

Awareness of Government Officials on RA 7877 (also known as the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995) in Tacurong City

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ABSTRACT

Sexual Harassment is one of the major problems in the country. Women are considered the weaker sex and are prone to sexual harassment; therefore, the Civil Service Commission passed the law that protects the welfare of women. The main objective of the study is to determine the level of awareness of Government Officials in Tacurong City. Specifically, it will answer the following questions: firstly, what is the profile of the Government Officials in Tacurong City, in terms of: Age; Gender; Length of Service; Highest Educational Attainment. Secondly, what is the Level of Awareness of the Government Officials, in terms of: Work Aspect; Education of Training Related Aspect; Duty of Employer or Head of Office; Liability of Head of Offices; and Penalties. Lastly, is there any significant relationship between the Government Profile and their Level of Awareness on RA 7877 (also known as the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995) in Tacurong City. The method employed in the study is through survey questionnaires. The result of the study shows that most of the heads of the government offices are in their Middle Age and Baccalaureate graduates, which is the minimum qualification of the Civil Service Commission. The awareness of the Officials in terms of Education falls on Moderately Aware; Highly Aware in terms of the duty of the Employers; highly aware of the penalty; and the correlation between the profile of the respondents and the level of awareness falls on Very High Correlation. This proposed that lawmakers should take further steps in crafting a firmer and stiffer penalty for the violators to ensure that women are protected and can become of equal importance in the development of policies for humans.

Keywords: Government Official, Sexual Harassment, Academic Environment, Working Environment, Penalty, Awareness

INTRODUCTION

Sexual Harassment is one of the major problem in the globe. It is an everyday occurrence both in urban and rural areas where it victimized both men and women. Since women and children are considered to be a weaker sex, they are sexually harassed in the streets, schools, workplace, and other public transportation. Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995 or also known as RA 7877 is considered a landmark legislation as it finally gave a name and legal recognition to such unwelcome sexual advances. This law defines sexual harassment as “an act committed by an employer or manager, supervisor, agent of the employer, teacher, instructor, professor, coach, trainer, or any other person who, having authority, influence, or moral ascendancy over another in a work or training or education environment, demands, request or otherwise requires any sexual favor from the other, regardless of whether the demand, request, or requirement for submission is accepted by the objective. The context of this law define the sexual harassment between peers and co-employees. This study tried to synthesize the level of awareness of Government Officials regarding the causes and effect of this law towards their work and education environment. It also assesses their awareness regarding the duty of employer or head of office, liability of head of offices, and penalties. The

result of the study aims to ensure that gender based violence in the locality of Tacurong City will be eliminated through effective legislation and policies for women and children. This law has been in place for 18years now, and it is time to revisit the law to help in strengthening the enforcement and protection of the considered weaker individuals of society against any form of sexual advances and offenses.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter addresses the researcher's design, data sources, sampling techniques, and procedures to attain the research objectives. This thesis is descriptive, and the data were gathered through a survey questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of different levels of questions, each asked of the respondents. First, the profile of the respondents in terms of Age, Gender, Designation, Length of Service and Highest Educational Attainment; Second, the level of awareness of the Government Officials in terms of Work, Education or Training related, Duty of the Employer, Liability of the Employer or Head of Office, Independent Action for Damages, and Penalties; Third, the significant relationship of the Profile of the Respondents and their level of awareness on RA 7877. The respondents were the heads of Government Offices in Tacurong City.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results based on the statistical analysis performed on the data collected. The data are presented in a frequency table and as a percentage. This chapter shows the gathered data and discussion as well as its statistical findings. The responses were gathered through survey questionnaires and used to determine the level of awareness of Government Officials regarding RA 7877.

Table 1.1 Profile of Respondents in terms of Age

Age	Frequency	Mean	Percentage
21-30	2	3.86	12.50%
31-40	0	0	0%
41-50	7	3.77	43.75%
51-60	7	3.21	43.75%
Total	16	3.61	100%

Table 1.1 shows the respondents' age profile, with four (4) brackets as shown in the table. As shown in the data above, the majority of respondents' ages are in the 41-50 and 51-60 ranges, with a frequency of 7 (43.75%). The rest of the brackets obtained two (2) and zero(0) with a percentage of 12.50% and zero(0)%. The result of the study fall on the idea of Havighurst idea of Developmental Span that ages 40-60 belong to Middle Ages.

Table 1.2 Profile of the Respondents in terms of Gender

Gender	Frequency	Mean	Percentage
Male	8	3.54	50%
Female	8	3.53	50%
Total	16	3.54	100%

Table 1.2 shows the respondents' gender profile. It shows that there is a balance in frequency between males and females, with 8 (50%) each. The result of the study implies that holding a position in an office does not vary by gender, it supports the advocacy of the Gender and Development.

Table 1.3 Profile of the Respondents in terms of Length of Service

Years of Service	Frequency	Mean	Percentage
1-10 years	2	3.86	12.50%
11-20 years	6	3.83	37.50%
21-30 years	6	3.43	37.50%
31-40 years	2	3.00	12.50%
Total	16	3.53	100%

Table 1.3 shows the respondents' profile by Length of Service. As shown in the data above, most respondents are serving between 11-20 years and 21-30 years, with a frequency of 6 (37.50%). The other two (2) brackets, 1-10 years and 31-40 years, had a lower frequency of 2 (12.50%). It implies that most of the respondents served in the office and were subject to retirement according to the guidelines and policy on the Labor Code, which says that after at least 25 years in government office, you have the option to early retirement or not.

Table 1.4. Profile of the Respondents in terms of Highest Educational Attainment

Degree	Frequency	Mean	Percentage
Baccalaureate	9	3.81	56.25%
Master's Degree	4	3.60	25.00%
Doctor's Degree	3	3.63	18.75%
Total	16	3.68	100%

Table 1.4 shows the respondents' profile by Highest Educational Attainment. The data shows that the majority of the government officials of Brgy.Poblacion, Tacurong City, has a college graduate frequency of 9 (56.25%). The other two (2) brackets, which were the Master's Degree and Doctor's Degree, obtained a lesser frequency with a percentage of four (4) and three (3), or 25.00% and 18.75%. It implies that most respondents are Baccalaureate degree graduates who meet the minimum requirements stipulated in the Civil Service Commission Code for holding an office.

Table 2.1 Level of Awareness of Government Officials in terms of Work Aspect

Work Environment	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Sexual favor is made for hiring in the employment	2.81	Moderately Aware
2. Granting favorable compensation	3.06	Moderately Aware
3. Promotion for work	3.13	Moderately Aware
4. Refusal of sexual favor discriminate the employees	2.75	Moderately Aware
5. Deprive or diminish employment opportunities	2.65	Moderately Aware
Section Mean	2.89	Moderately Aware

Table 2.1 cited the responses of the Government Officials on their level of awareness in terms of work environment. It shows that item number three (3) got the weighted mean of 3.13, which is interpreted as "Moderately Aware". It implies that Government Officials are sometimes aware that sexual harassment occurs in exchange of promotion of work.

Item number five (5) got the lowest weighted mean of 2.65, which is interpreted as "Moderately Aware" and implies that Government Officials are sometimes aware that refusal of Sexual favor may result in deprivation or diminishing employment opportunities.

Section mean got 2.89 which interpreted as "Moderately Aware" which shows that refusal of Sexual favors may result to hostile environment to the employees.

Table 2.2 Level of Awareness of Government Officials in terms of Education or Training Related Aspect

Education or Training Related Aspect	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Sexual favor is made in giving a passing grade	2.50	Fairly Aware
2. Granting honors and scholarships	2.94	Moderately Aware
3. Payment of a stipend or allowance	2.44	Fairly Aware
4. Sexual Refusal result in intimidating students	2.88	Moderately Aware
5. Refusal creates offensive environment	2.69	Moderately Aware
Section Mean	2.69	Moderately Aware

Table 2.2 presents the respondents' responses regarding the Education or Training-related environment. The Table above shows that items one (1) and three (3) got a weighted average of 2.50 and 2.44, respectively, which describes "Fairly Aware", indicating that officials are seldom aware that sexual favor occurs in the school from a teacher towards the students in exchange of giving a passing grade and that sexual refusal may result in intimidation towards the victim.

The rest of the items scored 2.94, 2.88, and 2.69, which are interpreted as “Moderately Aware” and indicate that the Heads of Offices are sometimes aware that, even in academe, these sexual favors may occur in exchange for stipends, honors, and scholarships.

The section mean got 2.69, which falls under the descriptive rating of “Moderately Aware”, implying that the head of an academe is aware that refusal of the said Sexual favors may result in an offensive environment for the students.

Table 2.3 Level of Awareness of Government Officials in terms of their Duty of Employer or as Head of Office

Duty of Employer or Head of Offices	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Promulgate appropriate rules and regulations	4.44	Very Much Aware
2. Create committees on decorum and investigation of Sexual Cases on Sexual Harassment	4.38	Very Much Aware
3. Investigate alleged cases of Sexual harassment	3.88	Highly Aware
4. Disseminate information on this Republic Act	4.06	Highly Aware
5. Post a copy of Republic Act 7877 on bulletin	3.75	Highly Aware
Section Mean	4.10	Highly Aware

Table 2.3 cited students' responses regarding the employer's duty. Items numbered one (1) and two (2) obtained a weighted mean of 4.44 and 4.38, which are described as “Very Much Aware,” which strongly implies that the officials are always aware that it is their duty to promulgate rules and regulations, and a committee should be formed to handle cases like harassment.

The rest of the items got 3.88, 4.06, and 3.75, which, interpreted as “Highly Aware,” indicates that officials are oftentimes aware that it is their duty to investigate cases and should disseminate information and post a copy of Republic Act of 7877.

The section mean was 4.10, indicating “Highly Aware,” suggesting that officials are often aware of their functions in the office and their roles when cases of sexual harassment occur under their administration.

Table 2.4 Level of Awareness of Government Officials in terms of Liability of Head of Office

Liability of Head of Offices	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Liable for damages of Sexual harassment in school	4.00	Highly Aware
2. Settle disputes between the offender and victim	3.81	Highly Aware
3. To manage and represent workers	4.19	Highly Aware
4. Keen understand its constituents	4.13	Highly Aware
5. Operate the function of the job	4.00	Highly Aware
Section Mean	4.03	Highly Aware

Table 2.4 presents the respondents' responses regarding the liability of the Head of Offices. Item number three (3) had the highest weighted mean of 4.19, which is interpreted as “Highly Aware” and implies that Government Officials are often aware of their responsibility to manage and represent their workers in the office.

Item number two (2) got the lowest weighted mean of 3.81, which is interpreted as “Highly Aware” and implies that Government Officials are often aware that it is their liability to settle disputes between offenders and victims whenever sexual harassment cases are reported to them.

The section mean got 4.03, which is interpreted as “Highly Aware,” which shows that they are aware of their liabilities as heads of government offices.

Table 2.5 Level of Awareness of Government Officials in terms of Penalties

Penalties	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Conviction of this act penalized by imprisonment of not less than one (1) nor more than six (6) months	3.63	Highly Aware
2. Convict of Sexual Harassment must pay fine not less than ten thousand (10,000.00) nor more than twenty thousand pesos (20,000.00)	3.81	Highly Aware
3. Administrative Sanction	4.25	Very Much Aware
4. Investigations conducted for Sexual Cases	4.06	Highly Aware
5. Separation of Office	4.13	Highly Aware
Section Mean	3.98	Highly Aware

Table 2.5 presents the respondents' responses regarding penalties. Item number three (3) obtained a weighted average of 4.25, which is described as “Very Much Aware” and strongly indicates that officials are always aware that every civil case handled in the office has corresponding administrative sanctions.

The rest of the items got 3.63, 3.81, 4.06, and 4.13, which, interpreted as “highly aware,” signifies that most of the officials are often aware that the penalties, such as imprisonment and fines, may be imposed for Sexual Harassment cases.

The section mean got 3.98, which is interpreted as “Highly Aware,” which shows that they are all aware that they can be imprisoned, face fines, and be removed from the office when they commit sexual harassment.

Table 3. Correlation of Government Official’s Level of Awareness versus the Profile of Respondents in terms of Age, Gender, Length of Service and Highest Educational Attainment.

Variables	n	r	Degree of Relation
Age Vs. Level of Awareness	16	1.00	Very High Correlation Very Dependable relationship
Gender Vs. Level of Awareness	16	1.00	Very High Correlation Very Dependable relationship
Length of Service Vs. Level of Awareness	16	1.00	Very High Correlation Very Dependable relationship
Highest Educational Attainment Vs. Level of Awareness	16	1.00	Very High Correlation Very Dependable relationship

CV=+/- 0.497

Significant at .05 alpha

two-tailed test

The computed correlation coefficient is 1.00, which is greater than the critical value of 0.497 at the 0.05 level of significance, indicating a significant relationship between the two variables and a “Very High Correlation, Very dependable Relationship”. It implies that the awareness of Government Officials on RA 7877 has a high dependable relationship with their profile.

As shown in the results, all Government Officials of Tacurong City have a very high level of awareness and understanding of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995, also known as RA 7877.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The respondents' ages are 41-50 and 51-60, which are considered Middle Age by Havighurst's Developmental Span. The profile of the respondents in terms of Highest Educational Attainment shows that most of the respondents are Baccalaureate graduates, which qualifies them to lead a Government Office within the minimum qualification of the Civil Service Commission of the Philippines. The profile of the respondents in terms of Length of Service shows that most of the respondents serve the office within 11-20 years and 21-30 years which

imply that most of the Government Officials are in their mid-year or they have the option to take their optional retirement or not based on the Code of Labor. The profile of the respondents by gender shows a balance in leadership; this indicates that Tacurong City implements the Gender and Development advocacy to ensure equal protection and rights for men and women.

The Government Official's level of awareness regarding the Work Aspect was 2.89, which is interpreted as "Moderately Aware," indicating that they are aware that Sexual Harassment can occur in exchange for work favors, such as access to work, promotion, or a higher salary than others.

The Government Official's level of awareness in terms of Education or Training-related aspects got a section mean of 2.69, which is interpreted as "Moderately Aware", implying that they are aware that Sexual favors occur in getting a passing grade, giving a stipend, or even maintaining their scholarships.

The Government Official's level of awareness in terms of Duty of Employer got a section mean of 4.10 which is interpreted as "Highly Aware" implies that they are aware of their function in the office, they are aware that it is their duty as head of office to inform their constituents about this Republic act which aims to promote the welfare of the employee and students under their administration.

The Government Official's level of awareness in terms of Liability of Office got a section mean of 4.03 which interpreted as "Highly Aware", implying that they are very aware of their obligation as head of office to act as mediator whenever cases of Sexual harassment occur in the office, it is also their liability to settle disputes between offender and victims.

The Government Official's level of awareness regarding penalties had a section mean of 3.98, indicating "Highly Aware," suggesting that they understand that every wrong action they take will result in a corresponding penalty, depending on the degree of damage caused.

The correlation between the Government Official's Profile in terms of Age, Gender, Length of Service, and Highest Educational Attainment and their level of awareness shows a value of 1.00, which means that there is a Very High Correlation or a Very dependable relationship. It implies that all governments of Tacurong City have a thorough understanding of RA 7877, the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995.

Based on the conclusions conducted, the following were the recommendations:

This paper recommends that the government, as well as the citizens, must work hand in hand in addressing the issues of sexual harassment in exchange for a favor both in work and educational settings. The government, such as the lawmakers and the Civil Service Commission, must take the optimum precautionary measures in enforcing the law that protects the welfare of the considered weaker individuals in the society. They must craft a firmer penalty for the violators as a consequence of his action so the oppressor can learn a lesson. To the head of the Government Offices, they must manifest high awareness of this law so they can control their employees. They must have a heads-up solution whenever harassment occurs. To the employees/students who are victims of unwelcome sexual harassment, they must take the courage to coordinate with the head of their organization so these kinds of instances might be prevented from happening again. If the victim will be silent about these cases, the perpetrator will continue to ruin their peaceful life and it will keep on happening over and over again cause you did not take the right steps to stop them.

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