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# MANSPLAINING IN ACADEMIA: NARRATIVES OF WOMEN FACULTY MEMBERS AT A UNIVERSITY IN CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY

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**Acceptance Page**

This paper prepared by **DOMINIC D. YASAY** with the title: **"MANSPLAINING IN ACADEMIA: NARRATIVES OF WOMEN FACULTY MEMBERS AT A UNIVERSITY IN CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY"** is hereby accepted by the Faculty of Information and Communication Studies, U.P. Open University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Program.

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## Biographical Sketch

Dominic De los Angeles Yasay (pronouns he/him/his) is an instructor at the College of Communication, Art, and Design (CCAD) of the University of the Philippines Cebu. He is actively engaged in teaching within the Communication Program, handling courses such as Critical Perspectives in Communication, Communication for Development, Content Writing, and Academic Writing. His rich blend of academic insights and practical experiences positions him as a dedicated professional aspiring to make a lasting impact in the realms of communication, journalism, and digital content creation. Dominic earned his Bachelor's degree in Development Communication (Major in Development Journalism) from Xavier University - Ateneo de Cagayan and has forged a multifaceted career in journalism and digital marketing.

Born on December 12, 1993, Dominic hails from 43 Quarter Street, Banawa, Cebu City. Beginning as a news correspondent and advertising writer, he made notable contributions to esteemed publications such as CDN Digital (formerly Cebu Daily News), Inquirer.net, and iStorya.net. Dominic also worked as a content marketer and copywriter, helping small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) build their brands in various niches such as travel and tourism, branding and design, digital marketing, healthcare, and new age spirituality through search engine optimization (SEO) and audience-centric web content.

Dominic is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Development Communication at the University of the Philippines Open University. This academic pursuit serves as a testament to his commitment to continuous learning. As a beginner researcher, Dominic aims to pursue scholarly work in the areas of gender and communication, digital ethnography, digital identities, health communication, and peace communication

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## Dedication

I dedicate this work to my family and friends, my source of strength and inspiration.

To my parents, Dante and Terencia, who have always supported me and taught me the virtues of patience, hard work, and perseverance. I have grown to be confident in my strengths and abilities because you believe in me. You are the wind beneath my wings.

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**Abstract**

This study delves into the experiences of women faculty members at a tertiary university in Cagayan de Oro City who have faced “mansplaining” (a portmanteau of the words “man” and “explain”), a form of gendered communication where men condescendingly explain concepts to women, presuming their ignorance. Employing a descriptive phenomenological approach, I analyzed interviews to uncover the ways mansplaining occurs within academic settings as well as the meanings that women faculty attach to their experiences. Five emergent themes were identified, highlighting the varied manifestations of mansplaining, such as male superiors questioning women's expertise and interrupting them during discussions, which undermines women's contributions and breeds a culture of undervaluation.

These encounters significantly affect women's motivation, engagement, and self-perception, instilling doubt about their capabilities and place within the academic sphere. The participants in this study refrained from attributing mansplaining solely to gender dynamics. Instead, they highlighted the critical need for explicit policies that delineate roles and responsibilities while ensuring that women have the autonomy to express their ideas and assert their expertise confidently, even when diverging from male colleagues' perspectives. These approaches can mitigate mansplaining by fostering an inclusive environment that values and respects women's expertise.

The findings underscore the necessity of creating a supportive academic culture that recognizes and celebrates women's achievements without bias. Highlighting the importance of mentors and a supportive network, the study advocates for a respectful, open, and empowering academic atmosphere conducive to all faculty members' growth, irrespective of gender and position in academia.

In conclusion, this research contributes to the dialogue on gender dynamics in academia, offering insights and recommendations for promoting equity and inclusivity. By addressing the systemic roots of mansplaining, institutions can cultivate a more supportive environment for women, ensuring their contributions are valued and their voices are heard, thus advancing the broader goal of gender equality in academic settings.

# Chapter I

## Introduction

For the past few decades, there have emerged studies about how women in academic settings experience interruptions, dismissal, and disregard in conversations with men (Blithe and Elliott, 2020; Bourabain, 2021; Flanigan, 2021; Jones et al., 2014; and Myrick, 2019). This type of interruption in a communication process is referred to as "mansplaining." An intrusive behavior believed to be commonly perpetrated by men against women, mansplaining involves cutting off, shutting down, or ignoring a woman's voice, knowledge, and opinion in a conversation. It also describes a situation where a man talks to a woman in a condescending or patronizing manner. This behavior stems from a man's belief that the woman in this situation is less informed, less intelligent, or less experienced than him (Vick, 2013). In academia, women academics get mansplained to in faculty meetings, board meetings, and conferences, among other settings. This phenomenological study aimed to understand the narratives of select women faculty at a university in Cagayan de Oro City where they were on the receiving end of mansplaining.

"Mansplain" is a verb, and a portmanteau of the words "man" and "explain." It is a neologism that became a buzzword on the Internet in 2008 (Bridges, 2017). The coinage of the term resulted from the time when socio-political journalist Rebecca Solnit published an essay titled "Men Explain Things to Me," recounting her experiences of

being cut off and interrupted by men. One instance was at a party where the male host attempted to explain her book *River of Shadows* to her. At the time, the host did not realize that Solnit was the author. He assumed that his know-how of the subject matter, extracted from the *New York Times Book Review*, demonstrated he knew the topic of the book more than Solnit. Solnit's essay voiced the shared frustration of women at the time who felt their abilities, ideas, and voices were eclipsed and disregarded each time they were interrupted by and talked down to by men (Bridges, 2017), so much so that they invented a label for this subtle sexist act that silences women.

On UrbanDictionary.com, an online dictionary for slang words and phrases, there are two opposing definitions of the word "mansplaining" (Bridges, 2017):

> *(1) To delight in condescending, inaccurate explanations delivered with rock solid confidence of rightness and that slimy certainty that of course he is right, because he is the man in this conversation (Handmaid, 2010).*
>
> *(2) A derisive and condescending term insultingly used by women when referring to a man that they are in a conversation with. The man's point is derided not because his reasoning is faulty or his evidence is unreliable; his point is derided simply on the basis of his gender (RizzoDaily, 2015).*

As explained by Bridges (2017), the first definition frames mansplaining as a condition where men believe they have a right to talk over, interrupt, and explain things to women, whereas the second definition shifts the victimization from women over to men, highlighting occasions wherein men's voices and opinions are censored because of their gender. Nevertheless, despite the nuances of these points of view, the

condescension that sparked the creation of this neologism is gendered in nature. Bridges (2017) further notes that this came from a reality of cultural and institutional sexism in which women are deemed to be less knowledgeable and less capable of understanding than men. The phenomenon has much to do with the epistemic roles and power relations of both genders in an interaction, and the issue of mansplaining hugely affects the flow and effectiveness of communication between a man and a woman.

Mansplaining also encompasses situations where a man interrupts a woman during a conversation to assert his superior knowledge. Interruptions and overlaps affect participation and speaking rights because they disrupt the ongoing process of the interaction by superseding the choice of the next speaker (Cannon et al., 2019). Therefore, mansplaining behaviors are barriers that can result in the breakdown of communication when left unaddressed. It prevents the speakers from conveying their messages successfully, hinders mutual understanding, and prevents the speakers from achieving the goal of the communication process.

This study looked at how mansplaining occurs as a communicative practice within Philippine academia. In addition, the study aimed to describe the meanings Filipino women academics attach to this phenomenon and understand their experiences of being mansplained to by their male colleagues.

The choice to study the phenomenon in academic contexts was influenced by my access to and identification with academics in higher education. As a newcomer in

academia, I was interested in understanding how the presumed power differences between men and women likely impact discourses and knowledge exchange in this sector. My research interest in mansplaining was also shaped by my curiosity about how communication behaviors reveal power relations, and how communication can be weaponized by power-wielding individuals and groups to maintain their status and privilege. I hope that by bringing to light the reality of mansplaining—and, in general, gendered microaggressive behaviors—in the halls of academia, I might help concretize a familiar experience for women academics that is normalized in daily interactions to the point of being buried in their consciousness or even rendered inoffensive.

Mansplaining is believed to be most prevalent in the education sector (Kidd, 2017), manifesting in many forms and in various conditions. In a study on faculty discourses in higher education that sought to examine language-related workplace experiences that reveal varying themes of gender inequality (Myrick, 2019), women professors described that their male colleagues use interruptions, direct language, loud voices, and talk time to dominate others, particularly women faculty. Eakins and Eakins (1976, as cited by Myrick, 2019) found out through an observational study of faculty meetings that male faculty members spoke more and for longer durations than their women counterparts. They also found that men interrupted others more often than women did. Women in academia who are expressive of their emotions and are vocal about their ideas are put at a disadvantage. Exploring gender bias in academia, Llorens et al. (2021) cited in their study that women are at risk of losing beneficial connections in their workplace when they voice out their opinions, especially when their opinion goes against those of the

majority. Gender bias is also evident in teaching evaluations. Mengel et al. (2018, as cited by Llorens et al., 2021) found that women instructors receive lower ratings on their student evaluations compared to male instructors. Generally, male instructors are perceived to be more knowledgeable than women instructors. These are only a few instances that demonstrate how women academics experience gender-based inequality in the workplace. Common among the key findings outlined above is how speech and language have become a variable for gender discrimination (Carli, 1990 as cited by Myrick, 2019). However, as substantial as these findings are, these studies are focused on the contexts of academic institutions in North America. To understand the mansplaining phenomenon from the local Filipino context, I focused on the personal experiences of women academics from a higher education institution in Cagayan de Oro City, Northern Mindanao. The faculty experiences and narratives cited in this study provide academia with some valuable local knowledge on how gender biases and discrimination are perpetuated and perpetrated through the use of speech, language, and mediated communication. An understanding of how mansplaining is being experienced by cultures outside of the U.S. can invite further scholarly inquiry into the phenomenon and inspection of other sociocultural factors unique to a given population that lead to the occurrence of mansplaining. As a result, discourse around this communication behavior is expanded and enriched.

The results of this study can also give academics insight into how their manner of communication potentially impacts their colleagues. I hope that through this research, women academics who have experienced mansplaining at some point in their careers

will feel seen and heard as they learn from the accounts of the participants and that they will be empowered to assert their voices as they speak from a place of knowledge and expertise. I also hope that this study will educate male academics (whether or not they have mansplained to women in the past deliberately or unintentionally) on how their communicative acts, bolstered by the power and privilege that come with being a man, can potentially affect how a woman sees her worth and value as far as contributing knowledge in the workplace goes. Ultimately, this study was intended to spark discourse on how men and women in academia should communicate respectfully in a way that builds each other up. As role models and persons of authority in the classroom, teachers must serve as an example of how transparent, healthy communication looks like to their students. Teachers help create the culture of communication within the four walls of the classroom, which then shapes the culture of the institution as a whole. Through this study, educators—regardless of gender—can instill in themselves the value of creating space for respect and freedom of speech. I hope this study adds to the repository of knowledge from which further empirical research on gender and communication can draw.

**Statement of the Problem**

While the term “mansplain” was only coined in 2008, Rothman (2012) says that this communicative practice has been around for centuries. Existing literature has documented the power differences in verbal interaction between men and women. Analyses conducted by Anderson and Leaper (1998) on the gender effects of conversational interruptions indicate that men were more likely than women to initiate

interruptions. Furthermore, results suggest that men do so to exercise dominance and control in conversations—a behavior believed to stem from men's assumption to take control of the conversational floor. Asare (2019) emphasizes that mansplaining reinforces the gender stereotype that women are less competent, less intelligent, and less educated than men. As a result, this makes women feel undervalued and unappreciated. These feelings can lead to a loss of productivity and a decreased sense of belongingness. In the long run, a pervasive culture of mansplaining can derail a woman's progress in her career.

Limited research specifically exploring mansplaining is focused on how epistemic rights are mobilized to create accusations of mansplaining (Joyce et al., 2020) and how the term is used in online discourses around gender politics and gender relations (Lutzky and Lawson, 2019). However, these studies are founded on American culture. No study either explores mansplaining from a communication vantage point or captures the subjective experiences of mansplaining of women faculty anywhere in the Philippines. This communication study bridges this gap in literature.

Mansplaining is still a novel term. A deeper inquiry into its connotations must be done to understand the phenomenon and the lived experiences of women in academia. Beyond tracing the origin of the term and studying how it is used to label sexist acts, it is essential to understand the nature of mansplaining as communication behavior and the perspective of women academics.

## Research Questions

This study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. How are mansplaining experiences of women academics from a university in Cagayan de Oro manifested in their work? How do they interpret these experiences?
2. How did the women academics deal with their mansplainers, and what strategies do they recommend to prevent the situation from happening in the future?

## Objectives of the Study

This study sought to address the following objectives:

1. To explore how the mansplaining experiences of women academics are manifested in their work;
2. To understand the views of women academics who experienced mansplaining in the workplace; and
3. To examine how the women academics dealt with their mansplaining experiences and the ways they recommend to prevent mansplaining from happening in the future.

## Significance of the Study

Despite being a mainstream topic on blogging sites and social media, the phenomenon of mansplaining has not yet enjoyed a serious scholarly inquiry (Bridges, 2017) from a communication perspective. Perhaps this is because users of the term have yet to reach a consensus about what concretely qualifies as “mansplaining” behavior (Joyce et al., 2021). Anyone seems to be able to instantly accuse someone of mansplaining at any point in the conversation. An accuser can wrongly bring up aspects of gender relations to solidify the transgressing man’s culpability to justify claims of gender-based transgression in a conversation. Another reason could be that there is a complex web of factors (social, cultural, environmental, etc.) that influence how men and women exchange ideas, information, and knowledge during an interaction. This makes it difficult to ascertain when someone is guilty of mansplaining behavior. All these are potential explanations as to why studies on mansplaining are few and far between.

Despite these challenges, conducting qualitative research continues to be a worthwhile endeavor because there is so much to be understood about mansplaining in academic contexts. Exploring the personal accounts of women academics who have been offended in speech or writing on the basis of their gender may guide future communication research in this area and may also spark further discussion between men and women about how to exchange ideas productively without offending one another. As a young academic with a burgeoning research interest in the area of gender and communication, through this study, I hope to gain a foundational grasp of how

communication shapes cultures and fosters understanding between people of different genders and backgrounds.

This study also serves as a guiding light to development communication practitioners who aim to leverage communication to eliminate gender discrimination and remove barriers that prevent women from fully participating in academia. Communication (whether in speech or in writing) plays a pivotal role in promoting gender equality and in transforming attitudes and behaviors that perpetuate gender-based discrimination (UNICEF, 2018). The knowledge gained from recognizing mansplaining behaviors, how it takes place, and how it impacts women mentally, emotionally, and socially will equip development communicators to design programs that help increase participation among women, build their confidence, and achieve their potential in their respective academic institutions.

Focusing on select women academics' subjective experiences—and how they perceive these experiences—can help come up with ways for faculty in the higher education sector to communicate in a productive manner. It will also help develop policies that promote respect for women's voices and expertise in the workplace, dismantle gender biases in academia, and promote fair treatment across all faculty members, as well as encourage increased participation among women.

At the organizational level, it is not yet fully understood how mansplaining affects women's participation in meetings, collaborative projects, policymaking, and other

professional undertakings. A deeper understanding of mansplaining experiences from women's perspectives could help shape policies geared toward gender-inclusive interactions in academic institutions. Giving women the space to speak their mind, contribute to forming opinions, and enrich the body of knowledge in their respective fields—giving them a seat at the table, especially in professional settings—is one of the thrusts of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, which is to "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls." Identifying and rectifying instances wherein women's voices are silenced or devalued is a significant step toward reinforcing the two targets under SDG 5, namely "[to] ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life," and "[to] adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels" (UN Women, n.d.).

Mansplain is a newly coined term to label sexist behaviors such as women being explained to or corrected by men who have less expertise on a topic under discussion (Joyce et al., 2021), interrupting women in conversations on the basis of their gender, and talking down to women in a condescending manner. In these interactions, the mansplainers are described to take over the floor and restrict the other participants from contributing to the conversation (Joyce et al., 2021). Only a few studies have been conducted to develop a widely agreed upon definition of what constitutes mansplaining and how it unfolds in everyday interactions (e.g., Joyce et al., 2021; Lutzky and Lawson,

2019; Bridges, 2017; and Johnson, 2020). However, all these studies are concentrated in the North American context and are mostly framed within intimate interactions.

At the time of research, there were no studies (communication or otherwise) in the Philippines that investigated such a phenomenon using the word “mansplaining” and that gauged women academics’ perception of it. From a communication standpoint, this research sought to provide a local perspective of mansplaining within academic settings so as to better understand this gendered social phenomenon from a different culture and context. It also aimed to contribute to the documentation of personal experiences of mansplaining which, in turn, could help develop a more concrete definition of what constitutes mansplaining behavior.

Mansplaining can occur in various contexts involving various individuals coming from diverse backgrounds. This study zeroed in on women academics’ experiences. It focused on personal accounts of heterosexual women academics who were treated by heterosexual men as ignorant, were interrupted, or were questioned on issues where they had clear expertise (Joyce et al., 2021) during an interaction. These interactions happened online, through email and video conferencing.

This qualitative study is the first investigation of higher education faculty members’ attitudes, perceptions, and feelings related to their subjective experiences of mansplaining. Furthermore, this is also the first qualitative study that explores the mansplaining phenomenon in the academic setting. I know the participants on a

personal level, having worked with them in the same institution and department. The mutual trust and respect we have with one another was a great advantage in collecting the data for this study since the participants were comfortable with sharing their thoughts, feelings, and opinions to me throughout the interviews. It is also worth highlighting that data in this study represents the perspectives of a highly specific sample of women academics from the same university who volunteered to tell their experiences, which allows for a more focused examination of the mansplaining phenomenon. Additionally, due to the recency of their experiences (about one to three years before this study took place), it is possible that the participants still had strong opinions and potent emotions on the subject of the study. All these factors make a great case for the subjectivity of this study—relaying the firsthand experiences of these women provides readers with a clear view of the topic.

# Chapter II

## Review of Related Literature

This chapter presents a literature review on the subject of mansplaining, its history and different forms, and its occurrence in academia. The focus of this study is to capture and understand the lived experiences of women academics related to mansplaining, how they navigated it, and how this communication behavior has affected their self-confidence and work performance.

Literature covering mansplaining in academic settings and how it can be addressed is scant, especially in the Philippine context. However, there are several relevant studies investigating how women's speeches are interrupted; how their knowledge, expertise, and contributions are devalued; and how they become targets of hostile sexism perpetrated by men (in the campus and in fieldwork research). The scope of this literature review is mainly within the U.S. context and the conditions that subject women to being cut off, interrupted, excluded, and dismissed in conversations, meetings, conferences, and even research works.

The review begins with a recent instance of mansplaining in the Philippine context. It then proceeds with the definition and origin of the relatively new term "mansplaining." Next, this review of literature cites studies that demonstrate the different ways women academics experience mansplaining and the pervasive culture of sexism and gender

bias in academia. The review wraps up with an explanation of how the phenomenological approach will be used in this study to get a clearer picture of the participants' experiences of mansplaining throughout their careers.

**Mansplaining Explained**

Sometime in October 2020, Antonio Parlade, who was then Lieutenant General of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, trended on the microblogging site X (Twitter) after calling on actress Liza Soberano not to associate with women's group Gabriela or else she would suffer the "same fate of those killed" (Inquirer.net, 2020). The three-star general's statement triggered an online debate on the culture of men telling women what they should do. Expressing her disagreement, actress Angel Locsin dismissed Parlade's statement as backward thinking. Gabriela outrightly tagged this deed as "mansplaining," stating that the officer had no right to tell women what to do and how to use their platform to defend other women.

University of the Philippines (UP) Center for Women Studies professor Nathalie Verceles said that what Parlade did—appearing to think he knows better than Soberano just because she is a woman and addressing the actress as if she did not know what she was doing—was an extension of mansplaining. Feminist studies claim that mansplaining is a systematic and institutionalized form of oppression that silences women, implicitly disclosing the lesser value of the female voice (Kidd, 2017).

A verb added to the Merriam-Webster dictionary in 2018, “mansplain” is a portmanteau of the words “man” and “explain” (Coccimiglio, 2015). It describes a communication behavior where a person (typically a man) explains something to someone (especially a woman) in a condescending and patronizing manner, seemingly ignoring the victim's knowledge and/or experience about the subject. The definition also extends to the way men interrupt women during conversations. Interruptions and overlaps affect participation and speaking right within an interaction in that it can disrupt the ongoing process of the interaction by superseding the choice of the next speaker (Cannon et al., 2019).

According to Lutzky and Lawson (2019), the first use of mansplaining traces back to 2008 in American socio political journalist Rebecca Solnit’s essay titled “Men Explain Things to Me.” Solnit tells of her experiences of being cut off and talked over by men, citing an instance at a party where the male host attempted to explain her book *River of Shadows* (about Eadweard Mubridge and the Western Technological revolution) to her. At the time, the host did not realize that Solnit was the author. He assumed that his know-how of the subject matter, extracted from the *New York Times Book Review*, demonstrated he was more qualified than Solnit to carry the conversation. Solnit’s essay gained massive public attention which sparked conversations about the matter, eventually resulting in the coinage of the term “mansplaining.” The journalist writes of the behavior as a “slippery slope of silencing” which “crushes young women into silence by indicating, the way harassment on the street does, that this is not their world.”

## A Brief History of Mansplaining

Although the term “mansplaining” was only coined in 2008, Rothman (2012) says that the behavior has been around for centuries. Existing literature has documented the power differences in verbal interaction between men and women. Analyses conducted by Anderson and Leaper (1998) on the gender effects of conversational interruptions indicate that men were more likely than women to initiate interruptions. Furthermore, results suggest that men do so to exercise dominance and control in conversations—a behavior believed to stem from men’s assumption to take control of the conversational floor. Another study by Hancock and Rubin (2014) shows that women are more likely to be interrupted both by men and by other women, and that women were found to be more amenable to such behavior than men and are likely to nod, smile, laugh, and agree to keep the conversation going.

Over the years, feminist researchers have attempted to investigate the phenomenon further to understand how mansplaining manifests in conversations and to infer men’s motives for mansplaining. In her paper “Mansplaining and Illocutionary Force,” Johnson (2020) explains the three common types of mansplaining and their discreet nuances. She calls them the “well, actually” mansplaining, the straw-mansplaining, and the speech-act confusion mansplaining. Each of these types are defined as follows:

1. “Well, actually” mansplaining - An instance where a woman offers an explanation or an answer to a query, and then a man swoops in to offer his own account. In this case, the mansplainer appears to believe that his answer or explanation is

superior (hence the use of the phrase “well, actually”) and attempts to offer a correction or improvement to the woman’s account. Sometimes, “well, actually” mansplainers provide explanations that are entirely separate from the original subject matter contributed by the woman.

2. Straw-mansplaining - This occurs when the mansplainer responds to a comment or question from the woman who is the target of mansplaining. In this instance, the woman has equal or more expertise and/or experience in the subject than the mansplainer. The woman might ask a difficult question or pose a challenging objection to the mansplainer, but the mansplainer resorts to answering a simpler question or addressing a straw-man objection. Although not always exactly a mansplaining act, a sincere answer is classified as straw-mansplaining.
3. Speech-act confusion mansplaining - This describes a situation where a mansplainer hears his interlocutor make an assertion or hypothesis and takes it as an invitation to display his expertise. Specifically, the mansplainer takes the utterance to be a question or a request for information, disregarding the fact that the woman intends to assert something and is actually an expert in the topic of conversation.

Acknowledging the diversity of factors and contexts that shape a single interaction, Johnson (2020) clarifies that these definitions are not exhaustive and exclusive. She also asserts that mansplaining is not “always done in a patronizing or condescending way” and need not be. But whether or not the act is done in a patronizing manner, a person with an advanced or commensurate expertise is treated in an unfair way on the

basis of her being a woman. This bias automatically makes the behavior problematic and sexist at best.

**Literature on Gender, Conversations, and Group Interaction**

In recent years, social scientists in North America have conducted a series of studies with the goal of understanding interactions within groups that reflect and perpetuate gender inequality. These studies investigated the dynamics of participation, development of conversational roles, interruptions and overlap in speeches, and effects of gender and group compositions.

Cannon et al (2019) examined how gender (defined in this study as “a system instead of something one ‘is’”) permeates conversational interactions using three levels of analysis. First, the researchers used an inductive quantitative analysis to examine how the history of conversational interaction cumulates to affect the organization of participation, turn taking, interruptions, and overlaps. Second, they explored how sequential conversation roles (who is a participator, who interrupts others to gain the floor, and who is often interrupted) that develop in a group interaction might lead to the permeation of the gender system into the conversation. And third, they used the sequential nature of their data to depict how conversational elements develop to create inequality. In the second and third analyses, the study concluded that the gender difference and interruptions are not “a direct overt process” of men interrupting women, but that gender shapes the conversational roles participants assume in a given

situation. Women are placed in less advantaged and more likely interrupted conversational roles. Cannon et al (2019) further highlighted that women are “not provided with as many opportunities to speak during the conversation, making them more likely to experience interruptions” as the conversation evolves. As a result, women are then likely to be interrupted frequently as they are forced into the low participator role. I noted that processes through which inequalities evolved in a particular interaction setting have not been explored extensively. This is to say that how gender factors into an ongoing interaction remains to be an unproven phenomenon.

The majority of studies on interruptions are concentrated on conversations in intimate dyads or in close relationships. While these may give us a view of power and interpersonal status in conversations, these studies do not account for the nature of interruptions within impersonal, task-oriented interactions. To address this gap, Smith-Lovin (1989) studied interactions among non-intimates in a task-oriented setting by observing the conversations of six-person groups with varying sex compositions. The group members had a minimal prior knowledge of each other. The lack of previous intimacy was intended to increase the effects of observable status characteristic which is gender relative to other status or power differences that may occur as a result of long-term interaction. The task-oriented nature of the observed groups was similar to the nature of real-world work groups. This allowed the researcher to study the promotion of ideas, gaining recognition, and status effects which are observable conditions in professional interactions. The study found out that there is gender inequality in interruptions. However, this is produced not by the result of sex difference

in terms of frequency of interruption (or by virtue of dominance effect), but because men disrupt the speech of women far more frequently than that of fellow men. On the other hand, women interrupt men at the same rate as they interrupt women. The study suggests that unlike women, men consider sex as a status characteristic when it comes to expectations on performance delivery. Smith-Lovin also categorized the type of interruptions as supportive (positive comments on an idea, repetition of a phrase, or finishing a thought for a speaker), neutral, and negative (disruptive and intrusive comments that ignore or put down the speaker). Negative interruptions are more likely to succeed against women than against men. Women also succeed less frequently than men in attempting to interrupt using a neutral comment, and they are more likely to lose when someone (man or woman) interrupts them.

**Stance and Stance-Taking**

The behavior of mansplaining cannot be fully understood without viewing it against the backdrop of stance and stance-taking. In communication, stance is a social action that speakers express in lexical, grammatical, and paralinguistic terms. Stance allows speakers to present themselves through their beliefs and social identities by expressing their knowledge and emotion (Bridges, 2017), which can embed and evoke their identity among other members of society. When speakers engage in dialogue wherein they use overt communication means, evaluate objects, and position and align themselves with the subject, that is stance-taking. Stance lets participants in a communication process

infer one another's reasons for using a particular form of language, which in turn reveals everyone's social ideologies and identities.

Bridges (2017) explains that stance can play an epistemic or affective role, both of which describe talk that determines a relationship between the speaker and topic of discussion. For example, an utterance that opens with *"Obviously…"* conveys an epistemic stance which emphasizes the degree of access the speaker has to the information that follows that statement. On the other hand, *"Luckily…"* conveys an affective stance which presents the speaker's feelings about the content of the utterance. Regardless of the content of the utterance, all utterances play an epistemic and/or affective stance and thereby convey the point of view of the speaker. The language used not only reflects the mindset of the sender of the message but also signifies an attempt to align the receiver's judgment with their own. Bridges (2017) emphasizes that epistemic stance is most useful in online communication, although the researcher believes that conveying epistemic stance can also happen in face-to-face conversations. Considering a speaker's stance helps us understand mansplaining as a behavior, in that stance informs how a speaker constructs their identities to connect with shared ideologies and how they react to other participants who have a different point of view.

## Gender and Epistemics in Accusations of Mansplaining

Being interrupted by and explained to or corrected by men with less expertise on a certain topic are only a few of the subtle manifestations of sexism, or the prejudice or discrimination based on sex or gender, especially against women and girls (Masequesmay, 2014). Calling out subtle acts of sexism like mansplaining is difficult due to its obscurity as well as its internalization and normalization in the fabric of everyday life (Joyce et al., 2021). Feminist advocates propose one solution to this issue: labeling this conduct. Transforming these actions into “talk-ables” is a step toward articulating, exposing, problematizing, and challenging sexist conduct (Bridges, 2017) that is often swept under the rug.

However, while new vocabulary is being made to describe everyday sexist acts, it can also elicit arguments, defensive responses, and counter-accusations of sexism (Jane, 2017). This is because despite the widespread cognizance of the conduct within talk-in-interactions, there is no scientific account and consensus about what exactly constitutes mansplaining. In the pioneering study on the gender and epistemics in mansplaining accusations by Joyce et al. (2017), women participants characterized mansplaining as the patronizing and condescending conduct of men. They also used the term to call out claims of knowledge regarding topics that are objectively within their purview (e.g., reproductive health). In a separate study, women participants used “mansplaining” in a lighthearted manner to signal instances of verbal repression (Bridges, 2017). The study acknowledged that different uses of the term in different

discourses may vary depending on the user's gender, language, and perception of sexism and normative gender roles. While definitions may differ, the use of the term prompts people to discuss and share stories to justify their principles.

Existing analyses on the topic lack substantial amounts of data to further examine the definition, nature, and extent of mansplaining. In addition, most studies about the topic are concentrated around the North American context. The purpose of this study is to provide a local context for the occurrence of the conduct, by way of capturing the lived experiences of mansplaining among women academics in the Philippines.

**Understanding Mansplaining from the Lens of Speech Act Theory**

Why mansplaining occurs in relational and professional conversations has not been studied extensively yet. But one study by Johnson (2020) attempted to examine the phenomenon from the theoretical perspective of the speech act theory.

Introduced by J.L. Austin and developed by J.R. Searle, speech act theory is a subfield of pragmatics that examines how words are used to present information, carry out actions, and express the speaker's intentions (Nordquist, 2020). Searle forwards that there are only five illocutionary points that speakers can achieve when uttering a statement (Littlejohn and Foss, 2009): the assertive, which are statements that advocate truth purely and simply; commissive, such as promises, pledges, and guarantees that commit a speaker to a future act; directive, which are commands,

invitations, requests, and other statements that prompt listeners to do something; declaratory, or statements that express truths when uttered; and expressive, which are acts like thanking, welcoming, and apologizing intended to express the speaker's internal state.

Using this theory to shed light on mansplaining, Johnson (2020) explains that speech is a social action that involves the speech of a speaker and the reactions of one or more hearers (including that of the speaker). And for the success of the interaction, the intention behind the speaker's act must match the kind of reactions the hearers have. Mansplaining happens because there is a perceived mismatch between the reaction of the male audience member to a woman speaker's utterance, as well as the reaction of the woman speaker. The mismatch is further reinforced by differing perceptions of speech conventions and intentions (i.e., illocutionary force) followed by conversation participants. Johnson (2020) also emphasizes that these conventions are mutable, overlapping, evolving, and ambiguous depending on the context and dynamics of conversations, which make mismatches somewhat common. Conventional responses to an utterance can also vary.

Additionally, Johnson (2020) uses the speech act theory to point out that another reason why mansplaining takes place is because in conversations, men participants, subconsciously or not, tend to take women participants' assertions to be a question and/or request for information. By default, this leads a man to react to a woman's utterance by offering information as if women are less informed, less intelligent, or in

need of intellectual assistance. Johnson (2020) emphasizes that this is also a function of incorporating people's social position into our illocutionary reactions or the way we interpret the intentions of a speaker for saying something. For instance, the statement, *"Can I look inside your bag?"* can be uttered by a toddler and a police officer in different forces because the two speakers have different social positions. However, the problem with a mansplainer's reaction is that it factors gender when interpreting assertions.

But while speech act theory provides us a general understanding of why mansplaining occurs in a conversation, the theory sees the hearer (in this case women participants) as passive participants in the interaction (Nordquist, 2020). The theory does not consider the interactional function of conversations, the context of the discourse, and the plurality of interlocutionary forces that can play out in a single interaction. Moreover, speech act theory does not focus on the perspective of women as the subject of mansplaining behaviors; it only puts a finger on the fault in the flow and the dynamics of a man-woman conversation where mansplaining likely takes place, and not on the perception of women about the conduct and how it impacts their lives.

**Mansplaining: A Form of Microaggression**

According to Johnson et al. (2021), mansplaining is a microaggressive behavior that many women and other marginalized groups experience on a regular basis. The authors explain that microaggressions are subtle forms of discrimination not only against women but also against LGBTQIA+ people, individuals with mental health

issues, religious minorities, and other people belonging to historically marginalized groups. Mansplaining is lumped together with behaviors such as gaslighting (the act of manipulating others into doubting themselves and questioning their sanity), victim blaming (blaming people for their misfortunes), and abandonment and neglect (failure to act on behalf of the target as a result of a lack of ability to recognize microaggressive behaviors). Giving it a more specific label, mansplaining is a form of "microinvalidation"—or communication patterns that exclude, nullify, or negate the thoughts, feelings, experiences, and reality of people from marginalized groups (Johnson et al., 2021). As men mansplain to women and assert their opinion (whether it's accurate or not), they prevent women from speaking for themselves and disregard their perspectives. For example, in an academic setting, a man interrupts a woman or speaks for women in discussions of female reproductive health. This act of mansplaining distances the perpetrator from the experiences and perspectives of women. It also paints the perpetrator as the authority in the topic at hand and diminishes the validity of the contributions of women, who have firsthand knowledge about their own reproductive health, in the discussion.

In their microaggression theory, Sue et al. (2007) explains that microaggressions can be intentional or unintentional and explicit or subtle. They can be communicated through verbal or nonverbal means, social media, TV programs, educational curriculum, mascots, monuments, etc. Perpetrators may be aware of their intention, but they may deny or justify their words and actions when confronted. Because of this, microaggression is invisible or hard to detect. While microaggressive behaviors may

seem “little” and nuanced in certain situations, evidence suggests that they pose enormous harm to marginalized people’s mental health. Being subjected to a lifetime of microaggressions has increased depression and stress levels of people of color, denied or negated their racialized experiences, affected their learning and problem solving skills, created a hostile and invalidating work environment for them, and impaired their work performance (Sue et al., 2019).

Despite the ill effects of these behaviors, targets of microaggressions would suppress their feelings out of fear of retaliation from their perpetrator, being invalidated further, and to avoid reinforcing negative stereotypes about their group. However, choosing not to confront perpetrators of microaggression only led the targets to harbor feelings of anger, embarrassment, guilt, regret, and shame. Challenging microaggressive behaviors through confrontation may prevent these negative emotions from welling up and boost self-efficacy for targets of microaggression (Brondolo et al., 2009; Sue et al., 2019). Calling out perpetrators is also an essential step to raising awareness of microaggressions and minimizing its occurrence.

**Mansplaining in Academia**

Many women have been at the receiving end of mansplaining in subtle or crude ways, in different settings and in everyday situations. Yet one environment where it is most common is in the higher education sector (Kidd, 2017). What follows is a review of studies documenting various forms of mansplaining in the academic setting. Some of

the studies cited do not use the term “mansplaining” in exploring specific instances of sexist behaviors and microaggression. Nonetheless, I consider these studies as substantial evidence that shed light on the reality of mansplaining (and by extension, microaggression) in academia since the situations described in the texts fall under established definitions of mansplaining.

In a study exploring American women faculty’s experiences of workplace hostilities, microaggressions, and work-life conflict, Blithe and Elliot (n.d.) interviewed 21 faculty members holding tenured, tenure-track, and full time-instructor academic positions. Most of the interviewees reported firsthand experiences of microaggressions. One faculty member explained that, *“One of my male search committee members kept referring to the female candidates as 'girls' even though one of them was a professor at Harvard! And I actually said something like, 'Unless she's 9 years old, she's a woman. Could we just say that?' And he was like, 'I don't know what the big deal is, to me it’s just like girls, guys, girls …’ A couple weeks later at the next meeting, he uses it again.”* One participant shared one instance where her male colleagues rolled their eyes when she talked in a meeting. Another participant described receiving “aggressive nonverbal communication” such as deep sighs, crossed arms, and a look of annoyance from one male colleague when she spoke during faculty meetings. Still another woman faculty shared that an older colleague in her department discouraged her from publishing more research, explaining to her that other people in the department would not like her personally if she were more productive in her research than the rest of them.

Mansplaining and other microaggressive behaviors hinder women's full participation in research and knowledge building. This stems from gender stereotypes attached to being a woman in academia, putting more value on male faculty's scholarly work over that of women's, and the failure to acknowledge women's expertise and contributions to their respective fields. In a research assessing the pervasiveness of gender bias in universities across the US (specifically in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics or STEM), Llorens et al. (2021) documents the most common forms of bias in every aspect of academia. These include journal article and innovation citations, hiring decisions, publication rates, symposia speaker invitations, evaluations of conference abstracts, and tenure decisions. These barriers are higher for women who are members of other underrepresented groups (based on, but not limited to ethnicity, race, religion, socioeconomic status, disability, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation).

The key findings of the study closely linked to mansplaining are cited below:

1. Women are underrepresented as first and last authors in peer-reviewed publications relative to the proportion of women scientists in the field. Furthermore, conference abstracts, papers, and fellowship applications were rated as having higher merit when they were written by men. This observation is more evident in scientific fields perceived to be more "masculine."
2. In biological and cognitive sciences, citation is a critical metric of productivity. Citation influences hiring and tenure decisions, grant awards, speaker invitations,

and career recognition. As it turns out, women researchers receive fewer citations than men. In 149,000 publications, a paper with a woman as a lead author received 10% fewer citations on average than similar papers written by a man. The rate is higher in top neuroscience journals, where papers with women as first and last authors had 30% fewer citations.

3. At the professor level, women instructors receive lower-than-average scores on their student evaluations compared to male instructors, and students perceive male instructors to be more knowledgeable educators and more competent leaders than their women counterparts.
4. Expressions of emotions linked to strong leadership characteristics (e.g., pride and anger) are admired and tolerated more when they come from men. On the contrary, women who voice out their opinions and stand up for themselves risk losing their social capital or the valuable connections they have at work.
5. Qualified women scientists are given fewer opportunities to speak at seminars and conferences than men. Women also reported experiencing sexual harassment (both verbal and nonverbal) at conferences. Authors note that disrespectful questions and unprofessional feedback during talks and poster sessions deter women academics from presenting their work.
6. Rates of sexual harassment cases for academic faculty and staff are as high as 58 percent, as stated in the 2018 report on sexual assault released by the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, and funded by the National Institutes of Health. Most women in academia reported having experienced sexist hostility or negative views toward individuals who go against

traditional gender roles (Daniels and Leaper, 2011). An example of hostile sexism is receiving disparaging remarks for entering traditionally masculine domains like sports and sciences. Other forms of verbal sexual harassment academic women encountered include being made to feel that their intelligence is inferior to men or receiving demeaning jokes.

While these findings do not directly equate to mansplaining, the situations highlight behaviors that stereotype women as less competent, undermine their knowledge, and silence them, thus putting them at a disadvantage. All these components make a strong case for viewing these discriminatory actions as extensions of mansplaining.

There is one specific situation in which academic women can benefit from mansplaining: utilizing information voluntarily given by men to influence their data and navigate logistics when collecting data for their research. In her paper titled "Utilizing Mansplaining as Data: Leveraging Gender and Outsider Positionalities in International Third Sector Research Fieldwork," Flanigan (2012) discusses the common types of mansplaining that international women researchers like herself encounter in the field. Below are direct quotations from her paper:

> *"As a young Northern female international researcher, I often was asked, 'Your parents let you come here?' As I have grown older, this question has been replaced by, 'Your husband let you come here?' These statements often are followed by a disbelieving shake of the head, displaying a sense of shock at the irresponsibility of said parents or husband in allowing me to travel so far from home.*

*"Male interview participants sometimes offer much more detail than is necessary to explain a given subject, or speak extensively about a topic that is unrelated to my research. Outside of data collection, male residents offer uninvited, detailed elaborations on a variety of social and political topics. [...] As a female researcher viewed as inherently naive due to my gender, and often not accorded respect as a legitimate contributor to knowledge creation, I have found mansplaining to be a ubiquitous aspect of the fieldwork experience."*

Flanigan (2021) then discusses how women can reframe their mindsets and leverage these experiences to make their data collection more efficient.

*"As a 'vulnerable' female, I often am assisted with logistical arrangements and research contacts to a degree that my male colleagues are not. In this way, sexist attitudes toward female independence and travel result in research support that can be unexpected and useful. While sexist orientations toward female researchers present serious barriers and even dangers in the research process that must not be disregarded, sexist 'helping' behaviors sometimes can facilitate research access and logistics.*

*"[T]he frustrating experience of mansplaining can be reframed as a useful source of data in the context of fieldwork, as has been noted by other female researchers. [...] Female researchers [can use] males' patronizing or pedantic behavior to their advantage, viewing it as an opportunity to generate detailed responses to research questions and gain greater insight into local culture and politics."*

It is worth emphasizing that safety and security comes first in field research. Flanigan (2021) notes that researchers of any gender, race, and background should make decisions according to their own comfort and must protect their physical and emotional well being. The benefits laid out above should be leveraged only when it makes sense to do so and never when it presents risks of harm to the researcher.

## The Way Forward

Considering the myriad of factors that contribute to the occurrence of mansplaining in academia and the fact that men are the usual perpetrators of this communication behavior in this context, increased awareness and responsibility is expected of men to reduce mansplaining at the organizational level. What are some actions male academics can take to help make academia an inclusive workplace for their women colleagues?

David Smith (2021), an associate professor of practice at the Johns Hopkins Carey Business School who studied and wrote about the issue of mansplaining in organizations, outlines some measures to make women feel seen, heard, and valued. It begins with understanding how women experience the workplace differently than men as well as their workplace struggles. This can be achieved by having faculty members undergo gender-sensitive training which covers awareness raising, knowledge enhancement, skills training, change in attitudes and behaviors, and mobilization for social change (Krupa, 2021). Second is for male faculty members to improve their

listening skills. Smith says that based on their research, women perceive men to be poor listeners. They appreciate male leaders and mentors who listen generously with an intent to understand rather than to fix a problem. As it turns out, with regard to listening, most men are conditioned to discern a problem and offer solutions. Smith explains that, on some occasions, women only want to be heard, valued, or validated when expressing their sentiments and that they find an interaction beneficial when men act as sounding boards for ideas. Generous listening increases empathy and emotional intelligence, thus creating a safe space and better working relationships between men and women.

## Using Phenomenology to Capture Experiences

Phenomenology is a form of qualitative research that focuses on the study of a person's lived experience within the world (Neubauer et al., 2019). A powerful approach to inquiry, it seeks to describe the essence of a phenomenon. It does this by exploring the phenomenon from the perspective of individuals who have experienced it. The objective of phenomenology is to capture the meaning of an experience in terms of the nature of the experience and the way it was experienced. Specifically, this study utilized the phenomenological approach by interviewing participants and asking them about their previous experiences of mansplaining (i.e., being interrupted or cut off in conversations, being explained to by men, or being devalued for their contributions on the basis of sex). The participants were asked about their perception, awareness levels, the impacts of mansplaining to them, and how they navigated these situations.

## Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to capture the personal experiences of mansplaining of women faculty members in Philippine colleges and universities. The literature review defined mansplaining as a communication phenomenon, explored how it happens in group settings, and provided reasons for considering it as a behavior that perpetuates sexism against women. It then examined various studies and articles to provide insight into the pervasiveness of mansplaining, microaggression, and other gender bias behaviors that put women faculty in higher education at a disadvantaged position. Due to the dearth of research on mansplaining in academic settings in the Philippines, most of the studies cited come from American literature. It can be noted that mansplaining is a type of communication pattern called microaggression, which excludes, nullifies, and invalidates the ideas, knowledge, experiences, and realities of marginalized groups (or in this case, women). Being frequent targets of microaggressive behaviors affects women's health—it increases women's stress and depression, affects their learning and problem solving skills, and overall creates an unhealthy working environment for them. Challenging microaggression by speaking up and confronting the perpetrator is one of the ways to address this behavior. It also helps prevent women and other marginalized individuals from developing negative feelings such as anger, embarrassment, guilt, shame, and regret that stem from letting microaggressions slide to avoid retaliation and further invalidation.

Academia is rife with hostile sexism that makes women faculty feel unsafe. This issue proves to be a hindrance to the professional growth of women academics. Hostile sexism manifests as verbal and nonverbal assaults directed against women academics simply for proactively taking charge of meetings and participating in research works. Studies by women researchers (especially in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) get fewer citations than similar studies written by men. In addition, women get fewer invitations to speak at conferences while others decline to present their works for fear that they might get disrespectful questions and feedback. In field research, women researchers visiting from other countries to gather data are regarded by male locals as naive, in need of logistical support, and “not legitimate contributors of knowledge creation.” While these presumptions can be frustrating and uncomfortable, women researchers can take advantage of the ubiquitousness of mansplaining in field research to generate data and gain access to local knowledge so as to make data collection more efficient.

To reduce mansplaining at an organizational level, thorough education about the behavior must be conducted across all employees, especially male employees. Women must be made to feel seen, heard, and valued. Men must understand the unique struggles of women and their experience of the workplace. Gender-sensitive training that aims to increase the awareness of faculty members, change attitudes and behaviors toward promoting gender inclusive interactions, and empower men and women to be active participants in social transformation may help stem the issue of mansplaining.

# Chapter III

# Methodology

## Descriptive Phenomenological Method

Phenomenology is the tradition of inquiry that was used to dig deep into the mansplaining experiences of two women academics in Cagayan de Oro City. Originating from the disciplines of psychology, philosophy, and education, phenomenology is a qualitative research approach that seeks to examine a phenomenon that has impacted a person at their level of subjective reality.

Phenomenology is concerned not so much about matters of fact as about how an individual describes their lived experiences and derives meaning from them. The approach can also be used to study common behaviors of a group of people (Harappa, 2021). According to Qutoshi (2018), giving a wider meaning to particular experiences through phenomenology helps educate our own vision, define our position, broaden how we see the world, and examine the phenomenon at a deeper level. This approach is aligned with the main goal of this study which was to explore how women interpreted being mansplained to.

As cited by Gonzalez (2010, p. 40-41), Moustakas (1994) forwards the following key concepts which are instrumental to understanding mansplaining at the level of consciousness of women workers:

1. Phenomenology delves into descriptions rather than analyses and explanations of experiences.
2. It aims to collect meanings through intuition and reflection on experiences, ultimately leading to concepts, judgments, and wide understandings of a phenomenon.
3. Phenomenology is founded on questions that illuminate and focus on a meaning, as well as on themes that sustain inquiry.
4. Perceptions of a phenomenon take off from the researcher's personal understanding of the experience.
5. Phenomenology looks into a phenomenon in its entirety, examining the different angles and perspectives to arrive at a consolidated vision of the essence of the phenomenon.
6. The researcher's experience and perception of the phenomenon interrelates with one another to make the objective subjective and vice versa.
7. Phenomenology goes back to the appearance of things as they are in the natural world, detached from biases and routine (and from what is claimed about the phenomenon to be true).
8. The researcher's own thought, intuition, reflection, and judgment are considered primary evidence of the scientific investigation.

9. The research questions must be constructed carefully in a manner that informs the phenomenological inquiry and the process of seeing, reflecting, and knowing.

Additionally, research questions in phenomenology stem from personal experiences guided by curiosity and a desire to extract knowledge about the phenomenon under study. Qutoshi (2018) explains that even if phenomenologists have differing views on particular issues, there is a collective agreement among researchers that consciousness is essential. It provides opportunities for gaining direct knowledge from individuals experiencing the phenomenon through reflections.

This philosophical view aids researchers in understanding a situation at a conscious level; it gives researchers the opportunity to approach the phenomenon at face value rather than from external interpretations like that of the media. Therefore, describing the event as it appears is necessary in comprehending its essence because it involves a great deal of collecting experiences and interpreting their meanings, not explaining and rationalizing.

Phenomenology was appropriate for this study because the goal is to explore the subjective experiences of mansplaining of women instructors and professors, which are the principal source of knowledge. The description of women academics' accounts wherein they were shut down, interrupted, and cast aside for being a woman helped unveil the meanings of these experiences as well as how it impacted the subjects on a personal level.

With this knowledge, I was able to widen the discourse on mansplaining as a sexist behavior that is shaping women academics' participation in the workplace.

**Participants**

Mansplaining can happen in different contexts and environments, but it is most common in schools (Kidd, 2017). Participants of this study were two heterosexual women faculty from a Cagayan de Oro City university who were mansplained to by a male figure in the institution they work in. I handpicked the participants for their knowledge and awareness of what mansplaining means and because their experiences fell under the common forms of mansplaining behaviors (a man silencing and interrupting a woman during a meeting or conversation; casting aside a woman's opinion; or disregarding a woman's abilities, ideas, and voices). The decision to select the participants was influenced mainly by the overt nature of the mansplaining that they experienced. Other factors such as the nature of the relationship between the participants and their mansplainers, as well as the environment and social context surrounding the interactions, did not factor into the selection. Table 1 shows the participants' demographic information at the time of participation in the study.

**Table 1**

*Summary of Participant Demographics*

| Participant | Gender | Age | Highest Educational Attainment |
|---|---|---|---|
| Tina | Female | 48 | Doctoral Degree |
| Jane | Female | 37 | Master's Degree |

The participants were Tina and Jane (real names withheld for anonymity), an assistant professor and an instructor respectively. Besides teaching in the same university, both participants hold leadership positions in their respective offices. In terms of years of service, Tina has been teaching at the university for 25 years and has been the university's international relations officer for three years. Jane has been with the university for 13 years and has been a department chairperson for five years. The former has a doctoral degree while the latter is currently taking her doctoral degree. Tina specializes in communication and media, as well as social psychology. Jane specializes in social marketing, media campaigns, communication for development, and behavior change communication.

## Research Instrument

The study used the interview schedule as the research instrument. The interview schedule was used to determine the nature of the participants' mansplaining experiences; the participants' perceptions and interpretations of the behavior; and the

participants' subsequent experiences. As the interviewer and, therefore, the research instrument of this qualitative study, I played a crucial role in the collection, interpretation, and analysis of the data due to my male perspective and understanding of mansplaining, relationship with the participants, and interactions with them during the interviews. All of these contributed to this study's nuanced discussion of mansplaining and the phenomenon's contextualization within academia.

**Data Gathering Procedure**

To gather participants, I crowdsourced on social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. I sent direct messages to all the women academics in my network and asked them if they had recent experiences of mansplaining. I also gave them a link to a Google Form that contained a brief overview of the study along with a consent form for signifying willingness to participate in the study. The crowdsourcing happened from March to May 2023.

After over two months of crowdsourcing, two women faculty members from a tertiary university in Cagayan de Oro City came forward and agreed to have one-on-one interviews to narrate their mansplaining experiences. These participants' experiences match the existing definitions of mansplaining behaviors.

The interviews took place on May 25 via Google Meet. The interviews were recorded using Google Meet's recording function.

To extract meaning and understand women's lived experiences of mansplaining, I asked the participants to narrate their personal experiences in detail. The following questions were used as a guide to surface meanings during the interviews [inspired by the questions formulated by Mountain (2015) for his study "The lived experience of battered women in transitional housing"]:

1. Can you describe the type of mansplaining that you experienced and what exactly happened?
2. How has this behavior, mostly associated with men, shaped how you see yourself and your position in your college or university?
3. Since you got mansplained to by a male colleague, how do you see yourself and your role as a woman faculty at your institution?
4. Recall and describe your experience of being mansplained to by your colleague.
5. How did you navigate through the interaction? How did you respond to your mansplainer?
6. Would you label your mansplaining experience as an attack on you as a woman?
7. What are your expectations of being a woman instructor or professor of your team in the context of contributing to the overall success of your school?
8. Think about that specific moment when you were mansplained to. How did you feel? What was your challenge then?

9. What was it like for you when your opinion was not valued, got interrupted, or when your expertise was not considered (despite your wealth of knowledge and experience)?
10. Describe what it is like to be mansplained to.
11. If you experienced changes socially, mentally, emotionally, and financially since your mansplaining experience, how would you describe it?
12. How can policies aimed at stemming sexist behaviors such as mansplaining at the organizational level help prevent gender discrimination and make you become a valued academic?

**Ethical Considerations**

The safety and well-being of research participants were of paramount importance in this study, informing all decisions made for the study's duration. Guided by the standards of feminist research, I dedicated sufficient consideration, time, and resources to ensure that rigorous ethical standards were met, including voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, and safety in research participation (Zubaan, n.d.). In conducting this study, I presumed at all times that sharing the participants' subjective experiences of mansplaining could cause feelings of anger, confusion, or resentment to resurface. Therefore, the study was conducted in a safe and private environment where participants were able to freely express their sentiments with no judgment.

The following safeguards outlined by the University of the Philippines Open University's Institutional Research Ethics Committee (n.d.) were in place to protect the well being of the participants:

*Informed Consent* - Prospective participants were thoroughly briefed about the purpose of the study, its objectives, the research instrument, and the duration of the study. They were assured that their personal data will be kept confidential, including their names, affiliations, address, contact details, etc. I also informed the participants about the risks that participating in the study entailed, and the participants were given the opportunity to ask any questions about the study. They were made to sign a certificate of informed consent before they proceeded with the interview.

*Participant Selection* - Selected participants informed of the schedule and venue of the interview.

*Voluntary Participation* - Participants were not coerced into joining the study. It was made clear to them that participation was entirely at their discretion. When the participants decided not to continue after the interview had already begun, they were informed that they could not instantly opt out of the discussion. Instead, they were given the ability to request that the information they provided not be cited in the data. They were also allowed to withdraw their answers even after the discussion had taken place.

*Interview Dynamics* - Before the interview proper, I allowed the interviewees to narrate their experiences. I also explained the type of questions that will be asked of the participants, including those that may be sensitive or may potentially cause embarrassment. They were informed that the entire interview will be recorded. The

participants were not forced to answer any questions that they felt were too personal or share experiences that made them uncomfortable.

*Anonymity* - Given the nature of the data that will be collected, participants were given pseudonyms to protect their identities. They were also not allowed to disclose the names of the people who they identified as mansplainers in their experiences (although they were allowed to reveal the professional positions of these colleagues).

*Sharing the Results* - The participants were informed of the timeline of the study as well as the availability of the findings for sharing and verification.

**Data Analysis**

In analyzing the data of this study, I used Colaizzi's (1978) method of analysis. An analytic process common in descriptive phenomenological studies, this method is widely used in many disciplines such as psychology and health sciences. It offers a rigorous analysis of meanings given by research participants through every layer of the process. The result is a concise yet all-encompassing description of the phenomenon under study (Morrow et al., 2015).

After transcribing the interviews, I familiarized myself with the data by reading through the two semi-structured interview transcripts several times. I extracted significant statements that were directly related to mansplaining, deriving a total of 71 with a combined duration of approximately 107 minutes. I read each statement repeatedly until I reached a thorough understanding, after which I formulated meanings

and classified statements into different theme clusters. In reviewing those, I identified five emergent themes, which allowed me to construct an exhaustive description and fundamental structure of the mansplaining phenomenon as it occurs in our local context.

A deep inquiry into the participants' personal accounts of mansplaining in their university assisted me in understanding that the phenomenon can happen to any faculty member in any institution regardless of their experience, function, and domain of expertise.

The succeeding sections present the data gathered in order of Colaizzi's (1978) seven steps. It begins with step two, which is the extraction of significant statements from the interviews. Clusters and emergent themes are presented and described in depth. The data analysis ends with the exhaustive description of the phenomenon under study.

### *Extraction of Significant Statements*

To begin the data analysis, significant statements were derived from the interview transcript. Each statement was reviewed carefully to ensure they align with the objectives of the study. A total of 71 significant statements were extracted during the final review and selection. Figure 1 below shows an example of a significant statement extracted from the second transcript (Jane's narrative). Highlighted in yellow are specific portions of the transcript that are considered significant to the study.

**Figure 1**

*Examples of Extracted Significant Statements from the Interview Transcript of Jane*

**Interviewer: So, how has this behavior shaped how you see yourself and your position in the university?**

I think it did affect me a lot, kay feeling nako after adto, diba, because I can't forget about it, and sa kadaghan nahitabo, nahimo siyang core memory sa ako. But it's not a pleasant memory to remember. And then, diba, if you notice—things you just notice when you really face the situation—I kept using the word, chairperson LANG man ko, and then sila man ang BOT. So, it really, I don't know, basin sa ila intentional or not, pero murag na-instill sa ako, ang chair LANG ka, and these are BOTs, or they're people in power, like, no matter how you make your case, no matter how well-crafted your position is, given the power dynamics, you're just there, you're just that. Kanang, especially, sa akong personality, di man ko necessarily very assertive, but also kanang, the experience also told me that there's no point kanang, asserting something nga medyo fixed na pud sila.

So, as I also mentioned, kanang, niabot pud ko sa point ato nga time, nga na-question pud nako akong reality lagi nga kanang, sakto pa ba nga gatudlo pa ko ani? I mean, they're saying, my field is no longer relevant, so unsa pa ma'y tumong ani? So, medyo na-down gyud ko adto, and in fact, kanang, I don't wanna use the word traumatic, pero I would not want to be seated in the same setting again with them, pero if I had a choice, or if I had no choice, gyud, kanang, I don't

Translation of highlighted texts:

(1) *"I think it did affect me a lot in the sense that I can't forget about it. Of all the things that happened to me, that interaction became a core memory. But it's not a pleasant memory to remember."*

(2) *"After that interaction, I questioned my own reality as a teacher. Is it right that I'm still teaching devcom? I mean, they're saying my field is no longer relevant, so what's the point in teaching this?"*

### *Formulation of Meanings*

After the extraction of 71 significant statements from the two transcripts, I applied meaning to the participants' statements. This is what Colaizzi calls the "precarious leap" where the researcher uncovers hidden meanings from the statements while taking into account the contexts of the participants and the intricacies of the phenomenon as

described in the original transcript (Colaizzi, 1978 as cited by Meyers, 2019). This method emphasizes that a researcher must avoid formulating meanings that have no connection with the data (Meyer, 2019). There were a total of 40 meanings formulated during this stage. Figure 2 below shows a set of formulated meanings from significant statements.

**Figure 2**

*Examples of Formulated Meanings Derived from Significant Statements from Tina's Interview Transcript*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Tina | 6. "I wanted to even retract my [directorship appointment]... I started to question… the alignment of [our] values. Dili man ingani dapat ang [leader]. I have my expectations of him and then I thought he understood my work and my responsibilities." | 6. Disappointment after her responsibilities were misunderstood<br>7. She felt her capacity was questioned, leading her to want to step back from her role |
| Tina | 7. "Did I do anything wrong? Ako nang gi-question akong [actions]. Shouldn't I travel? Magpuyo nalang lugar ko ani?" | 8. Participant is questioning her actions, assessing what she did wrong, what her next action should be, and if she will just stay put instead of traveling |
| Tina | 8. "Ako pud… I am very empowered. That's also what I've gained. Di na ko nimo kailangan ignon what I'm supposed to do." | 9. Having a strong sense of belief in her abilities that she doesn't need to be told by her boss what to do |
| Tina | 9. "Basin pud that he found it very… pabida man kaayo ni nga employee uy… Lahi iyang nakita bitaw. Nga gauna-una ko, nga dili ko gapananghid." | 10. Participant looks at herself from her boss' point of view, that her boss might think she likes to take the spotlight and does not ask for permission from leadership |

Translation of Tina's statements:

(1) *Statement 6: "I wanted to even retract my [directorship appointment]... I started to question… the alignment of [our] values. A good leader should not be like this. I have my expectations of him and then I thought he understood my work and my responsibilities."*

(2) *Statement 7: "Did I do anything wrong? I began questioning my own actions. Should I not travel? Should I not make decisions until he [the president] tells me so?"*

(3) *Statement 8: "I am very empowered. That is also what I've gained. You don't need to tell me what I'm supposed to do."*

(4) *Statement 9: "Perhaps he thought I wanted to take the spotlight. Instead of my initiative, what he saw was that I don't ask for his permission; that I always want things my way."*

**Theme Clusters**

The 40 formulated meanings were clustered into 12 different themes. Meanings that carried the same ideas were grouped together to form one theme, with the objectives of the study as the bases for clustering the meanings. These are the 12 theme clusters:

(1) Undervalued Leader

(2) Disrespectful Communication

(3) Expression of Resilience

(4) Introspection and Self-Examination

(5) Insecurity

(6) Distorted Sense of Purpose and Value in the Workplace

(7) An Offensive Act that Limits Participation and Freedom of Expression

(8) A Short-Lived Experience that Can Be Easily Ignored

(9) Done by Men in Higher Positions

(10) Promoting Open and Respectful Communication

(11) Enhancing Effectiveness and Accountability

(12) Social Support

Table 2 below shows how formulated meanings produced from sample significant statements were grouped together under the theme cluster “Undervalued Leader.”

**Table 2**

*Development of Theme Clusters*

| | |
|---|---|
| **Theme Cluster:**<br><br>**Undervalued Leader** | **Significant Statement:** *“Mao man gud akong feeling, nga nakaminus ba. Nga dili maayo iyang pagsabot sa akong work. Didto ko nalain. After all? After sa akong kahago?”*<br><br>(Translation: “I felt that he underestimated my capacity and that he still misunderstood my job after all my hard work. I felt offended by that.”)<br><br>**Formulated Meaning:** Participant felt her boss still devalued her contributions and didn’t appreciate her initiatives despite all her efforts |
| | **Significant Statement:** *“I really felt disrespected… I felt like I was just* [in the meeting] *for formality.”*<br><br>**Formulated Meaning:** Participant felt disrespected and undervalued |

***Emergent Themes***

From the 12 theme clusters, five emergent themes were identified to construct the fundamental structure of the lived experiences of the participants related to mansplaining. These emergent themes are as follows:

(1) Disregard of Women Faculty's Expertise and Opinion

(2) Display of Resilience and Introspection

(3) A Mentally and Emotionally Stressful Experience

(4) A Stifling Act Perpetrated by Persons with Power

(5) Push for Open Communication, Increased Support, and Higher Management Training

By extracting significant statements, formulating meanings from the statements, and developing themes of meanings, I was able to gain a better understanding of the participants' narratives which resulted in a thorough explanation of their experiences related to mansplaining. The next section provides elaborate descriptions of each emergent theme based on Tina's and Jane's narratives.

**Theme 1: Disregard of Women Faculty's Expertise and Opinion**

Participants spoke of their mansplaining experiences and described what happened during their interaction with their mansplainers. From the significant statements, I generated five meanings or codes and two theme clusters that captured how the participants' mansplaining experiences manifested in their workplace. I stayed very close to the data when distinguishing between theme clusters. For example, I applied the code "Undervalued Leader" only to the meanings that clearly convey how the

participants felt that their authority as heads of their offices was disregarded. Table 3 is a thematic map that summarizes these findings.

**Table 3**

*Thematic Map for Emergent Theme 1: Disregard of Women Faculty's Expertise and Opinion*

| Formulated Meanings | Theme Cluster | Emergent Theme |
|---|---|---|
| Recounting of favors | Undervalued leader | Disregard of women faculty's expertise and opinion |
| Being underestimated and undervalued | | |
| Being interrupted during a meeting | Disrespectful communication | |
| Patronizing and condescending talk | | |
| Twisting of the participants' words | | |

### Theme 2: Display of Resilience and Introspection

This theme essentially captures how the women faculty dealt with their experiences and how they responded to their mansplainers. Seven meanings were generated from the data which were grouped into two theme clusters. I coded the statements that clearly reflected the thoughts, mindsets, and behaviors of the participants as they handled the interaction with their mansplainers. It is worth noting that Tina and Jane

responded differently to their experiences—Tina stood up to her mansplainer by countering his offensive statements, while Jane became less participative and censored her opinion after being mansplained to. Both of them probed deeper into their experiences and tried to analyze why the incident happened. Table 4 is a thematic map that sums up these findings.

**Table 4**

*Thematic Map for Theme 2: Display of Resilience and Introspection*

| Formulated Meanings | Theme Cluster | Emergent Theme |
|---|---|---|
| Asserting one's authority and independence | Expression of resilience | Display of resilience and introspection |
| Moving on and forgetting the incident | | |
| Management of expectations of their boss and their work | | |
| Processing the experience and self-reflection | Introspection and self-examination | |
| Analyzing one's behavior from the mansplainer's point of view | | |
| Internally opposing the remark of the mansplainer | | |
| Not labeling their mansplaining experiences | | |

### Theme 3: A Mentally and Emotionally Stressful Experience

The data indicated that the women faculty from a tertiary university in Cagayan de Oro interpreted their mansplaining experiences as having a negative impact on their mental and emotional well-being. A total of 13 meanings were formulated from the data. These meanings were grouped into two theme clusters, namely “Insecurity” and “Distorted Sense of Purpose and Value in the Workplace.” I coded the statements that articulate how participants interpret the impact of mansplaining on their psyche and their roles in the university. Note that this emergent theme does not intend to establish mansplaining as a phenomenon that caused some negative effects on the participants feelings and behavior. Rather, it only seeks to present and describe the thoughts and feelings of the participants during and after the mansplaining act. This is consistent with the form of inquiry of this study and aligns with one of the study’s objectives which is to find out how women faculty make sense of their mansplaining experiences. Table 5 shows the meanings and themes generated under the broader emergent theme.

**Table 5**

*Thematic Map for Theme 3: A Mentally and Emotionally Stressful Experience*

| Formulated Meanings | Theme Cluster | Emergent Theme |
|---|---|---|
| Dismay and disappointment | | |
| Trauma and anxiety | | |
| Resentment toward mansplainers | Insecurity | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Feeling helpless and humiliated | | |
| Insecurity | | |
| Questioning one's reality | | A mentally and emotionally stressful experience |
| Second-guessing one's actions and contributions | | |
| Contrasting view of one's roles and responsibilities with that of their mansplainer | | |
| Questioning one's life work | Distorted sense of purpose and value in the workplace | |
| Thoughts of quitting and underperforming | | |
| Feeling restrained | | |
| Loss of interest | | |
| Cluelessness | | |

**Theme 4: A Stifling Act Perpetrated by Persons with Power**

The two participants interpreted mansplaining as an offensive behavior that assigns lesser importance to the voices of other participants of the discussion and undermines their knowledge and capabilities. Based on their narratives, the participants expressed that forms of mansplaining such as interrupting someone while they are speaking, disregarding their expertise, and questioning their efforts and actions limit a person's full participation in the workplace. Moreover, they believe that mansplaining is likely done by persons in positions of power. I extracted a total of eight meanings under the emergent theme "A Stifling Act Perpetrated by Persons with Power," which I then categorized into

three theme clusters, namely “An Offensive Act That Limits Participation and Expression,” “A Short-Lived Experience That Can Be Easily Ignored,” and “Done by Persons of Higher Positions.” Table 6 presents these findings.

**Table 6**

*Thematic Map for Emergent Theme 4: A Stifling Act Perpetrated by Persons with Power*

| Formulated Meanings | Theme Cluster | Emergent Theme |
|---|---|---|
| An attack against a person’s capabilities | An offensive act that limits participation and expression | A stifling act perpetrated by persons with power |
| An act that makes a person filter their words, ideas, and opinions | | |
| Makes one feel unsafe | | |
| Difficult to recall | A short-lived experience that can be easily ignored | |
| Not as traumatic as sexual harassment | | |
| A fleeting experience one can easily move on from | | |
| Most likely done by men of higher positions (not women) who look down on women of lower positions | Done by persons of higher positions | |
| Influenced by age, status, and power relations, not mainly by gender | | |

### Theme 5: Push for Open Communication, Increased Support, and Higher Management Training

This emergent theme discusses the participants' recommendations to minimize and prevent mansplaining as well as increase participation among women academics. I coded six meanings and categorized them into three theme clusters, namely "Promoting Open and Respectful Communication," "Enhancing Effectiveness and Accountability," and "Social Support." Table 7 presents these findings.

**Table 7**

*Thematic Map for Emergent Theme 5: Push for Open Communication, Increased Support, and Higher Management Training*

| Formulated Meanings | Theme Cluster | Emergent Theme |
|---|---|---|
| Transparent communication | Promoting open and respectful communication | Push for open communication, increased support, and higher management training |
| Respect for polarity of opinions | | |
| Higher management training | Enhancing effectiveness and accountability | |
| Crafting policies that push for freedom of expression | | |
| Recognition and support by higher management | Social support | |
| Peer support | | |

**Exhaustive Description and Fundamental Statement of Structure**

The two women academics from a higher education institution in Cagayan de Oro City expressed their reflections about their personal experiences of being mansplained to by men in an academic institution, how they dealt with these experiences, and what they think should be done to prevent mansplaining in academia. Each participant experienced different forms of mansplaining and were mansplained to by different men (the university president and members of the board of trustees). The commonalities of their experiences are that (1) they were both mansplained to by men of higher positions in the university and (2) their experiences happened online (via email and a video conference). In both cases, the participants were addressed by their mansplainers in a condescending manner with little to no consideration of their expertise and experience regarding the subject under discussion (Coccimmiglio, 2015). These interactions were both professional and transactional in nature, as both women faculty had to engage with their mansplainers to achieve the objectives of a work-related task or project.

Both women faculty came into the interaction expecting a positive and productive exchange of information. They were armed with good intentions and best-laid plans to propose to the male officials they were interacting with, hoping the officials would value their efforts and insights. However, they were surprised to be met with condescending talk as well as written and verbal attacks on their expertise. They were prepared to reason out, defend their position, and assert their plans, but their mansplainers shut them down and remained inflexible about their own perspectives and opinions. This made the mansplainers unable to be persuaded by the participants. In their attempt to

make sense of their experiences, both participants analyzed how their actions and demeanor during the interactions may have triggered the mansplaining from the perspective of their mansplainers. This is evident in Tina's statement about her boss (*"Perhaps he thought I wanted to take the spotlight. Instead of seeing that I had initiative, what he saw was that I don't ask for his permission; that I always want things my way*") and Jane's statement about the board of trustees (*"They saw me as someone who's very fragile and easily offended; or someone who breaks down easily").*

Jane and Tina have since moved past the incidents. However, the participants interpreted their mansplaining experiences as having negative effects on their mental and emotional well being. Being at the receiving end of mansplaining behaviors made them feel dismayed, humiliated, and anxious. They were dismayed at the fact that their capabilities and contributions in their fields were belittled—that their expertise was devalued in the halls of academia, the one place they thought valued and nurtured diversity of knowledge. They felt humiliated in the communication process, considering that the mansplainers who talked over and interrupted them made them feel as if they are not experienced and knowledgeable enough in their own domains. Being mansplained to made the participants anxious as a result of not being allowed to speak their minds freely and after their ideas were not heard on the (online) conversation floor. This also resulted in them not wanting to interact with their mansplainers again or to be put in the same situation with them ever. Their mansplaining experiences have also led them to question their realities, their self-worth, and their place in the university. Being told by men that the participants' field was no longer relevant (despite the men's lack of

expertise in the field in question), and having their actions and decisions questioned made the participants consider quitting their jobs at some point.

While their experiences directly fall under the established definition of mansplaining (i.e., being talked down to, interrupted, and disregarded by men), the participants neither see the behaviors shown to them as an overt attack against them as women faculty nor think that they were unfairly treated primarily because of their gender. For both participants, they believed that they were mansplained to by male officials because they occupied lower positions than them. In other words, what played out in both instances of mansplaining were the power dynamics between an executive and a subordinate, not between a man and a woman. Nonetheless, the participants did not discount the possibility that they were easily mansplained to because they were women.

The participants believed that clear and open communication is an important step in reducing mansplaining occurrences in academia. This can be done by crafting policies that clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of faculty members so as not to overstep boundaries (as failure to recognize boundaries can result in higher management leaders telling off their subordinates, thus increasing the possibility of mansplaining). Another way is to create safe spaces where everyone, regardless of gender and position in the university, has the freedom to speak their minds and where differing opinions are respected. Higher management training is also important to ensure that leaders are equipped with proper communication skills and substantial knowledge of the functions and responsibilities of everyone on their team. Lastly, with

peer support, women can usually bounce back after a mansplaining incident. The participants believed that allies in the form of colleagues and mentors who did not belittle their capabilities and lent emotional support while they were being bullied or disrespected were a huge help in pulling through a mansplaining experience.

# Chapter IV

# Results and Discussion

This chapter describes the data collected from the one-on-one interviews with the participants. This chapter begins with a review of the purpose of the study. It also discusses the findings as they apply to the research questions of the study.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological research study was to explore the narratives of mansplaining of two women academics from Cagayan de Oro City. This study aimed to capture the personal experiences of a woman instructor and a woman professor from the same university wherein they were shut down, interrupted, talked to condescendingly, and disregarded in a conversation by a male figure in the context of performing their academic function and duties. In doing so, this study intended to reveal specific mansplaining behaviors that occur in academic settings, how the women participants dealt with their mansplaining experiences, how they interpret these gender-biased behaviors, and what they think should be done to reduce mansplaining in academia. The findings of this phenomenological study describe the subjective experiences of the women faculty members who participated in separate one-on-one interviews.

I conducted the interviews on May 25, 2023. The recorded interviews were done via Google Meet since I am based in Cebu City whereas the participants are both from Cagayan de Oro City. Each interview ran for 45 to 60 minutes. The participants were asked to recall and narrate their experiences. They were then encouraged to describe how they handled the interactions and share how they perceive the impact of their experiences on their psyches and work performance.

These research questions were answered:

(1) How are mansplaining experiences of women academics from a university in Cagayan de Oro manifested in their work? How do they interpret these experiences?
(2) How did the women academics deal with their mansplainers and what strategies do they recommend to prevent the situation from happening in the future?

**Mansplaining Experiences of Women Academics in their Workplace**

Tina and Jane were mansplained to by men of higher positions in the university, namely the university president and members of the board of trustees (BOTs). The next paragraphs provide detailed accounts of how mansplaining manifested in the participants' professional endeavors in academia.

***Disregard of Women Faculty Members' Expertise and Opinion***

In her interview, Tina—an assistant professor and the director of the international cooperation and networking office of her university—disclosed that she was mansplained to by the university president in the form of recounting favors and questioning her past actions. *"This was a very recent experience. I can't really say that my mansplain experience was an attack on me as a woman. But he did downplay my capabilities—at least that's how I felt—and my expertise,"* Tina said.

Tina wrote an email to the president expressing her intent to go to a conference happening abroad which she thought presented potent opportunities for networking and research collaborations for the university. She also believed the conference would expand her skills and knowledge as an international relations officer. *"So I wrote a letter to express my intent. First, I coursed the letter through the [vice president] as per protocol. I sought their permission because the trip required funds... [The vice president] did not reject it; she has always been supportive. The next step was to forward the letter to the president. So I emailed him and asked if he would grant me the permission to attend the conference. I told him that I thought the conference was a very good opportunity to promote the school and also to broaden my experience as a faculty and international relations officer."* But rather than receiving a positive response from the official, Tina was "floored" to receive a reply which, to her, reeked of condescension and power play. The president did not only decline her request—he questioned her actions and belittled her capabilities. *"I was shocked by his reply. He gave me three [reasons*

*why he was turning down my request]: first, he did not approve of my request because he did not grant me the permission to apply to the conference. I was so shocked. Maybe what I did struck his ego. Second, he said this university in Spain did not request him to send somebody to represent the university at the conference. The third one left me in complete shock. He said, 'You've had several travels already.' I felt he was holding me to account for previous travels."*

Tina highlighted that her boss's statements *"I did not grant you permission to apply to the conference"* and *"you've had several travels already"* felt like an attack on her capacity to make decisions that benefit her office. As someone who is entirely capable of building linkages and partnerships on her own for the university, Tina expressed that she doesn't need to be told by anyone—not even her boss—what to do. So to her, the president's remarks felt like a blow to her independence and ability to act on her own. *"I felt attacked… And I was like, who are you to act this way towards me when I've been around longer than you and have experienced more than you? I'm your international officer. I should be [traveling abroad]. Shouldn't that be common sense?"*

Jane's mansplaining experience also took place online, during a Zoom meeting with some university officials. This happened sometime in the last quarter of 2022. As the chairperson of the Development Communication (Devcom) department, Jane pitched the idea of moving the program out of its current college and changing it into an autonomous unit (i.e., an institute). *"So I presented [the plan] to the two heads of the BOTs... They're both businessmen with no direct experience in (academia). During my*

*presentation, I presented the case about the Department: from the history, to the students. [After that] we proceeded with the question and answer."* When the floor was opened to questions, one of the BOTs asked Jane what devcom is and its difference from mass communication. *"These people didn't really have an in-depth understanding, an idea of what devcom is, so I felt the need to explain."*

Just as she was launching into an explanation of the discipline, she was interrupted by one of the BOTs. *"I was cut off… and* [redacted] *said, 'Oh, there's really no need to go into details about what devcom is because right now, there's really no need [for specialized] communication. Right now, what we need is just communication.' He meant to say devcom is already 'passé'* (outdated)*. And that right now, what's relevant from the business perspective is really just communications. There's no place for devcom anymore,"* Jane narrated. She added that one of the trustees went on to tell her "to cut to the chase"—that there was no need to elaborate her case anymore since the trustees already read her notes and presentation. *"[T]hat time, I was like, you're really telling me that? Well, that's how you see devcom from a business perspective. But me, I've taught and experienced this one. I was mansplained into a topic that's probably… I mean, in terms of age, he's older than me. But I've studied devcom for thirteen years for you to say it's not important, or not relevant anymore."*

As if the remark was not enough to drive home their point, one of the BOTs prattled on about how, instead of teaching an "outdated" discipline as devcom, teachers like Jane should teach students "how to go viral." *"[He said] we need to teach students how*

*to go viral. Because, you know, people are no longer watching television. All they do is go to TikTok or YouTube for information. Although, when I was saying, that's the reason why we need to teach this! And then you tell me, nobody's watching television? I could show you a research that would say 60 percent of Filipinos are still watching TV. And your perspective on communication or devcom is based on a third [person perspective], as a BOT who is relatively living a more privileged life!"* said Jane, who was visibly still irked by the ignorant remarks of her mansplainers. As much as she wanted to correct and refute the claims of the BOTs, Jane, as powerless as she was before the officials, kept mum the entire time. *"I think [the other trustee] clapped his hands after his colleague mansplained to me, which to me meant that he also shared the same sentiment that devcom is not important anymore. The two of them applauded when both of them didn't have any idea what devcom really was."*

Still trying to assert her position, Jane asked the BOTs to allow the department some time to transition into an independent institute. But one of the BOTs was firm on his decision and chided Jane in an apparent disagreement to her proposal. *"[One of them said that] does not sit well with me because in business, the best time to do it was yesterday. The next best time is today. And then I was like, but this is not a business per se! Well, of course, dili ni siya SM (It's different from running a business like a shopping mall). Education is of course business for the [redacted], but we're not completely autonomous because we're regulated by CHED (Commission on Higher Education)."* After being interrupted and dismissed by loud-talking men in what should have been a

productive discussion about her department's future, Jane felt helpless and humiliated. *"It felt like I was put inside the lion's den… and I didn't get any support,"* Jane described.

In retrospect, Tina and Jane believed that their respective experiences counted as mansplaining because in these interactions they were talked down to by men who behaved as if they knew better than these two women. As experts in their field, Tina and Jane also felt their credibility was undervalued. Being told by her boss that she had to consult and seek permission from him first (despite being the head of her office for three years now) before making decisions, Tina felt that the president didn't trust her initiative, which made her feel less of a leader of her office. For Jane, being cut off just as she was about to explain the definition, history, and relevance of development communication made her feel that her opinion was invalid. She wondered if she was only there in the meeting for formality's sake, not because her expertise and knowledge as an instructor, researcher, and communications professional factored greatly into whatever decision that the board of trustees was going to make after the said meeting.

**Women Faculty Members' Interpretations of their Mansplaining Experiences**

As they recounted their experiences, Tina and Jane sifted through their understanding of mansplaining and its relationship to gender discrimination. They reflected on how their experiences impacted their mental and emotional well-being, and they described the career implications of being devalued in communication.

### *A Mentally and Emotionally Stressful Experience*

All the while, Tina thought that she and her boss, the president, had a shared understanding of her mandate as the university's international relations officer. Since she was installed as the director of her office five years ago, she was under the impression that the president thoroughly understood that part of Tina's main responsibilities is to travel extensively abroad; the president seemed to have given Tina full independence as director to pursue initiatives that would be beneficial for the university. All these expectations were shattered when Tina was mansplained to by the president. *"This is a behavior unbecoming of a leader. I had my expectations of him (as a president) and then I thought he understood my work and my responsibilities. (After this incident, I realized) that we see things differently—how this office should be managed and how I should conduct myself as the international relations officer,"* she said. This incident led Tina to think that her actions would be restrained, since her boss implied that she must consult him first before making decisions to travel. *"This is really not a good leader for me and I'm kind of scared kay basin mautro nasad, madugangan kay lahi siya og panan-aw [I'm kind of scared that this incident might happen again in the future knowing that he sees my work and responsibilities differently]."* Tina emphasized that this did not bode well for her because she was used to functioning on her own without anyone telling her what to do and how to do her job. *"Mananghid diay ko pirmi sa imo? [So I need to constantly seek your permission?] I am very empowered… You don't need to tell me what I'm supposed to do. When someone*

*questions my work, (I also end up questioning myself)... Unsa diay akong nabuhat nga daotan [What did I do wrong]?"*

Drawing insight from her own experience, Jane described mansplaining as an action that reduces (or completely takes away) the other's capacity to contribute to the discussion and express their ideas. Jane viewed mansplaining as a threatening behavior that makes people feel unsafe and uncomfortable—emotions that exactly mirrored how she felt when the board of trustees shut her down during her virtual presentation and she was forced to censor her informed ideas to avoid offending them. *"Safe space isn't just a physical space where you're not physically threatened, attacked, or harmed. It's also a space where you're able to freely speak your mind and have free access to information. A space becomes unsafe for me if I'm put in the same (mansplaining) scenario like I've experienced,"* Jane said, emphasizing that mansplaining limits freedom of expression because it forces a person to calculate their words and frame their perspective in a way that adheres to what the person in authority wants to hear.

Both participants confirmed that being shut down, interrupted, talked to condescendingly, and devalued in terms of expertise made them feel insecure in various ways. Feeling as though they didn't belong and feeling undervalued are two of what Geddes (2023) enumerates as the effects of mansplaining. Pondering on how she felt when she received her boss' email stating that he will not approve her international travel and that she "already traveled a lot," Tina said, *"I felt attacked… I was really very*

*pissed because I didn't expect that reply from him… I thought I had an ally in him."* Furthermore, it made Tina question what she did wrong and how she would make decisions in the future considering that the highest executive in the university doesn't support her vision. *"Wala'y daotan sa akong gi-request sa iya [There's nothing wrong with my request]. It's actually a win-win deal—I'll be able to represent the university at the international conference, plus it's an opportunity for me to expand my knowledge as the (international relations) officer. And it will help me improve my work performance because I'll acquire new skills from that seminar. But he thought otherwise,"* lamented Tina. In her three years as the university's director of international relations, she said it was the first time somebody questioned her actions and devalued her sincere efforts. Tina described her mansplaining experience as "traumatizing," emphasizing that the words of her boss totally hurt her feelings. *"[N]a-traumatize ko kay ma-remember nako iyang mga gipangstorya. Unya ana ko, 'Lord di ko gusto nga ingani' kay lain baya na nga feeling [I felt traumatized because I still remember what he said in the email. I prayed to the Lord and I said, 'Lord, I don't want to feel this way' because it's so unpleasant]."* For Jane, being mansplained to by the board of trustees became a "core memory," not because it was a valuable memory worth remembering but because it was an unpleasant time where she felt humiliated, hopeless, and small. *"It haunted me in a way that if I ever see them again, I will still tremble or get nervous. I don't want to use the word traumatic, but I would not want to be seated in the same setting with them ever again."* Since that incident, Jane added that she has become "aloof," or "detached" from the prospect of pitching her ideas to a group of people who were already convinced that they did not want to listen to what she had to say, which defeated the purpose of

discussion. *"[W]hen you want to pitch an idea, and obviously the other party is no longer listening to what you want to convey, ma-detach na pud ka [you'll get detached from the discussion]; you just plug off, nga wala na ma'y point, nga mag-discuss ko [there's no point for me to discuss anymore]."* She emphasized that it did not help that the other people present in the meeting (including the dean and the vice president for higher education) asked her if she was okay, since it only validated her feeling that the board of trustees indeed teamed up to extinguish her. *"I've always thought [this university], or academia in general, has provided me a safe space as a woman until we were doing this [study],"* she said.

The women academics disclosed that their mansplaining experiences made them question their realities and career decisions, as well as the significance of their work in the university. For example, the president's disapproval of her international travels and admonishment for "going over his head" made Tina feel insignificant and unsupported. *"Maka-question gyud ka sa imong life work… What am I doing here? Nag-existential crisis nako. Why am I still here? [It makes you question your life work... I went into an existential crisis. I asked myself, why am I still here?]."* At one point, Tina entertained the idea of slacking off at her job, which she quickly decided was not a good idea as she did not want her office to suffer. *"It didn't seem fair to just slack off and stop caring about my performance because that's not who I am. I have a trademark, a legacy somehow, of the kind of work that I do—I'm very passionate about everything that I do."* She even thought of retracting her reappointment as director (which was issued a week before the mansplaining incident) to work elsewhere. Moving to an office where she would be

appreciated for her efforts and given full autonomy sounded like a great career reset for this independent, strong-willed woman academic. As for Jane, after being told that development communication was already "passé," a practice that was losing relevance in a new media-driven world, she also started questioning if it was still right for her to be teaching the craft. *"Sakto pa ba nga gatudlo ko ani [Should I still be teaching devcom]? They're saying my field is irrelevant. So what's the point of teaching this anyway?"* she ruminated.

These narratives show that women who are mansplained to can also experience being gaslit in the same interaction. After their interactions with the male university officials, the participants were left to question their self-worth, capabilities, and their lived realities. Jane described this effect as being gaslit, saying, *"Mura ko'g na-gaslight sa akong reality as a devcom [I felt like I was gaslit about my reality as a development communication practitioner]. [P]wede gyud diay na mahitabo nga ma-twist imong words, ma-gaslight ka, especially if you're dealing with somebody nga dili mo pareha og power dynamics [I realized it's possible for someone, especially by a person who holds a higher power than you, to twist your words and gaslight you].*" By definition, gaslighting is an act of manipulating others to doubt themselves or question their own perceptions (Johnson et al., 2021). Gaslighting is embedded in a system of social inequality, often manifesting in power-laden relationships (in this case, between the male university officials and the women office heads). In enacting their power, privileged individuals, whether unconsciously or deliberately, may use gaslighting to gain or maintain power as well as uphold power structures (Johnson et al., 2021). Tina and Jane's experiences of

being gaslit augment Johnson et al's (2021) argument that in instances of mansplaining, an individual with power or privilege negates the perspective, reality, and lived experiences of a marginalized group (i.e., women). In asserting that his opinion is more important, valid, and logical, a man suppresses the right of a woman to speak for herself. The man can also use his privileged voice to silence or drown out the perspective of the woman (Johnson et al., 2021). It is important to note that while gaslighting is not necessarily a gendered phenomenon, it is statistically experienced more by women and perpetrated more by men (Stroud, 2022).

Both participants reported feeling restrained in their workplace after their mansplaining experiences. For Tina, this was because she felt she had to constantly rely on the university president's permission before having to make any decisions. *"My actions will be limited because I'll always have to seek his approval before I decide to do things, which is not good for me. That's childish—micromanaging, even. [You should] allow your officers to take the lead and let them do their work. They're adults; they know what to do,"* said Tina. For Jane, having to filter her ideas and language so as not to offend those who disagreed with her suppressed her freedom of expression. She said: *"It suppresses people's ability to speak their minds and really meet the purpose of an academic institution being an academic institution."* During the mansplaining incident, Jane highlighted that being shut down immediately led her to lose interest in the discussion, making her participate less and censor her ideas during the meeting. Jane added that she *"didn't know how to act or behave"* around the board of trustees if she ever had to present her ideas to them again. This cluelessness stemmed from not

knowing how to assert her knowledge before men of higher positions and how to navigate the interaction if she was met with the same rude behavior.

Based on the above accounts, I argue that mansplaining demotivates women and reduces their effectiveness in the workplace. Tina had just been reappointed as director of international relations when her mansplaining experience took place. After feeling that her boss devalued her expertise and contributions, she began having thoughts of underperforming and retracting her reappointment to work at some other place where her efforts would be appreciated. Jane also considered stepping back from teaching after her mansplainers said her field was irrelevant. These thoughts confirm Asare's (2019) claims about the negative impact of mansplaining on women's careers. In her article, Asare (2019) states that mansplaining makes women feel unappreciated and incompetent. These feelings can result in loss of productivity and a reduced sense of belonging, which eventually leads to them quitting their jobs.

### *A Stifling Act Perpetrated by Persons with Power*

Part of the goal of understanding how women faculty interpret their mansplaining experiences in academia is to determine whether or not the participants of this study believe they were mansplained to because they were women. Tina and Jane did not associate gender with their experiences. Rather, they identified power play as the main factor behind it. Asked if she would label the mansplaining act she experienced as blatant discrimination against her as a woman, Tina said she doesn't think it has

anything to do with her gender but mainly her boss undermining her capabilities. "*Dili nako siya ma-contextualize nga iya kong gi-mansplain because I am a woman [I wouldn't say the president mansplained to me because I was a woman], but he did downplay my capabilities—at least that's how I felt—my expertise, my work,"* she said.

Tina thought her boss must have felt offended that she did not inform him of her plans to apply to a conference in Spain, and that mansplaining to her must have been his way of demonstrating power and putting her in her place. She said, *"Based on my observations, dapat siya ang una. Dili siya pangunahan kay ma-feel bad siya kung pangunahan nimo siya [He must be consulted first because he will feel bad if you go behind his back when making decisions]."* The same can be said about Jane's experience. Rather than gender, Jane believed that what was at play in that interaction was the power difference between her and the board of trustees—as a department chairperson, she was a subordinate. For her, it seemed easy to be interrupted and talked over because she held a lower position and authority compared to the two men whose authority influenced decision making in the university. *"At the time, I didn't really think of it as something to do with gender... But (maybe they were being) condescending because first, I was younger than them. Second, because they are in authority. I mean, they're the BOT. I am just a chairperson. Gender is last on the list."* But while she didn't see gender as the main catalyst of mansplaining behaviors, Jane surmised that the board of trustees might have spoken differently had they been talking to a man. *"I think they could still be condescending (if they were addressing a younger*

*man). But maybe there's—I don't know, I don't want to use the term 'sense of respect.' But the approach might have been different."*

Jane added that the interaction changed her perception of the weaponization of power by authoritative men in the university. According to her, men of higher positions can very well look down on women who hold lower positions but possess substantial knowledge on a topic or concentration; men are more likely to brandish their power and authority to silence others and impose conformity, whether or not the views and ideas they espouse are factual or beneficial to others. *"If ever I encounter a man who holds a higher position than me, I'd now feel conscious that maybe he would look down on me. I would not necessarily feel that way towards [women of higher positions]. But because of that experience, I now have a lingering feeling of insecurity when interacting with men in authority."* Because of this incident, Jane realized that in such a communication setting, no matter the validity of her case and the intricacy of her position, her opinion would not hold much weight against that of the board of trustees because she was just a department chairperson. *"[N]a-instill sa ako, ang chair LANG ka [It instilled in me that I'm just a chairperson], and these are BOTs, or they're people in power, like, no matter how you make your case, no matter how well-crafted your position is, given the power dynamics, you're just there, you're just that."*

One participant had ambivalent answers regarding the nature of mansplaining experiences and the ease of recalling them. *"It's not as traumatic as sexual harassment that it will leave a lasting impact on you. Mansplaining can make you feel bad, but it's a*

*fleeting moment you can easily move on from,"* Jane explained. While her experience stuck with her because she remembered how deeply humiliated, helpless, and belittled she felt at the time, she also said it was difficult to single out mansplaining experiences. *"It's so hard to call to mind whether or not I have ever experienced being mansplained. Experiences like this come from very mundane situations that you just shrug off."* She highlighted that what helped her identify her mansplain experiences was when I provided her with the definition of mansplaining and engaged her in a conversation about it. The recency of the incident also helped her recall her experience. *"I would not label (experiences like these) right away as mansplaining. I would label it according to how I felt that time. I felt bad, I felt offended, and later on, as you dig deeper, ayha na dayon nimo maingon nga ay, oo, na-mansplain diay ko… [You'll only realize you were mansplained after the interaction has passed]... It's really more feelings-based. It starts with a feeling."*

**Dealing with Mansplaining Experiences and Strategies to Reduce Mansplaining in Academia**

The two women academics from a Cagayan de Oro university narrated how they responded to being mansplained to and how they moved past the incident. They also shared some ways to minimize the occurrence of the offensive behavior and to promote respectful communication in academia.

### *Display of Resilience and Introspection*

Tina described that she felt "attacked" by the president's response, which left her feeling crushed. But despite feeling bad for herself, Tina managed to regain composure and take a moment before writing back to her boss. *"I felt attacked. Wala ko deretso nagreply kay I had to gather my thoughts kay I don't want to sound… kay ako baya siyang boss [I did not reply immediately because I had to gather my thoughts. I did not want to sound disrespectful. After all, he's my boss]. I thought I needed to take a day off from this and strategize my counterattack. He must get a piece of my mind, too. It cannot just be one-sided. I think I owe it to myself (to stand up to him),"* Tina said, emphasizing that it was not fair for the president to point out that she had been traveling extensively in the past since she was merely doing her job. Defending herself, Tina wrote a counterresponse to her boss's email. She crafted a "clapback" for every one of the three reasons her boss was turning down her travel proposal. She also emphasized that all her travels in the past bore fruit, including a research collaboration with a Denmark university. *"Akong giingon sa iya nga wala ko naglaag-laag. Naa man ko'y intention ato gyud. Nagtrabaho ko* while I was there *[I told him I wasn't traveling for fun—I was working the entire time I was abroad]... I hope he took to heart everything I said… Because I will really fight back if I know I'm in the right,"* said a bold and assertive Tina. *"I was really very, very pissed. I didn't expect that reply from him. I really felt he downplayed my capacity… I've done a lot of things, you know, for this office, for this university. The least you could have done is, I don't know, maybe thank me for the effort."*

Tina also thought she might have misinterpreted what her boss meant with his reply given that they were communicating through email, and that in mediated communication meanings can get lost in translation. However, since there was not enough time to make clarifications, she took the president's words at face value and replied to him according to how she understood the email message. *"So I replied to him. I apologized because I really felt he was offended when I did not seek his permission. But my point was, should I constantly ask for your permission? As far as I know, there is no rule that I should always do so… You don't need to tell me what to do."* She said she has since moved on from the incident. Trying not to recall what happened has helped her get by and continue serving the university in good faith. *"I just try not to wallow in what happened. For now, I'm okay. I hope things will improve somehow,"* said Tina. To protect herself from further disappointment, Tina said she had to manage her expectations of her boss's manner of communication and perception of Tina's roles and responsibilities. She also minded how she conducted activities in her office moving forward.

Jane's experience presents a case of mansplaining that involved rough-talking men preying on a defenseless woman during an online meeting. She was interrupted by the board of trustees in the middle of presenting her proposal to transform the Devcom department from being a unit into being an independent institution. Jane tried to assert her position, asking if the trustees could allow the Devcom department some time to gradually transition into an institute. However, the BOTs chided her, maintaining that delaying important decisions such as creating, dissolving, or transferring a degree

program is bad for business. Sensing that they might have slighted her, the BOTs told Jane, in a patronizing tone, not to feel scared as it is only normal for the trustees to speak in a brash manner with each other. *"They said, 'Don't mind us if we talk this way. Sometimes, in the BOT meeting, we shout at each other.' But you don't expect me to shout at you because there's a power dynamic. I'm a mere department chair,"* said Jane. She recalled that at that point, she was paling and slouching out of humiliation. A senior professor advised Jane to put her foot down when taking up crucial matters such as this with the trustees, considering that they did not possess the knowledge and acumen to make decisions that preserve the interest of the program, its faculty, and its students. But Jane maintained that it was difficult to assert her voice when there was a wide disparity in power between her and the trustees that put her at a disadvantage and forced her to censor her ideas. *"No matter how much I want to say (your opinion is stupid), I will always be put in my place. (It's really an issue of) power dynamics and not necessarily gender,"* said Jane. She added that perhaps the BOTs would be less likely to talk down to a senior professor who was about their age because they would look at them as an equal, with commensurate power. After being mansplained to, Jane was relegated to the role of an audience, staying silent throughout the remainder of the meeting and censoring her opinion. *"I lost interest in talking about the topic because I was already focused on not feeling good… It's so hard to think about asserting yourself or asserting what you know when somebody as emotional as me is already processing the fact that, oh my god, gitabangan ko [I was dogpiled by the BOTs]."*

Johnson et al (2021) states that targets of microaggressive behaviors like mansplaining either sit and reflect on what happened or confront the person. Both participants did the former as they looked back on their experiences during the interview. They analyzed their own attitudes and behaviors during the interaction, recalled their past actions in their workplace, and assessed their social settings. Reflecting on her own behavior, Tina thought that she might have come off as *pabida* (a person who wants to be the center of attention in a showy or boastful way) to her boss or that her boss thought she was disregarding his authority. *"Maybe he saw me as a 'pabida' employee, something like that. But isn't that (looking for networking and learning opportunities for herself) a good thing? But he didn't see it that way. He interpreted it as 'pabida'; that I want attention, that I go behind his back, and that I don't seek his permission."* For Jane, she thought it was her appearance of being meek and fragile during her presentation that might have given the board of trustees the impression that she lacked knowledge and expertise. She also applied reflection and recollection in conducting an "autopsy" of her experience. Probing into her mansplaining experience, Jane said the interaction stuck with her because she felt humiliated and disrespected, not because a pair of men mansplained to her. *"It's really more feelings-based. We don't necessarily label a situation straight away using [neologisms] like mansplaining, but we focus more on our feelings. When you start to scrutinize it, that's when you think, okay, it was mansplaining,"* Jane explained.

***Push for Open Communication, Increased Support, and Higher Management Training***

Clear and open communication is instrumental in preventing offensive communication behaviors like mansplaining from occurring in the future. For Tina, this can be in the form of a policy that clearly states what employees are allowed or not allowed to do with respect to their roles and functions. Along with the lack of expectation setting, she said that the lack of clear policies around permissions and approvals leads to situations such as being reprimanded for overstepping a boundary she did not know existed. *"That's what's frustrating here. You only find out you did something wrong when a conflict or issue arises because there are no documented policies. It's only just best and worst practices. The policies would be very good so it is clear for staff like me that this is the only thing I can do and there are guidelines that tell me what I should not do."* Tina said that higher management training is necessary before someone is deployed to lead. She believed that her boss did not have previous experience with higher management and that this incident only revealed her boss's lack of experience in this department. *"In a way, I'm sad for him. He could have used his position in a better way to empower his staff and subordinates,"* said Tina. She also highlighted that the unwavering support of her friends and colleagues who believed in her capacity helped her move past the incident. Her strong support system reminded her of the good work and reputation she had built over the years. *"Some of my friends also told me, no, that's just one person telling you (what to do), how you (should) work. It shouldn't change the kind of work that I do, which is actually correct. Thankfully (my colleagues would say*

*don't mind him), the rest of us are rooting for you. We believe in what you do."* Tina narrated that her supportive friends and colleagues urged her to continue serving her office to the best of her ability, owing her efforts to herself and not to anybody else.

On the other hand, Jane believed that their university was already making significant strides in amplifying inclusivity within its walls. However, her mansplaining experience showed that the university still had more work to do as far as promoting freedom of expression and respect for diversity of opinions go. *"I've always thought (this university), or academia in general, has provided me a safe space as a woman until we were doing this (study)... It's a case-to-case basis though."* She emphasized the crafting of policies that create "safe spaces" (both offline and online) where officials, employees, and students can freely express and exchange ideas regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, and position. She said an institution can also be a safe space when people have access to information. *"There are so many ways an institution can become a safe space because it's supposed to be a place where knowledge is being nurtured. But if it's a place where power dynamics dictate who should speak their minds, then it only suppresses people's ability to speak and really meet the purpose of an academic institution being an academic institution."*

The next chapter discusses these findings vis-à-vis the literature review and how they expand understanding of the mansplaining phenomenon in the academic context. Chapter Five also discusses the conclusions and the implications that these findings have for academia. Additionally, recommendations for promoting gender inclusivity and

directions for gender and communication researchers are also covered.

# Chapter V

# Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

## Summary

Coined in 2008, “mansplain” is a portmanteau of the words “man” and “explain” which describes an intrusive communicative practice where a person cuts off, shuts down, and devalues the knowledge and opinion of the other person in the conversation. It also involves talking to someone in a patronizing or condescending manner. While anyone (regardless of gender) is capable of mansplaining at any point in a conversation and in any given context, it is believed to be commonly perpetrated by men against women—a behavior that stems from a man’s belief that the woman participant in the conversation is less informed, less intelligent, or less experienced than him (Vick, 2013). As a matter of fact, the conception of this syllogism resulted from the shared frustration of women who—after having been in numerous interactions with overconfident men—feel that their ideas, knowledge, abilities, and voices are disregarded when they are interrupted and talked down to by men (Bridges, 2017). In a social reality further complicated by cultural and institutional sexism, women who feel that they are viewed as less knowledgeable and less capable of understanding than men (Bridges, 2017) created the word “mansplain” as a way to articulate, expose, and problematize this conduct that is so common and embedded in everyday interactions that it is often

overlooked and dismissed. Interrupting, overlapping, and eclipsing the voice of the other person in the conversation hinders their full participation and takes away their speaking right, thereby disrupting the ongoing process of the interaction (Cannon et al., 2019) and preventing a productive and meaningful exchange of ideas. When left unaddressed, mansplaining can result in the breakdown of communication. It prevents the speakers from conveying their messages successfully, hinders mutual understanding, and keeps the speakers from achieving the goal of the communication process.

Limited research on the mansplaining phenomenon is focused on how epistemic rights is mobilized to create accusations of mansplaining in close personal relationships (Joyce et al., 2020) and how the term is used in online discourses around gender politics and gender relations (Lutzky and Lawson, 2019). However, these studies are founded on American culture. Little is known about how the behavior unfolds in professional settings and how women interpret their experiences as targets of this rude behavior. Moreover, studies that explore mansplaining from a communication perspective and that capture the subjective experiences of mansplaining of women academics anywhere in the Philippines were nonexistent. This communication study aimed to bridge this gap in literature, propelled by Kidd's (2017) argument that this gendered communication is most prevalent in the education sector. To shed light on how mansplaining occurs in the Filipino academic context, this study focused on the personal experiences of women faculty members from a higher education institution in Cagayan de Oro City. The experiences and narratives extracted in this study offer academia highly contextualized knowledge on how gender biases and discrimination

are engendered by the use of speech, language, mediated communication, and power dynamics between a man and a woman. This study examined the phenomenon from the thoughts, feelings, personal history, and viewpoints of the women participants, grounding their narratives in the social contexts of their academic environment. It offers academics, policymakers, and gender and communication researchers fresh insights into this communicative behavior and recommends ways to promote inclusivity and respectful communication in the halls of academia.

This research study specifically focused on answering these questions:

(1) How are mansplaining experiences of women academics from a university in Cagayan de Oro manifested in their work? How do they interpret these experiences?
(2) How did the women academics deal with their mansplainers and what strategies do they recommend to prevent the situation from happening in the future?

Descriptive phenomenology was the tradition of inquiry used to dig deep into the mansplaining experiences of two women academics in Cagayan de Oro City. I handpicked the participants because of their awareness of mansplaining and because they outrightly labeled their experiences as mansplaining using common descriptors of mansplaining behaviors (a man silencing and interrupting a woman during a meeting or conversation; casting aside a woman's opinion; or disregarding a woman's abilities, ideas, and voices). The participants of the study were Tina and Jane (real names

withheld for anonymity), an assistant professor and instructor respectively. Besides their teaching responsibilities, both participants hold leadership positions in their respective offices.

The study used the interview schedule for the research instrument to determine the nature of the participants' mansplaining experiences as well as their perceptions and interpretations of the behavior. The interviews took place on May 25 via Google Meet. In analyzing the transcripts, I used Colaizzi's (1978) method of analysis. I extracted the significant statements and assigned meanings to each of them based on the research questions. The analysis revealed a total of 71 statements and 12 theme clusters. The themes were further grouped into five emergent themes that captured the meanings of the participants' narratives (Disregard of Women Faculty's Expertise and Opinion; Display of Resilience and Introspection; A Mentally and Emotionally Stressful Experience; A Stifling Act Perpetrated by Persons with Power; and Push for Open Communication, Increased Support, and Higher Management Training).

Results of the study provided a glimpse of how women academics can experience mansplaining in the academic setting. Both participants were mansplained to by men who hold positions of authority in the university (the university president and the board of trustees) but do not possess equal or higher knowledge, skills, and experience in either the area of discipline of the women participants or the topic under discussion. The women faculty were mansplained to online: one of them through email and the other during a video conference. The participants narrated that they felt their knowledge,

experience, and decision making abilities were undervalued by men who thought they knew better than them, which made their experiences fall under mansplaining. In a situation where overconfident men wielded the power afforded by their positions to preserve their own interests, these interactions made the participants feel powerless in asserting themselves. Even when knowledge and expertise gained from years of experience in their respective fields demonstrated that they knew better and must therefore be trusted to make reliable decisions, academia still seemed to favor the voice of those in authority.

Based on the participants' testimonies, I argue that in making decisions in academia, positional authority trumps expertise authority. This finding supports Tirrell's (2018) argument that institutional affiliation and rank amplify one's authority regardless of expertise. In both cases, Tina and Jane lobbied for the approval of initiatives that they believed could expand their skills and benefit the students, teachers, and the university as a whole. Both women academics applied their experiential knowledge in crafting their plans and positions to influence the decisions of the university officials. Still, the mansplainers—men who hold powerful positions in the university—failed to see sense in the women academics' plans and, using the power afforded to them by their high positions, turned down the women academics' proposals. This action may or may not be influenced by the gender of the person making the proposal. A disquieting effect of this communication behavior is that the women academics felt their expertise being consistently disregarded as the university formed crucial decisions that directly affected them. Tirrell (2018) states that disregarded expertise authority prevents women from

contributing to projects they care about. This keeps women from pursuing opportunities that further develop their agency, autonomy, and creative effectiveness, which may lead to stunted growth. Mansplaining can also lead to productivity loss and make women feel a decreased sense of belonging (Asare, 2019). In the interviews, both Tina and Jane echoed similar sentiments which led to thoughts of giving up their positions and leaving the university.

I also noted that when mansplaining, men tend to evaluate women's expertise as less substantial. A man's mental state when mansplaining to a woman is likely that he takes a woman's capabilities as less valuable than his. Therefore, he imagines himself to be in a superior position to offer an explanation or an assumption (Johnson, 2020). This was apparent in Tina's case when her boss told her that she traveled a lot (something that should come naturally with Tina's job title), thus declining her proposal to attend the conference overseas. Had he had a clear grasp of Tina's roles and responsibilities, he would not have uttered such a remark in his email to her. Jane's mansplainer demonstrated this when he cut off Jane during her presentation (and telling her to *"cut to the chase, there's no need to go into details"*), dismissed her position by telling her that development communication is irrelevant, and told her that today's communication teachers must teach students how to *"go viral"* in the era of social media.

Besides feeling undervalued, being mansplained to made the participants question their self-worth, capabilities, and realities. Jane described this effect as being gaslit.

Gaslighting is an act of manipulating others to doubt themselves or question their own perceptions, often manifesting in power-laden relationships (Johnson et al., 2021). This study exposed how a person who has power or privilege consciously or subconsciously resorts to gaslighting to assert their authority and control the action of the other person in the communication process. Findings included Tina's experience wherein she started questioning her values, self-worth, priorities, past actions, and place in the university after being told that she traveled a lot. Gaslighting was also apparent in Jane's experience in that she began doubting the relevance of development communication and her experience as a development communication teacher. Gaslighting is not necessarily a gendered action, although statistics show that it is commonly perpetrated by men against women (Stroud, 2022).

Another salient finding of this study is the response of targets of mansplaining. I found out that individuals at the receiving end of mansplaining actions either ruminate on the interaction or confront the mansplainer. Tina and Jane responded differently to their experiences. Tina replied to her boss's email, asserting that she did not travel for leisure and that her previous trips abroad brought home research collaborations for the university. On the other hand, after being interrupted and shut down by the board of trustees during her presentation, Jane felt powerless, censored her views and opinions, and retreated to silence throughout the remainder of the meeting. It was only after a few months had elapsed that Jane was able to process her experience and label it a mansplaining incident. Both responses confirm what Johnson et al (2021) states about how targets of forms of microaggression such as mansplaining shoulder the impact of

the behavior. After overcoming such an incident, targets either sit and reflect on what happened or confront the person. Both Tina and Jane underwent retrospection as they made sense of their experiences. During the interviews, they dissected their own attitudes and behaviors during the interaction and considered their past actions in their workplaces to try to understand the actions and behaviors of their mansplainers.

In both mansplaining narratives, I observed that there was a mismatch between the speakers' intent for their utterance and the reaction of the receivers to the utterance. This applies to both the women faculty and their mansplainers. The women faculty proposed their initiatives to the university officials expecting to be seen, heard, and appreciated, seeing as they sought to advance the welfare of the university. However, the officials reacted differently to the information they received. According to Johnson (2020), this gap between the speakers' intent for their message and the audience's response to the message is influenced by differing perceptions, habits, and attitudes among the participants of a conversation. The gap is widened further by a person's gender, social position, and procedures for asserting knowledge and information that participants adhere to in a given context. I argue that there was an interplay of all these factors in the participants' mansplaining experiences, an observation that also supports the claim forwarded by the speech act theory of J.L. Austin and J.R. Searle.

In conclusion, results of this phenomenological study reveal that mansplaining in academia can be committed by men in positions of authority against women academics occupying lower positions. Interrupting, using condescending language, and

undermining their knowledge and expertise in task- or project-related communications make women academics feel excluded, disrespected, and undervalued in the workplace. These behaviors limit women's participation and lead them to question their competencies and realities, contemplate leaving their jobs, and develop an aversion to their mansplainers. Participants of this study indicated that policies that clearly outline their roles and responsibilities as well as freedom to speak their minds and assert their knowledge and expertise—no matter how unpopular, contrarian, or disagreeable to the ears of men—are some viable ways to prevent mansplaining in academia. Being surrounded by supportive mentors and colleagues who believe in their capabilities and strengths encourages women in academia to continue to deliver a stellar performance in the face of inequality.

**Implications for Academia and Gender and Communication Researchers**

The findings of this study present new knowledge and insights into the phenomenon of mansplaining in academic contexts and from the perspectives of women academics. It shed light on specific mansplaining behaviors that offend and alienate women, the women's reactions and ruminations, and the psychosocial effects of these behaviors. Many women experience mansplaining in subtle or crude ways, in different settings and in everyday situations, and it is most pervasive in the higher education sector (Kidd, 2017). Faculty, students, administrators, and staff can use the findings of this study to get a firmer understanding of how mansplaining occurs and how it can be minimized or prevented. The experiences of the participants of this study can give higher education institutions a baseline knowledge of mansplaining (including its impact) and incorporate

it into policies that promote open communication, freedom of expression, and respect for the diversity of opinion among all academics regardless of gender and position. Furthermore, the results of this study will inform school administrators on how to make their decision-making processes more inclusive, and how to be more receptive to the voices and perspectives of faculty and staff who have substantial knowledge of pertinent matters.

As of writing, I infer that the term “mansplaining" is not yet widely known to Filipinos. However, a lack of awareness does not mean that mansplaining does not exist. In fact, the phenomenon is sufficiently widespread to have a name and be instantly recognizable to most women (Johnson, 2020). And as narrated by one of the participants of this study, recognizing instances of mansplaining requires more than memorizing the definition of the phenomenon. To conjure experiences where they were interrupted, shut down, talked over, and talked to condescendingly by men on various personal and professional interactions, it is necessary to bring to light more of these personal accounts and give vivid descriptions of these experiences. The descriptions fleshed out in this study serve that purpose. I hope that through this scholarly inquiry, women who have been frequently exposed to mansplaining and other gender-biased behaviors will find sympathy in the participants featured in this study, and that, as a result, they will be emboldened to take action by asserting their voices and creating policies that push for their increased participation. To the men who will read this study, it is my hope that they will become cognizant of the power and privilege they hold, and that they will use these to build and uplift others, especially women. This study does not

intend to condemn or castigate men (specifically men who are in positions of authority in higher education) who mansplain or have mansplained to women in the past. Rather, this study calls on men to use their voices and influence to include in knowledge building and decision making those who are marginalized—to become aware of the role that speech and language play in perpetuating gender inequality in academic circles.

**Recommendations**

The results of this study recommend directions for future research and the crafting of university policies. Future research could focus on expanding the sample size and examining the phenomenon in other contexts to represent the experiences of more women, which in turn may also present opportunities for exploring other forms of mansplaining behavior.

The neologism “mansplaining” emerged from the historical tendency of men, as supported by empirical evidence, to dominate over women in conversations and disregard their knowledge and opinion. Preliminary understanding of this communicative behavior mostly highlights the power dynamic in traditional gender roles. Additionally, existing literature on mansplaining does not account for the complexity of individual experiences, identities, and power dynamics that go beyond traditional notions of sex and gender. To enhance understanding of the behavior outside the male-female binary and promote respectful communication for everyone, future research may delve into the mansplaining experiences of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender men and women,

and other individuals in the LGBTQIA+ spectrum. The inquiry need not confine the investigation solely to professional settings but consider many other contexts such as daily conversations within close personal relationships where condescending and dismissive behaviors are also likely to occur.

Another possible direction is to investigate the mansplaining experiences of women tertiary students in the male-dominated fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and Arts and Humanities where mansplaining is believed to be pervasive, according to a survey by Uddin (2021). While the short survey was done in an American university, this data can serve as a jumpoff point for Filipino researchers to gauge whether or not the same experience is common among Filipino STEM and Arts and Humanities students. Dissecting and analyzing the discourse elements—namely, the context of utterance, relationship of the message sender and receiver, mode of discourse, conversational behavior, turn-taking conventions, speech act performance, and conversational norms—that surround specific mansplain acts can also be a possible research agenda. All these directions for research can help expand understanding of the mansplaining phenomenon, its manner of occurrence in specific cultures and contexts, and its usual targets.

Findings of this research also have implications for university programs and policies. While most universities have programs that promote diversity and inclusion, issues on freedom of expression and respect of polarity of opinions are rarely documented and addressed in these programs. Results of this research reveal concrete instances of

speaker interruption, condescending talk, and the devaluation of women's knowledge and expertise, which had negative psychosocial effects. If higher education institutions intend to create safe spaces where teachers, students, and staff are heard equally regardless of gender and position, mansplaining behaviors must be addressed. Part of the solution is to create policies and programs that raise awareness on this issue and persuade members of academia to hold space for one another when exchanging ideas. Incorporating the results of this study, universities could conduct seminars and workshops on communication behaviors that perpetuate gender bias and inequalities. To promote contextual understanding, faculty members and higher management officials must be taught about how offensive speech and language behaviors can breed inequality in the classroom, faculty meetings, and proposal hearings, both online and offline, and whether it is verbal or written communication.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Individual Semi-Structured Interview Script

Welcome/introduction: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. This discussion will take approximately one hour to complete and you were selected because you indicated in your responses that you became a target of mansplaining. But before we begin, I want to assure you that whatever information you disclose today will be kept strictly confidential. What you will share with the group will help us better understand what mansplaining is from your perspective, how it affects you personally, and how it influences your performance at work. And your names will not be disclosed so no one will know that it's you who said these things. The results of this study will be used to broaden the conversation about mansplaining as a sexist act and in promoting a more inclusive exchange of ideas for women across workplaces. There will be no wrong or right answers; only varying points of view. This discussion is also recorded.

1. Do you have any questions before we begin?
2. How would you define mansplaining?
3. Can you describe the type of mansplaining that you experienced and what exactly happened?
4. How has this behavior, mostly associated with men, shaped how you see yourself and your position in your workplace?

5. Since you got mansplained to by a male colleague, how do you see yourself and your role as a woman employee at your company?
6. Recall and describe your experience of being mansplained to by your colleague.
7. How did you navigate through the interaction?
8. Would you label your mansplaining experience as an attack on you as a woman?
9. What are your expectations of being a woman member of your team in the context of contributing to the overall success of your company?
10. Think about that specific moment when you were mansplained to. How did you feel? What was your challenge then?
11. What was it like for you when your opinion was not valued, got interrupted, or when your expertise was not considered (despite your wealth of knowledge and experience)?
12. Describe what it is like to be mansplained to.
13. If you experienced changes socially, mentally, emotionally, and financially since your mansplaining experience, how would you describe it?
14. How can policies aimed at stemming sexist behaviors such as mansplaining at the company level help prevent gender discrimination and make you become a valued employee in the workplace?
15. Is there anything else you would like to say or add as we wrap up?
16. I will go over your statements carefully and develop a concise description that captures your common experiences.
17. Closing

Thank you for your time in participating in this study!

## Appendix B: Certificate of Informed Consent

I have read and fully understood the objectives of the study "Exploring the Lived Experiences of 'Mansplaining' of Women Academics in Philippine Colleges and Universities." I am aware that by sharing my experiences related to mansplaining, I will be able to contribute significant knowledge that will lead to a deeper understanding of this phenomenon.

I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study and any questions I have been asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

Print Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Participant: _____

Date: [MM/DD/YYYY]

## Appendix C: Demographic Questionnaire

# STUDY: Exploring the Lived Experiences of "Mansplaining" of Women Academics in Cagayan de Oro City

Thank you for taking the time to answer this form! I'm Dominic Yasay, a third year Master of Development Communication student at UP Open University. As part of my requirements for my communication research class, I'm conducting the study titled **Exploring the Lived Experiences of "Mansplaining" of Women Academics in Cagayan de Oro City.** The goal of this study is to gather knowledge from the personal experiences of mansplaining of women instructors and professors.

Mansplain (a portmanteau of the "man" and "explain") is a term coined in 2008 to label sexist behaviors such as:

- women being explained to or corrected by men who have less expertise on a topic under discussion,
- interrupting women in conversations on the basis of their gender,
- and talking down to women in a condescending manner.

In these interactions, mansplainers are described to take over the floor and restrict women participants from contributing to the conversation.

Kindly complete the demographic questionnaire below. Have a great day!

**ddyasay@up.edu.ph** Switch account

The name and photo associated with your Google account will be recorded when you upload files and submit this form. Only the email you enter is part of your response.

* Indicates required question

Email *

Your email

## Appendix C: Demographic Questionnaire (Cont.)

Name (Optional)

Your answer

Sex *

Your answer

Age *

Your answer

College/University *

Your answer

Rank/Designation (e.g. Assistant Professor and/or Department Chair) *

Your answer

Department/Unit/Field of Expertise *

Your answer

## Appendix C: Demographic Questionnaire (Cont.)

Highest Educational Attainment *

Short answer text

Please Specify the Degree/s You Finished (Or Are Currently Studying) *

Long answer text

Years of Experience in Academia *

Short answer text

If you consent to participating in this study, kindly sign this Certificate of Consent before submitting your response. Then upload your signed form in this section. *

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# Appendix D: Example of Researcher's Reflexive Journal

**RESEARCHER'S REFLEXIVE JOURNAL**

May 30, 2023

**Entry #1: Thoughts and Reflections Before the Data Collection**

The researcher is Dominic Yasay, an instructor in the Communication Program of the University of the Philippines Cebu and a content marketing specialist. At present, I am teaching Introduction to Development Communication and Critical Perspectives in Communication. My burgeoning research interest covers gender and communication; communication, culture, and identity; and digital ethnography.

As a newbie researcher, I've always been interested in how people from different backgrounds and experiences communicate with each other to exchange meanings, achieve their personal goals, represent their realities, and shape their identities. I'm also keenly interested in how communication behaviors reveal power relations and how communication can be weaponized by power-wielding individuals and groups to maintain their status and/or disadvantage those who lack power, privilege, and influence in society. This made me want to study the behavior of mansplaining and its impact on women.

I first encountered the term 'mansplain' on social media, particularly on the microblogging site Twitter. I noticed how it is often used as a catchall for behaviors wherein a man talks over a woman and disregards the latter's knowledge and contribution in a conversation. Reading up on the topic, I observed that existing literature on the topic mostly covers the use of the term by netizens in online discourses. There's also a dearth of studies examining mansplain behaviors as experienced by women and what women feel when they're mansplained to. And most of the studies I've read were from the West. This birthed my curiosity to investigate whether or not this is also experienced by Filipina women and to find out if Filipinas associate the behavior with sexism (and therefore a form of discrimination) like Western women do.

The choice to study the phenomenon in academic contexts stemmed from the fact that I am a college teacher, so I'm curious to see if it's evident in my work setting. In constructing my objectives, the questions that swirled around my mind were: Is mansplaining evident in academic institutions where teachers are expected to exercise open knowledge sharing with their colleagues regardless of gender? Do Filipina academics label experiences where they were shut down or interrupted by a male figure as mansplaining? And what do they feel toward these experiences? I hope that by the

## Appendix E: Interview Transcripts

### *Transcript #1: Tina*

Um, actually very recent siya na experience. Si Father, diri no. Siguro dili nako siya ma-contextualize nga iya kong gi-mansplain because I am a woman but katong isa nga murag gi-downplay niya ang akong capabilities—at least that's how I felt—akong expertise, akong work because of what he did to me.

So the context is this. Naa ko'y trip to Spain. The main trip is project-funded siya. So akong gi-think nga wala gyud siya'y problem nga ma-reject kay naa man gyud na siya'y funds and since one of the active team members man ko sa project. And gi-recommend ko sa team leader sa project nga mu-join ko sa Xavier nga team to go to this event. And then naa ko'y nakita nga lahi siya nga event. It's a conference or a workshop for international officers like me in another city in Spain. So ni-apply ko ato kay for application man. Kung madawat ka, libre ang participation. But of course you need to pay for transportation… So I thought nga ako nalang ipananghid nga a week early ko sa akong main trip para makasave ko sa transportation and malibre nako sa participation kay mahal baya gyud nang mga ingana and 20 lang ka slots. And because active ko ana nga group nahatagan gyud ko'g assurance nga makasulod. Nag-apply ko thinking nga suportahan ko kay wala man ko'y experience so far nga gi-reject sa last three years nga nagserve ko.

So nagprepare ko sa akong letter. Akong gi-course through the VP kay mao man ang protocol. Nananghid ko kay magrequire man siya og some… akong funds for my own per diem ba kaha or for board and lodging kay wala siya'y provision. Libre lang ang seminar for a week. Ako nang giplastar (ang letter). Ma'am Juliet (VP) did not reject kay supportive man gyud kaayo na siya. So ang next kay siya na (President). So nag-email ko; nag-explain ko nga I would like to ask for your approval nga muattend ko ani nga conference because I think this is a very good opportunity for Xavier and also for me as your international relations officer.

Na-shock ko sa iyang reply. Kay gihatagan ko niya og three issues. Three things. Ang first, (he said) I do not approve. I do not approve of this request because first I did not give you permission to apply. Na-shock kaayo ko. Siguro naigo ang ego niya. And ang second niya nga reason is, wala siya giinvite sa kato nga university sa Spain nga magsend daw siya og iyang staff or anyone from the university daw. And ang last—didto gyud ko sa last na-shock, didto gyud ko na-floored kay nagmention siya nga,

“You’ve had several travels already.” Ang akong feeling kay gikwentahan ko niya sa akong travels, so murag, “Can we skip this for now?” So kato nalang daw usa ka trip, okay na daw siya adto. And this is a Jesuit university so taas jud akong hope nga mosugot siya because this was a Jesuit university. And partner namo ni sila, naa mi agreement bag-o lang with international studies.

So mao to, didto gyud ko na-crush. Ako gyud siyang gi-counter. Nagsalimuang gyud akong gibati… I felt attacked. Wala ko deretso nagreply kay I had to gather my thoughts kay I don’t want to sound… kay ako baya siyang boss. In a way di gyud ko pwede mo-kuan sa iya. Ako sa giplastar akong thoughts. Ingana gyud ko basta I’m emotional with an email. Email ra gani to ha. Grabe siya og effect sa ako. Ana ko, I’m going to take a day off from this and then strategize my counter attack kay di man sad pwede nga dili ko mo-answer and I think I owe it to myself. You know, so after a day nakalma na ko. I was really very, very pissed. Kay wala ko nag-expect nga ingato iyang reply. Ang ako gyud feeling kay gi-downplay niya akong capacity. I also acknowledge man gud nga I’ve done a lot of things, you know, for this office, for Xavier. The least you could have done is, I don't know, maybe thank me for the effort.

Ako siyang gireplyan gyud. Three things pud para klaro sa iya nga kada point naa gyud ko’y counter.

**Interviewer: For emphasis lang, unsa gani to ang third thing nga iyang giingon?**

I’ve had several travels na daw. Ako dayon kay, I'm your international officer. I should be doing this. Diba dapat common sense? Unsa diay tan-aw nimo sa akong work? So national officer nalang ko, dili nalang ko international officer. Didto ko na-offend. Siguro kay nag-expect ko nga he has a better idea of what I do. Although ako na nang gi-question last year kay naa nami gamay nga rift last year about my work sa office. Nadugangan siya kay… lahi gyud siguro ni siya og perception of what I do.

So gi-counter nako siya. First, nag-apologize ko kay I felt nga nasuko siya kay wala ko nananghid sa iya nga, Father, muapply ko ani ha. Pero ako pud gi-point out nga it’s like a scholarship. You don't tell people, right? You don't ask for permission like, “Mag-apply ko ani nga scholarship, pwede ba?” So I was thinking if there's a fellowship call for application, you don't tell people nga I'm going to apply to this. Kay there's no assurance man of acceptance, ma-jinx palang hinuon. So akong treatment of that application was like a scholarship. You only tell people when you receive the good news. So nag-apologize ko.

Second is, katong wala daw siya ka-receive og invitation. I said they don't do that (because) this is an open call. So it's like, I read it on the, like the newsletter, which I received I think every two weeks kay naka-attend nako sa ilang events before. So they're doing it for the first time in person because pwede naman… So ingon ko sa iya you don't get invited personally because this is an open call. So akong kuan kay, naa gyud diay siya'y ingana nga feeling nga "I-invite ko dapat, mag-send sila dapat og invitation nga we invite your international officer to attend."

Ang third, didto jud ko nabikil sa third nga, "You've had several travels." Ana ko, "Yes, I traveled last year because it's part of my job. I'm your international officer, so it should just be normal to be doing this." Ingon ko nga thankful ko for the opportunities to travel because it's not easy given the circumstances, you know, budget and everything. But Xavier is very generous. But I would also like to stress that the travels last year bore some fruit. Two agreements in Denmark, where I presented my paper in a conference, produced this new agreement for research collaboration with DevCom. Akong giingon sa iya nga wala ko naglaag-laag. Naa man ko'y intention ato gyud. Nagtrabaho ko while I was there. Ang akong feeling ba kay dili siya fair nga imo kong ignan nga, "Daghan na man kaayo ka'g travels." Kwentahay diay ang show? Nagingon nalang unta ka nga you can only travel this much. Kay wala man sad gud na siya nga policy.

I also felt nga you're supposed to do this for me—nga i-fund ko ninyo, nga suportahan ko ninyo. (Because) I'm (wearing) both my two hats as (the university's) international officer and as a faculty professor (doing her) research presentation. So akong ingon sa iya nga wala gyud ka nalugi sa akong travels.

I don't know, basin lahi pud ang dating sa email, no? Maybe nawala ming duha, lahi among (interpretation). Ako pa lugar i-clarify like, what do you mean? So wala na, ako nalang gyud siyang gi-answer according to how I understood the message, but I really felt so bad. Like really bad. I wanted to even retract my (directorship appointment)... The appointment of my directorship happened a week before this thing happened, so I started to question… the alignment of (our) values. Dili man ingani dapat ang (president). I have my expectations of him (as a president) and then I thought he understood my work and my responsibilities. So akong giignan si VP nga I really felt bad about it. (I asked her) nganong ingana siya, ma'am? Did I do anything wrong? Ako nang gi-question akong (actions). Shouldn't I travel? Magpuyo nalang lugar ko ani? Karon pa ko kabalo nga naa siya'y ingana nga thoughts. Si ma'am (VP) sad mura siya'g na-shock. I told her ni-disapprove si (President) and I felt so bad about it. Nanawag siya, niingon siya unsa daw kuno ang email ni (President). (I explained to her) nga ingani iyang tone, nga very condescending bitaw.

(In my perspective), wala'y daotan sa akong gi-request sa iya. It's actually a win-win for the university nga ma-represent mi didto and nga madugangan akong knowledge, akong experience as their (international relations) officer and then better akong performance of my job kay maka-acquire man ko'g new skills and knowledge from that seminar. But he thought otherwise.

(So I replied to him and I apologized) because I really felt nga na-offend pud siya kay wala daw ko nananghid. Pero akong point was, mananghid diay ko pirmi sa imo? As far as I know, wala siya'y rule nga mao na dapat ang buhaton. Ako pud… I am very empowered. That's also what I've gained. Di na ko nimo kailangan ignon what I'm supposed to do. Basin pud that he found it very… pabida man kaayo ni nga employee uy. Murag ingana gani. But isn't that a good thing (that I'm looking for networking and learning opportunities for myself)? But he didn't see it that way. Lahi iyang nakita bitaw. Nga gauna-una ko, nga dili ko gapananghid. So ana ko, dili gyud diay mi pareha the way we see things, how this office should be managed, and how I should conduct myself as the international relations officer. Maybe it doesn't have to do with me being a woman, but (him) undermining my capabilities. This is really not a good leader for me and I'm kind of scared kay basin mautro nasad, madugangan ang (instances like this) kay lahi siya og panan-aw. Mao akong thinking at least, sa unsa akong buhaton.

It actually affected me in so many ways. Imagine, you're the head of the university saying those things sa email.

(It would've been a perfect opportunity) but then wala man niya nakita ang value kay gitan-aw man niya akong pagkabida-bida siguro. Kana bitawng, "Sige ra man ni siya og travel, unsa man ni siya uy." Di man gud ko ganahan og ingana kay akong work, quality work man gud siya. When someone questions that… (I also end up questioning myself), "Unsa diay akong nabuhat nga daotan?" As far as I know, according to what other people tell me, I'm doing okay. So, unsa pa diay kulang? (It's so disappointing). Kana bitawng, what am I doing here? Nag-existential crisis nako. Why am I still here? (And then) ma-restless na sad ko (then I think to myself), mohawa na ko diri bi.

**Interviewer: How has this experience shaped how you see yourself and your position in the university?**

Maka-question gyud ka sa imong life work. But then some of my friends also told me, no, that's just one person telling you (what to do), how you (should) work. It shouldn't change the kind of work that I do, which is actually correct. Unfair man pud kaayo if (I just slack off and stop caring about my performance because that's not who I am). Kay naa na baya ko'y trademark, a legacy somehow, of the kind of work that I do. I'm very

passionate about everything that I do. And if an area of that will be questioned, (it would lead me to question myself), what am I doing wrong?

But thankfully, (my colleagues would say don't mind him), the rest of us are rooting for you. We believe in what you do. (This is what I would've wanted the president to say) kay siya baya akong boss. (But that's not the case), maka-question siya sa imong life work ug sa imong self-worth. Because there's a difference between the way I look at my work and the way he looks at my work. Kay sa iyaha mura siya'g gapangwenta and I don't like that. Kay gaihap siya kung ikapila na ko nagtravel. Di man na maayo. Akoa unta, tan-awon niya ang gains.

Pero naka-get over na man ko somehow kay I have a very good support system.

**Interviewer: What are your expectations of being in this position or being a professor of your team in the context of contributing to the overall success of the university?**

Nag-expect ko og recognition. Kana bitaw'ng thinking nga after all you've done, mao ra na iyang ika-kuan sa imo… Sa kadaghan nimo'g nabuhat nga insakto ang mistake gyud and iyang mahinumduman. Kung sakto siya, (he would've acknowledged) my initiative, maybe gi-thank pa dapat ko niya. Pero pagka-state man gud niya sa email kay outright siya ba. Di siguro siya kabalo mag-communicate, di siya kabalo mag-filter. We know that in communication no, so many things actually get lost in translation. Probably nag-factor pud na siya kay ako very strong kaayo ko sa communication, maybe iyaha siguro nang weakness. But I will take it at face value kay wala man ko'y lain way. Wala man mi nagstorya in person, sa email ra man gyud to siya.

(After that), nagkita mi at an event. (We greeted each other and he praised me in his welcome message). Gitawag ko niya nga "prime mover of internationalization of the university" (and I was like), mao ba?! *Laughs* Na-jaded na ko, di na ko motuo sa iyang gipangstorya. Basin lip service ra.

(After that, we met again at a symposium in the university where we sat next to each other). Di man ko gusto gud nga magpa-OA sad kaayo no, so civil lang. Storya ginagmay, mga small talk lang gud. Dili pud appropriate nga storyahan pa siya. Kay akong thinking, it's a done deal kay nireply naman ko sa iyang email. He knew na unsa akong thoughts. Dapat makabalo siya unsa akong thoughts, dili pwede nga siya lang. I do not know unsa iyang reaction pero I don't care anymore. Basta nagstorya ko sa akong counter sa iyang message. Awkward siya; karon di na ko ganahan nga makita siya to be honest. Di unta mi magkita anytime soon kay mura ko'g… kana akong word

kay “traumatized.” Kana bitaw, na-traumatize ko kay ma-remember nako iyang mga gipangstorya. Unya ana ko, “Lord di ko gusto nga ingani” kay lain baya na nga feeling.

Now I think I should really do a better management of expectations kay lahi gyud siya.

**Interviewer: How do you see yourself navigating your functions after this incident? How has this affected your duties?**

It is very tempting to underperform. But then it’s not me. Thankfully, I have colleagues and friends (telling me not to let this incident affect my work performance). It’s difficult. (It has made me ask myself), what am I really doing this for if I don’t have the right kind of support from the highest person in the university? But then (a colleague told me) nga padayon lang sa imong trabaho. Go on with what you do. It’s a win-win anyway: you give it your best all the time and you actually grow as a person. You do it for you and especially for you. (Don’t think that you’re doing it for the university). It’s really doing it for me, for my self-improvement. (Because if I dedicate it to the university and its officials, then I would get frustrated. My efforts would go to waste). It’s disheartening to be honest. Na-realize pud nako nga di maayo nga dili nalang pud ko magperform sa akong duties kay magsuffer pud akong office. And it’s not me. So padayon lang, you do you. Try lang gyud nga di na to nako siya ma-think whenever naa’y trigger. But for now, okay na ko. Hope things will improve somehow.

Ingon pud akong friend nga dean nga ato nalang siyang hulaton nga mohawa. But then I also think nga di man pud dependent sa iya ang akong work. I mean, I can function (on my own) man. But ma-limit lang ko kay sige nalang ko’g pangonsulta (before I act or make decisions). Meaning, “mananghid” or I have to seek his (approval) before I decide to do things, which I think is not good for me. Kay binata man na nga style, micromanaging no? (You should) allow your officers to take the lead and let them do their work. They’re adults. They know what to do.

Mao man gud akong feeling, nga nakaminus ba. Nga dili maayo iyang pagsabot sa akong work. Didto ko nalain. After all? After sa akong kahago?

**Interviewer: If you experienced changes emotionally, socially, mentally since that experience, how would you describe it?**

Siguro maka-rethink gyud ka sa imong values. Kay somehow naa man gud koy nakita nga dili aligned ang values nga akong gina-believe in sa akong ginathink nga he (President) believes in, and of this institution. I thought pareha mi og perspectives and all those values nga gina-uphold sa institution. Imong ma-reexamine imong mga life

choices. Like, why am I still here? I could be elsewhere nga daghan ko'g freedom to do what I want and what I can. Kay tungod adto nga (incident) no kay I thought ma-limit gyud ko, kay di na diay pwede nga maguna-una ko (in making decisions) kay ma-feel bad man siya (president). Based on my observations… dapat siya ang una, dili siya pangunahan kay ma-feel bad siya kung pangunahan nimo siya. Because i think kana pung power play nga, "I am the president." In a way, it's good because at least naa na ko'y idea nga in-ani diay siya nga leader. But I felt lang ba nga after three years pa ko nakabalo. It took that request to change (my perception). Kay I thought man gud nga I have an ally in him. Kay wala baya gyud ko sukad the last three years that I worked with him. Wala sukad, first time gyud to nga mura bitaw og… gibombahan gyud ko niya. Then based on what people are telling me, naconfirm gyud nga naa siya'y ingana nga batasan.

**Interviewer: What changes or policies should be done to stem such behavior at the organizational level and prevent other instances like that to happen in the future and make you become a valued employee in the university?**

Wala ma'y policy nga you should only travel this number of times in a year. Lisod kaayo siya mag-craft og policy because it has to go through a process, but that would be ideal. (At least the VP already knows about this.) I don't know if naa pa'y lain nga nagreklamo. Policy would be good para klaro siya, then I would know what to do. Wala'y policy nga you have to seek approval or permission from the president or from anybody before you do this. If naa siya, maka-help unta siya og prevent. Mao pud na ang makaulit diri kay you only find out sa kaning mga ingani nga circumstances nga very sad. Ma-feel ra dayon nimo nga naa'y conflict, naa'y issue kay di siya documented. Murag practice ra siya bitaw, best and worst practices. Kay wala man siya'y policies. The policies would be very good gyud para maklaro sa staff that this is the only thing I can do. Beyond this, dili na siya pwede because naa'y guidelines.

Dapat naa'y training ang leader before siya ipa-lead. Because kaning (president), wala siya'y previous experience of higher management. Ni-factor in jud iyang lack of experience. Kulang siya og management experience. And wala pud siguro'y tao nga gaingon sa iya.

In a way, I'm sad for him. He could use his position in a better way to empower his staff and subordinates. Kay sa akong experience, negative gyud to siya. And for someone who has worked here in the university longer than him. Kana bitawng feeling nga, "Kinsa ra man ka nga mag ingani sa ako nga mas dugay pa ko sa imo; nga mas daghan pa ko'g naagian sa imo."

Mura siya'g detached sa realities sa mga tao diri, or ga-pretend lang gyud siya. Kanang gapa-as if nga di kabalo pero kabalo diay pero di niya ginapakita for some reason. Maka-question gyud ka sa iyang credibility as a leader. Na-disappoint ko sa iya ana nga part. I have to better manage my expectations as far as he is concerned para dili na magsakit akong heart. But anyway, life goes on. I try not to be affected. Padayon lang sa trabaho. I hope dili na ma-repeat.

I also think nga naka-learn pud siya from me based sa akong responses. I hope iya to gitake to heart akong gistorya sa iya and maybe naa sad siya'y perceptions of me nga hopefully ma-change. Like, "Ah, di man diay ingana si kuan." Kay dili gyud ko ingana. Kay mo-fight raba gyud ko If I know I'm in the right.

## Appendix E: Interview Transcripts (Cont.)

### *Transcript #2: Jane*

Well, actually, it was very, I won't say very recent, but siguro late last year, I think this was in December, because there was already talk of the DevCom Department to be moved from the College of Agriculture. So, since this directive is coming from the BOT (Board of Trustees), so we've met since September with the OVPHE, and then with the president, and then finally, we needed to meet with the BOT to pitch the case that, you know, we wanted to, instead of moving to the Arts and Sciences, we moved to be a separate institute instead, or while we're still preparing for the Campus of the Future, we'll stay at the College of Agriculture.

So, I presented to the two heads of the BOT. I think isa man ang pinaka-head, and then ang isa is also a member of the BOT. So, they're both businessmen with no direct experience in (academia). Ang one, si Atty. Monteza, was, ang setting lugar sa presentation was that he was in a cafe, sa Starbucks yata to siya. So, it's a bit noisy. And the other one, si Frank Guerra, I think he was in the US that time when we were joining a meeting. So, during lugar sa akong presentation, of course I presented the case about the Department, from the history, the students, and then later, after the presentation, we proceeded na sa question and answer.

In fact, si, I think the head of the BOT, Atty. Monteza, was saying, “Oh, let's cut (to) the chase. I've read your notes or your presentation, so there's no need to really go into details. So, I'll just ask the question right away.”

So, Sir L.P. was also asking me, siya una nag-ask, “What is DevCom, and then what is its difference from Mass Comm?” So, I mean, the very typical, so, it's actually the premise na these people didn’t really have an in-depth understanding, an idea of what DevCom is, so nag-explain lugar ko.

And then, when I was cut off by NCAF, Monteza would say, oh, there's really no need to go into details about what DevCom is, because right now, there's really no need of, kana bitawng i-specialize daw ang communication. Right now, what we need is just communications, and not, bale murag “passe” (unfashionable) na daw ang DevCom. Right now, what's in sa business perspective is really communications. Wala’y room na for a place sa DevCom and all.

And really, adto nga time, kay, like, you're really telling me that? I mean, siguro from a businessman perspective, that's how you see DevCom. Pero, murag, ang akoa adto, I've experienced this one. I was mansplained into a topic that's probably, I mean, siguro sa edad, mas tigulang siya. I've studied DevCom for 13 years for you to say, it's not important, or it's not relevant anymore. What we need is just communications. Like, you know, we need to teach the students how to go viral. Because, you know, people are no longer watching television. All they do is go to TikTok or YouTube for information. Although, when I was saying, that's the reason why we need to teach this! And then you tell me, nobody's watching television? I could show you a research that would say 60 percent of Filipinos are still watching TV. And kana ang imong perspective on communication or DevCom is based on a third experience as a BOT who is relatively living a more privileged life.

Actually, daghan na dayon siya pusot-pusot adto. I think Frank Guerra was also clapping his hands after nag-explain si Atty. Monteza, which for me was like, hala, nag-applaud siya, which means iyahang gisupport nga nabuthan ko nga, oh, it's not important anymore. Hala, nag-applaud silang duha nga pareha raba sila wala'y mga hanaw sa process.

When I was also saying, it's not easy to, parang akong gibutang man gud sa among position letter, is that give time as the department is slowly transitioning to become an institute.

And then gipong na pud ko adto. The work does not sit well with me because in business, the best time to do it was yesterday. The next best time was today. And then I was like, but this is not a business per se. Kay, of course, dili ni siya SM. Education is of course business for the Jesuits. But, dili man mi autonomous, naa'y CHED.

After that, I think everybody saw si Ma'am Juliet was saying—Ma'am Juliet is the OP of CHED—"Okay ra ka, Rech?" So I think sila to mismo, the BOT was saying, "Ayaw kahadlok ha, kay ingani gyud mi mag-storya sa BOT." But, you know, everybody, si Ma'am Shie, nakakita sa ako nilabay nga nagslouch nako and nangluspad nako! Kay akong feeling, kay mura siya'g, I was put inside the lion's den… and I didn't get any support, I guess.

So, mura kog na-gaslight pud sa akong reality as DevCom… Mura jud ko'g di ko kasabot sa akong gibati. Karon lugar, taking myself out of that situation looking at it, akong narealize naa man gud siya'y power dynamics. And siguro, dili, of course, BOT man ka, muingon ka, "Don't mind us if we talk this way. Sometimes, in the BOT meeting,

we shout at each other." But you don't expect me to shout at you because there's a power dynamic, I'm a mere department chair.

Adto nga time, I didn't really think of it as something to do with gender. Siguro pud sa ila, ako nalang nag-analyze, maybe not necessarily deliberate or conscious. I understood it this way. But condescending siya in a way because first, I was younger than them. Second, because they are in authority. I mean, they're the BOT. I am just a chairperson. Pero kato nga fact lugar, sa power dynamics in interpersonal communication, I mean, by authority, might be more powerful. But, kung in terms of the field, probably I would be more knowledgeable than you are. And then, mag-analyze sa age. And then, siguro, last, siguro, na ang gender. I would be thinking, siguro, kung lalaki ang nag-present ato. Let's say, for example, I would imagine, say, ikaw. Bata-bata man ka sa ila. Di siguro sila ang type nga murag, "I'll cut you off, Dom, ha?" Pero, I think they could still be condescending. But maybe there's, I don't know, di pud nako gusto gamiton ang word nga there's a sense of respect. Pero, lahi siguro ang approach sa imo. They will not ask you the same way they asked me nga, "Uy, nangluspad na man ka," or "Okay ra ka diha?" I doubt if they'll say, "Uy, Dom, okay ra ka, Dom? Nangluspad lagi ka?" I don't think they'll do that. I think siguro sa ako, ilang panan-aw ato sa ako kay I was very fragile. And then easily offended or nga, dali mohilak.

So far, kato pa nga experience siguro. Probably, there, yes. Dili ako ang type nga who would really think nga na-mansplain ko. Except for kato nga situation nga na-core memory to siya sa ako. And then, dugay man gud ko mag-process sa akong experience nga, "Ay, na-mansplain man diay ko." (At the time), I felt bad. But there's no room to actually say, "I felt bad because I was mansplained." My mind does not work that way. Di ba? Or, kanang, going back years ago, ayha pa nimo marealize nga ah, grooming to siya ng experience. Or, oy, mansplain to siya. Or, I was harassed. So, kanang, maybe, it really takes this kind of interview for you to process the situation and say, yeah, that was mansplain. Kaya, you know, human as we are, I think normal man siguro na nga my idea of the experience is whether it's just good or bad. Dili ko gabutang og label like, I felt bad because I was mansplained. But, I felt bad, period. Because I felt, one, katong power dynamics, and two, I really felt disrespected, and three, I felt like, I was just there for formality.

So, wala to siya sa ako nga ah, na-mansplain diay ko.

**Interviewer: So, how has this behavior shaped how you see yourself and your position in the university?**

I think it did affect me a lot, kay feeling nako after adto, diba, because I can't forget about it, and
sa kadaghan nahitabo, nahimo siyang core memory sa ako. But it's not a pleasant memory to remember. And then, diba, if you notice—things you just notice when you really face the situation—I kept using the word, chairperson LANG man ko, and then sila man ang BOT. So, it really, I don't know, basin sa ila intentional or not, pero murag na-instill sa ako, ang chair LANG ka, and these are BOTs, or they're people in power, like, no matter how you make your case, no matter how well-crafted your position is, given the power dynamics, you're just there, you're just that. Kanang, especially, sa akong personality, di man ko necessarily very assertive, but also kanang, the experience also told me that there's no point kanang, asserting something nga medyo fixed na pud sila.

So, as I also mentioned, kanang, niabot pud ko sa point ato nga time, nga na-question pud nako akong reality lagi nga kanang, sakto pa ba nga gatudlo pa ko ani? I mean, they're saying, my field is no longer relevant, so unsa pa ma'y tumong ani? So, medyo na-down gyud ko adto, and in fact, kanang, I don't wanna use the word "traumatic," pero I would not want to be seated in the same setting again with them, pero if I had a choice, or if I had no choice, gyud, kanang, I don't know how to act or behave given that experience nga, murag, kinahanglan pa gyud diay nako ipakita nga, mag-assert gyud ko sa akong self and authority, or, do I need to—mao man pud akong na-imagine nga si Ma'am Mayette mag-ingon sa ako, "No, pag-sukol sa ila, ganyan talaga yan, because they don't know anything, they're very stupid!" I mean, I would say, ma'am, I'm not in the same position as you are, ka-edad man mo, probably bisa'g, kanang, dili mo pareha og position, pero, you know these people all too well, for you to be able to afford saying, "Oh, your opinion is stupid." No matter how I want to say that one, I would always be put in my place. Makuan siguro siya nga power dynamics and not necessarily gender. Kay I imagine somebody as, like Ma'am Mayette, would be saying that they would look at her as an equal, so, dili sila maka ingana ka-condescending, so, mura siya'g antithesis, dili siguro siya necessarily about gender, but it's really more of the power dynamics or probably also about the age.

**Interviewer: How did you navigate through the interaction?**

So, Zoom lang man to siya, so, tutok kaayo ko. But after that interaction, murag nag-laid back na ko… Nawala na akong interest to talk about the topic, kay mas na-focus na ko sa akong feeling nga I don't feel good about this anymore. In fact, kung personal siguro to, or in-person siya nga interview, I would have been more quiet and magsige na lang kong tango-tango kay it's so hard to think about asserting yourself or asserting what you

know when somebody as emotional as me is already processing, nga, oh my god, gitabangan ko, or naa na ko sa defensive mode kay naa man sila sa, for me, I felt that it was they were in attack mode.

It also did not help that people who were in that meeting, including the dean and the VP, even Ma'am Shiella, asked me, “Okay ra ka?” because it actually validated na, hala, gitabangan gyud diay ko. Na-validate akong feelings nga, or if kung kuan siguro to nga, “Oh, you did well,” or “How did you feel?” instead of saying nga “Okay ra ka?” kaya mura siya’g “You don't look okay” because you were asking me if I'm okay.

Pero if, “So how did you feel about the presentation?” then, “Oh, I felt like I was also attacked” so maybe, ayha, siguro siya nga, oh no, no, it was okay, pero you know, you can't put words in people's mouth, but it really made me more aloof or detached to the idea of pitching, kay when you want to pitch an idea, and obviously the other party is no longer listening to what you want to convey, ma-detach na pud ka nga you just plug off, nga wala na ma’y point, nga mag-discuss ko.

**Interviewer: What are your expectations of being a woman instructor or professor in the context of contributing to the overall success of your school?**

You know even before we were doing this interview… there were several studies conducted before, nga kanang magsugod nga, we would like to interview you, or kanang there were studies saying, nga, was your being a woman a factor, kanang as chairperson lugar, nga, woman. I've always thought nga Xavier, or academia in general has provided me a safe space as a woman until we were doing this one. Kay again, I'm not the type who would label experiences, it's just whether it was a good or a bad experience.

So, I really thought nga Xavier was relatively a safe space for a woman, or the academe, because you know, our OVPHE is a woman, the HR is a woman, the finance officer is a woman, most departments, the dean is a woman, most departments is being manned by a woman, and even in meetings, I don't see nga ga-play or ga-factor in ang being a woman during conversations. But I also realized nga, siguro, kato nga time, I thought it was a safe space because I was standing in as a chair, and ako previous pud nga mga chair, when I was not yet a chairperson, they were women, si Ma'am Mayette, si Ma'am Shiella. So, wala ko’y experience nga na ako. Si Sir Roel sa una, pero wala man pud ko direct interaction with them, pero I think it was kato sa meeting with the BOT, I think that was the first experience I've had nga naa’y direct nga communication setting or scenario with males older than me who are mas taas ang ilahang power nga gihold sa ako in the university.

So, in fairness lugar sa Xavier, other than that situation, and I could speak sa akoa lang kaugalingon and sitting as chair siguro with as little power that I have. Xavier, dili man siya necessarily nga kanang… again, case-to-case basis siguro siya. So, I would look at it that way. I wouldn't probably be saying the same way kung faculty ko sa usa ka department nga male ang akong boss. But siguro in this kanang situation where I can see, or I can say nga relatively, nag-provide man pud siya og safe space for growth. Again, I'm seeing how women are being provided with the growth they are looking forward to.

I would not label it right away as mansplaining. I would label it according to how I felt that time. I felt bad, I felt offended, and later on, as you dig deeper, ayha na dayon nimo maingon nga ay, oo, na-mansplain diay ko… Dili man ko mo-label right away nga na-mansplain ko. It's really more feelings-based. It starts with a feeling.

**Interviewer: If you experience changes, socially, mentally, emotionally, and financially, since your mansplaining experience, how would you describe it?**

Siguro, mentally, naa siya'y toll on my self-esteem. Again, pwede gyud diay na mahitabo nga ma-twist imong words, ma-gaslight ka, especially if you're dealing with somebody nga dili mo pareha og power dynamics. So it haunted me in a way nga, pag makita nako sila next time, kay mangurog siguro ko, or makulbaan gihapon ko. And, yeah, I think that one, socially na siya, no? I viewed power dynamics differently na in the university because of that one. In fact, siguro, if I ever come across a situation nga naa ko'y ma-encounter diri sa university nga male, nga mas taas siya og position sa ako, conscious na ko sa fact na basin ubos pud iyang pagtan-aw sa ako kay dili mi pareha og position. It shouldn't necessarily be gender-based ha, pero it plays. Kay I would not feel that way kung, let's say, si Ma'am Dean or si Ma'am Juliet. I would not necessarily feel that way towards them. Pero because of that experience, pag lalaki siguro nga mas taas siya og position sa ako, naa na'y lingering feeling of insecurity.

**Interviewer: Would you say, nga, unsafe? Makafeel ka og "unsafetiness" when expressing your opinion to men of a higher position sa imoha because of that experience?**

Probably, yes. I just came from a training yesterday sa USAID, and nag-talk sila about safe space. And when we talk about safe space, di lang siya about literal space or physical space. Like, I feel threatened or i-attack or i-harm. I learned na ang safe space is a space where you are able to freely speak your mind. And you also have free access to information. It becomes unsafe for me kung mabutang ko'g another situation nga

ingadto. Kay I will be put on a spot wherein I had to watch my words. I have to be very careful of my actions. So, dili ko free sa akong thoughts. Kay before ko mag-storya, kay ako sa siya i-frame in a way nga it will adhere sa kung unsa'y tan-aw nako nga gusto madunggan sa person in authority. Ang ato man gud connotation of feeling unsafe is that if it threatens our safety is kanang ma-block ka, ma-attack ba ka, or whatever. But, when we talk about safe space it is when we are able to freely speak our mind as well. But, again, if I'm placed in a situation or position with the same people, or people nga, not necessarily the same people, but people with men nga naa'y higher authority, I'm now forced to conform, and forced to really watch my language, which makes it an unsafe space.

**Interviewer: How can policies aimed at stemming these behaviors, such as mansplaining, at the organizational level, help prevent gender discrimination and make you become a valued academic?**

That's a very difficult question. As I mentioned, our university is really geared towards becoming an inclusive organization. Based on my experience, di man siya necessarily na deliberate siya about gender, as I mentioned, mas nag-play nga factor ang power dynamics. But I would also think that sometimes it's a case-to-case basis, and depende siya sa tao. Kay there are people nga okay man sila, di ba? Pero, things like this, gakahitabo siya because of encounters or kanang mga situations, and it's really hard to answer. Pero, how do, as I mentioned gaganina, how do you ensure that the space is open for conversations, di ba? How do you ensure that the space is open to differing opinions?

Lisod kaayo siya nga imong i-pitch for a policy. Let's say for example, moingon ko nga, okay, I felt very unsafe towards these people kay power dynamics man akong giingon. Although, ang Safe Space Act, mas more siya, bawal bastos kayong law, dili siya safe space in the way na it provides space for conversation. Dili ingana ang definition sa atong Safe Space Act. So, siguro kung ma-amend, siguro kung mahuna-hunaan, maybe it's also something we can make as a policy in academia. Kay mubalik ko sa akong experience nga gi-mention. Kato, about sa university, sa college, sa pantry, few years back, siguro prior to the pandemic, mga 5-10 years ago si Sir Ray as HR. Ang pantry sa college, when you enter the door, right away nga nagatubang nimo, mao nang pantry sa college, that's where we have lunch. But aside from lunch, it also becomes a nook or venue for hot chismis. And then, I think naa'y specific nga incident nga, niingon ang dean, di na pwede maglunch dinhi kay gahimuon ninyo siyang lugar para chismisan. So, literal siya nga gi-threaten ang space for conversations. In academia, we don't necessarily just talk about academic things. And you know, whether we like it or not, chismis makes our job more bearable. And it also becomes a venue, diba? A venue

to also build a camaraderie, an outlet na mapagawas nimo imong mga rants. Sometimes people rant not necessarily because they want something to happen. They rant because they just want people to listen ug magpagawas sa gibati. And so, feeling nako katong gibawalan na nga maglunch didto sa pantry kaya gihimo siyang chismis na lugar. Mura siya'g gihikawan ang teachers og katungod to express their thoughts. I suppose it's also good to really have a policy like kanang an open space. Diba? A policy nga wherein ang safe space goes beyond anti-bastos. Kay medyo mabaw man gud atong definition sa safe space: kanang ma-cat call ka, or kanang ma-sexually harass ka. Safe space is also kanang talking about people's feelings of safety to speak their mind. So, siguro kana siya na policy on safe space na mas mapa-strengthen and mapa-widen. In academia, we expect nga very basic ang kanang respect or safe space na bawal anti-bastos or bawal bastos. Pero siguro sa academe, ang safe space can also cover kanang being able to express one's thoughts and not be scared nga ma-put to shame ka. Or kanang when you really conform to what people would want you to speak. And I think that is very common. You end up conforming to what the majority is saying. Dili man unta na dapat ibutang na policy kay very basic man unta na... Pero if it would help for a policy wherein you deliberately say everyone is free to speak their minds with respect, lugar, or everyone is kuan. And I think that transcends even online kanang i-respect ang polarity. And I think that is the definition of a safe space as well. Or kanang safe space wherein even access to information is also a venue for safe space…

Daghan kaayo paagi nga mahimong safe space ang usa ka institution or an activity because it's supposed to be a place where knowledge is being nurtured. Pero kung pareho ato sa experience na kung mag-play diay ang power dynamics for people to speak their minds. It suppresses people's ability to speak their minds and really meet the purpose of an academic institution being an academic institution.

Ako ra to siya ibalik-balik. At first glance diay, it's also a realization, kato akong giingon ba siguro depende sa laing tao na we don't necessarily label sa situation straight away based on probably kanang mansplaining ug katong uban nga mga terms nga gagamiton karon. But we focus more on our feelings. So there are probably times when we didn't realize it's mansplaining. But universal man ang feelings. Feeling good, feeling bad, feeling happy—these things are universal. Pareho man ta... Did you feel bad about it? Dili man ta lain lain og definitions but when you are... Feeling is not gendered. Pag imo diay siyang himay-himayon that's when you start to think, okay, na-experience diay nimo siya. And I think that's really it for me. And then I'm sure it would have been worse for other women siguro. Nga kanang in the academe lugar especially siguro for the younger ones. The older you get in the university, mas matubuan man pud ka og bag-ang

Lisod kaayo (magreflect) kung na-mansplain ba ko? Kay it comes from very mundane nga mga situations nga sometimes imo lang siyang i-shrug off. It does not necessarily become a core memory for you to say, “Okay, anyone who has experienced mansplaining please? Let’s set up an interview.” Diba, na-happen ra ni siya because you're probing me in situations. Nga mga experience wherein this one or ako syang… gibasa man gud to nako ang definition nimo. So, mas more sya nga makakita ka og participants if you start a conversation. Naa ka’y target nga feeling nako, kani naa sya’y boss nga lalaki. I'll try to probe. And then kung wala then move onto the next target.

Dili nako ni siya madumduman and then, ay, oo, naka experience diay ko ani. Kay ang mansplaining man gud… is an experience unlike being sexually harassed nga very traumatic gyud kaayo siya. Ang mansplaining man gud can sometimes be, you felt bad, pero fleeting siya nga moment nga pwede ka mag-move on diretso with the situation.