

No More Catcalling: Awareness of College of Criminal Justice Education Students on Republic Act 11313 Also Known as Safe Spaces Act

Luningning M. Mendoza, Chenie May R. Sumande, Mamerto C. Mendoza

College of Criminal Justice Education, Occidental Mindoro State College

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ABSTRACT

Due to the increasing cases of gender-based sexual harassment in public spaces, online platforms, workplaces, and educational or training institutions, this study was conducted to assess the extent of students' understanding of the Republic Act 11313 and to give insights that may guide future gender sensitivity programs and policy implementations in higher education institutions. The researchers employed survey research design and conducted in the Occidental Mindoro State College Sablayan Campus in Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro. The respondents were 292 CCJE students of the said campus. Validated survey questionnaire was used as instrument of the study and were administered through online using google form. In data analysis, frequency, percentage and mean were utilized in this study. This study found that most of the respondents were 21-25 years old, BS Industrial Security Management students, first year college and belonged to lower class socio- economic status. Moreover, the respondents were very aware and fully understand the Republic Act 11313 and its key provisions.

Keywords: Catcalling, RA 11313, Safe Spaces Act, Gender, Sexual Harassment

INTRODUCTION

Sexual harassment has become widespread in public places, on social media platform, work places and even in educational and training institutions all over the world [8].

A study conducted in Spain showed that one in five adolescents confirmed being victims of sexual harassment or homophobic bullying. Among these students, half said that they felt bothered by the harassment or bullying [11].

In Canada, adult women also experienced sexual harassment. Phillips et al. (2019) conducted a study among medical students who had immersion in an environment where power imbalances are tangible, between doctors and patients, teachers and students, and men and women wherein discussion and exposure of body parts and sexual functions are also normal in this setting. The results showed that the offender of sexual harassment were predominantly patients 40.39 %, followed by peers or other students 39.65 % and faculty 19.95%. These abuses made the students to felt mixed emotions of being confused, betrayed, angry, disrespected, ashamed and degraded. However, the most worrying effect of sexual harassment on the students was that they could not do or say anything about it for fear of consequences. If the harassment was done by a patient or a teacher, these students were scared that they would obtain a poor performance evaluation which could affect their academic performance or their job opportunities in the future [5].

The study of Social Weather Stations in 2016 found that women are most exposed to sexual harassment. In Quezon City, Philippines, three in five women were sexually harassed at least once in their lifetime. Among the respondents of the study ages 18 to 24, 88% experienced street harassment at least once. Wolf whistling and catcalling were the most experienced cases across ages 12 to 25 [13].

In 2018, the National Capital Region Police Office recorded a total of 3,791 cases of sexual harassment against women and Philippine National Police (PNP) spokesperson Senior Supt. Bernard Banac mentioned that

catcalling and other forms of harassment against women should not be blamed on their clothing [3].

Moreover, a 20-year-old man was arrested by the Quezon City police for verbally harassing his neighbor in violation of a landmark Quezon City ordinance that prohibits catcalling. He asked for her cell phone number, called her "Beh" (Filipino slang for baby) several times and said he wished he were one of her pets. Man explained he did not know there was an ordinance prohibiting catcalling "But every man ... in the Philippines should know that harassment in any form is unacceptable," the victim posted in the social media [7].

To address existing gaps and issues on equality, security, and safety of both women and men in private and public spaces, The Republic of the Philippines created the RA 11313 known as the Safe Spaces Act or the Bawal Bastos Act. The Safe Spaces Act is intended to expand the scope of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995 or Republic Act No. 7877. President Rodrigo Duterte signed this law on April 17 [2].

With this context, the researchers were motivated to determine the level of awareness of College of Criminal Justice Education students in Occidental Mindoro State College- Sablayan on Republic Act 11313.

Objectives

1. Identify the profile of the respondents in terms of age, course, year level and socio-economic status of the family.
2. Determine the level of awareness of the respondents on Republic Act 11313 in terms of gender – based streets and public spaces sexual harassment; gender – based online sexual harassment; qualified gender – based streets, public spaces and online sexual harassment; gender – based sexual harassment in the workplace; and gender- based sexual harassment in education and training institutions.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a descriptive survey research design and was conducted in the Occidental Mindoro State College Sablayan Campus in Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro. The respondents were 292 CCJE students of the said campus who were selected using stratified random sampling to ensure fair representation across year levels. Validated survey questionnaire was used as instrument of the study. There were 2 parts of the questionnaire, the part 1 was for the profile of the respondents. Part 2 were questions on the level of awareness on RA 11313. Five –point Likert scale was used in the level of awareness (5- extremely aware, 4 - very aware, 3 - moderately aware, 2 – slightly aware, 1- not all aware. The researchers asked permission from the program heads of CCJE and from the student respondents prior to the conduct of the study. The online survey was done through google form. In data analysis, the researchers used excel in calculation. Statistical tools such as frequency and percentage was employed to describe the profile of the respondents. To determine the level of awareness of the respondents on RA 11313, mean was utilized.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Results

Table 1 presents the profile of the respondent's age, course, year level and socio-economic status of the family. In terms of age, majority of the respondents were 21-25 years old (49.31%). Most of the students came from BS Industrial Security Management (56.5%) who were in first year college (40.8%). Mostly belong to lower class (90.1%).

Table I Profile Of The Respondents

Profile of the respondents	Frequency	n= 292	Percentage
• Age			
18 -20	137		46.92

21-25	144	49.31
26-30	8	2.74
31 onwards	3	1.03
• Course		
BS Criminology	74	25.3
BS Industrial Security Management	165	56.5
BS Law Enforcement Administration	53	18.2
• Year level		
First year	119	40.8
Second year	47	16.1
Third year	69	23.6
Fourth year	57	19.5
• Socio-economic status		
Upper Class (Family income is greater than P210,000 per month)	12	4.1
Middle Class (Family income is P21,000 – P210, 000 income per month)	29	5.8
Lower Class (Family income is less than P21,000 per month)	263	90.1

Level of awareness of the respondents on Republic Act 11313 in terms of gender – based streets and public spaces sexual harassment; gender – based online sexual harassment; qualified gender – based streets, public spaces and online sexual harassment; gender – based sexual harassment in the workplace; and gender- based sexual harassment in education and training institutions

Table 2 shows the level of awareness of the CCJE students on Republic Act 11313. In terms of Gender – based streets and public spaces sexual harassment, the over-all mean was 3.54 which was interpreted as very aware. It means that the respondents were very familiar with the Article 1 of RA 11313 which stated that sexual harassment includes catcalling, wolf-whistling, unwanted invitations, misogynistic, transphobic, homophobic and sexist slurs, persistent uninvited comments or gestures on a person's appearance, relentless requests for personal details, statement of sexual comments and suggestions, public masturbation or flashing of private parts, groping, or any advances, whether verbal or physical, that is unwanted and has threatened one's sense of personal space and physical safety.

Table II Level Of Awareness Of The Respondents On Republic Act 11313

	Mean	Interpretation
Gender – based streets and public spaces sexual harassment		
1. Gender-based streets and public spaces sexual harassment includes catcalling, wolf-whistling, unwanted invitations, misogynistic, transphobic, homophobic and sexist slurs, persistent uninvited comments or gestures on a person's appearance, relentless requests for personal details, statement of sexual comments and suggestions, public masturbation or flashing of private parts, groping, or any advances, whether verbal or physical, that is unwanted and has threatened one's sense of personal space and physical safety, and committed in public spaces	3.60	Very aware

such as alleys, roads, sidewalks and parks.		
2. Restaurants and Cafes, Bars and Clubs, Resorts and Water Parks, Hotels and Casinos, Cinemas, Malls, Buildings and Other Privately-Owned Places Open to the Public are obliged to provide assistance to victims of gender-based sexual harassment by coordinating with local police authorities immediately after gender-based sexual harassment is reported, making CCTV footage available when ordered by the court, and providing a safe gender-sensitive environment to encourage victims to report gender-based sexual harassment at the first instance.	3.64	Very aware
3. The minimum penalty for Gender-based sexual harassment in streets and public space is fine of one thousand pesos (P1,000.00) and community service of twelve (12) hours inclusive of attendance to a Gender Sensitivity Seminar while the maximumis penalty is arresto mayor in its maximum period or a fine of one hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00).	3.39	Moderately Aware
Over-all Mean	3.54	Very Aware
Gender – based online sexual harassment		
4. Gender-based online sexual harassment includes acts that use information and communications technology in terrorizing and intimidating victims through physical, psychological, and emotional threats, unwanted sexual misogynistic, transphobic, homophobic and sexist remarks and comments online whether publicly or through direct and private messages, invasion of victim’s privacy through cyberstalking and incessant messaging, uploading and sharing without the consent of the victim, any form of media that contains photos, voice, or video with sexual content, any unauthorized recording and sharing of any of the victim’s photos, videos, or any information online, impersonating identities of victims online or posting lies about victims to harm their reputation, or filing, false abuse reports to online platforms to silence victims.	3.64	3.43
5. For gender-based online sexual harassment, the PNP Anti-Cybercrime Group (PNPACG) as the National Operational Support Unit of the PNP is primarily responsible for the implementation of pertinent Philippine laws on cybercrime, shall receive complaints of gender-based online sexual harassment and develop an online mechanism for reporting real-time gender-based online sexual harassment acts and apprehend perpetrators.	3.72	Very aware
6. The penalty of prison correctional in its medium period or a fine of not less than One hundred thousand pesos (₱100,000.00) but not more than Five hundred thousand pesos (₱500,000.00), or both, at the discretion of the court shall be imposed upon any person found guilty of any gender-based online sexual harassment.	3.43	Moderately aware
Over-all Mean	3.60	Very aware
Qualified gender – based streets, public spaces and online sexual harassment		
7. It is considered as Qualified Gender-Based Streets, Public Spaces Sexual harassment if the act takes place in a common carrier or PUV, including, but not limited to, jeepneys, taxis, tricycles, or app-based transport network vehicle services, where the perpetrator is the driver of the vehicle and the offended party is a passenger in which the penalty next higher in degree	3.57	Very aware
8. It considered as Qualified Gender-Based Streets, Public Spaces Sexual harassment if the offended party is a minor, a senior citizen, or a person with disability (PWD), or a breastfeeding mother nursing her child in which he penalty next higher in degree	3.60	Very aware

9. It considered as Qualified Gender-Based Streets, Public Spaces Sexual harassment if the perpetrator is a member of the uniformed services, such as the PNP and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), and the act was perpetrated while the perpetrator was in uniform in which the penalty in which he penalty next higher in degree.	3.60	Very aware
Over-all Mean	3.59	Very aware
Gender-Based Sexual Harassment in the Workplace		
10. The crime of gender-based sexual harassment in the workplace includes an act or series of acts involving any unwelcome sexual advances, requests or demand for sexual favors or any act of sexual nature, whether done verbally, physically or through the use of technology such as text messaging or electronic mail or through any other forms of information and communication systems, that has or could have a detrimental effect on the conditions of an individual's employment or education, job performance or opportunities.	3.66	Very aware
11. The crime of gender-based sexual harassment in the workplace includes a conduct of sexual nature and other conduct-based on sex affecting the dignity of a person, which is unwelcome, unreasonable, and offensive to the recipient, whether done verbally, physically or through the use of technology such as text messaging or electronic mail or through any other forms of information and communication systems.	3.64	Very aware
12. The crime of gender-based sexual harassment in the workplace includes a conduct that is unwelcome and pervasive and creates an intimidating, hostile or humiliating environment for the recipient: Provided, That the crime of gender-based sexual harassment may also be committed between peers and those committed to a superior officer by a subordinate, or to a teacher by a student, or to a trainer by a trainee.	3.67	Very aware
Over-all Mean	3.66	Very aware
Gender-Based Sexual Harassment In Educational And Training Institutions		
13. All schools, whether public or private, shall designate an officer-in-charge to receive complaints regarding violations of this Act, and shall, ensure that the victims are provided with a gender-sensitive environment that is both respectful to the victims' needs and conducive to truth-telling.	3.75	Very aware
14. Every school must adopt and publish grievance procedures to facilitate the filing of complaints by students and faculty members. Even if an individual does not want to file a complaint or does not request that the school take any action on behalf of a student or faculty member and school authorities have knowledge or reasonably know about a possible or impending act of gender-based sexual harassment or sexual violence, the school should promptly investigate to determine the veracity of such information or knowledge and the circumstances under which the act of gender-based sexual harassment or sexual violence were committed, and take appropriate steps to resolve the situation.	3.75	Very aware
15. Once a perpetrator is found guilty, the educational institution may reserve the right to strip the diploma from the perpetrator or issue an expulsion order.	3.65	Very aware
Over-all Mean	3.72	Very aware
Grand Mean	3.62	Very aware

Scale: 0 -1.49 = Not all aware, 1.50-2.49 = Slightly aware, 2.50 – 3.49 = Moderately aware, 3.50- 4.49 = Very aware, 4.50-5.49= Extremely aware

The minimum penalty for Gender-based sexual harassment in streets and public space is fine of one thousand pesos (₱1,000.00) and community service of twelve (12) hours inclusive of attendance to a Gender Sensitivity Seminar while the maximum is penalty is arresto mayor in its maximum period or a fine of one hundred thousand pesos (₱100,000.00).

Similarly, in terms of Gender – based online sexual harassment, respondents were very aware (mean = 3.63) which implies that CCJE students were very cognizant of the forms sexual harassment occur in the virtual world such as acts that use information and communications technology in terrorizing and intimidating victims through physical, psychological, and emotional threats, unwanted sexual misogynistic, transphobic, homophobic and sexist remarks and comments online whether publicly or through direct and private messages, invasion of victim's privacy through cyberstalking and incessant messaging, uploading and sharing without the consent of the victim, any form of media that contains photos, voice, or video with sexual content, any unauthorized recording and sharing of any of the victim's photos, videos, or any information online, impersonating identities of victims online or posting lies about victims to harm their reputation, or filing, false abuse reports to online platforms to silence victims.

The respondents were very aware (mean = 3.59) on the qualified gender – based streets, public spaces and online sexual harassment - if the offended party is a minor, a senior citizen, or a person with disability (PWD), or a breastfeeding mother nursing her child in which her penalty next higher in degree. Also, if the perpetrator is a member of the uniformed services, such as the PNP and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), and the act was perpetrated while the perpetrator was in uniform in which the penalty in which he penalty next higher in degree.

In terms of gender-based sexual harassment in the workplace, the respondents were very aware with over-all mean of 3.66 which means that they were well informed that this crime includes an act or series of acts involving any unwelcome sexual advances, requests or demand for sexual favors or any act of sexual nature, whether done verbally, physically or through the use of technology such as text messaging or electronic mail or through any other forms of information and communication systems, that has or could have a detrimental effect on the conditions of an individual's employment or education, job performance or opportunities. Moreover, the crime of gender-based sexual harassment may also be committed between peers and those committed to a superior officer by a subordinate, or to a teacher by a student, or to a trainer by a trainee.

The respondents were very aware (over-all mean = 3.72) of gender-based sexual harassment in educational and training institutions. This implies that they were familiar with the article 5 of the RA11313 that every school must adopt and publish grievance procedures to facilitate the filing of complaints by students and faculty members. Even if an individual does not want to file a complaint or does not request that the school take any action on behalf of a student or faculty member and school authorities have knowledge or reasonably know about a possible or impending act of gender-based sexual harassment or sexual violence, the school should promptly investigate to determine the veracity of such information or knowledge and the circumstances under which the act of gender-based sexual harassment or sexual violence were committed, and take appropriate steps to resolve the situation.

In general, the respondents were very aware (grand mean = 3.62) which means that as CCJE students they were well informed of the Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act 11313 because they will be future implementers of this act. The highest mean (3.72) was on gender-based sexual harassment in educational and training institutions which implies that they were very acquainted with duties and responsibilities of educational institutions on issues of sexual harassment since they are students. While the lowest mean (3.59) was on qualified gender – based streets, public spaces and online sexual harassment which means that they still need to more information on this area since RA 11313 is just a new law.

DISCUSSION

The respondents were very aware of the new Republic Act 11313. This means that OMSC strategies such as inclusion in the syllabus of the discussion of Gender and Development related topic at the start of every semester and conducting webinars that tackled Safe Spaces Act during the pandemic which were participated by the student respondents were effective. This is similar to the findings of Borito and Yango (2022) who investigated the 374 respondents of Pamantasan ng Cabuyao on their level of awareness, attitude and level of compliance with RA11313 Safe Spaces. They found that respondents had high level of awareness, very positive attitude, and

the very high level of compliance to RA11313 Safe Spaces Act [1]. Moreover, this is in line with findings from previous studies that suggest increased awareness among younger generations about these issues of sexual harassment [4].

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

1. Most of the respondents were 21-25 years old, BS Industrial Security Management students, first year college and belonged to lower class socio- economic status.
2. They were very aware of RA11313.

B. Recommendations

The institution may organize seminars and workshops that are age-appropriate, practical, and accessible, focusing on how RA 11313 (Safe Spaces Act) applies in daily life and in the security profession.

Although students are already very aware of RA 11313, regular updates, forums, and information drives may be maintained to reinforce awareness and translate it into consistent behavioral practice.

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