



Extent of Awareness on the Anti-VAWC Law Among the Criminology Students

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Abstract:

This study embraced the quantitative type of research which involves the quantitative data that are numerical requiring statistical analysis methods. As to the profile of the respondents, around seventy-two percent among the respondents comprise the age bracket of nineteen to twenty-one years old; seventy-nine percent are second year level students; seventy-two percent are male respondents; forty-one percent has one to three children in the family; and fifty-four percent among the respondents have a monthly family income of ten thousand pesos and below. as noted in this research study, many of the respondents are not aware of the following as acts of violence:

Hitting, kicking, punching, or causing harmful injury to the woman or child; Acts of grave threat that cause a woman or her child a traumatic experience or risk of imminent danger; Shouting, blaming, use of profane language to a woman or her child to feel low self – esteem; Depriving a woman and her child to provide the basic needs, and sustain the educational needs of their child; Preventing a woman to practice her profession or to work in any establishment to gain additional income; Forcing a woman and/or her children to watch a pornographic scene and engage in any sexual activity and/or acts of lasciviousness; Forcing a woman and/or her children to engage in copulation; Limiting a woman and her children to attend social gatherings with her family, relatives/close kin, or even to meet neighbor's; and Staying of intimate partner or husband in the house of a woman with her child without any consent or against her will. Few of the respondents are not aware on the following provisions of law- The privilege of filing 10 days leave of absence with pay to cope up with suffering; Filing of complaint even uncommon relationship, such as lesbian/gay, or whom she has a sexual or dating relationship with LGBTQi+ that commits intimate partner violence; and Filing a VAW case against her intimate partner, husband, or any person who commit domestic violence in barangay or lawful authority. Indeed, seminars and orientation as well as strong implementation of the law are highly recommended.

Keywords: *Extent, Awareness, Anti-VAWC law, Criminology students, Philippines.*

Introduction

The Anti-Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) law is one of the most important legislations which the Philippine

Congress has ever made. This is giving special protection and shelter to women and children in the Philippine society who are the most fragile and vulnerable members of our community.



Indeed, gender inequality is still true now in the 21st century despite the very progressive trend of cultural, racial, and sexual boundaries being erased in almost all areas of life nowadays. The prevalence of violence against women and their children (VAWC) is so extensive and grave these days that the international community has been prompted to declare it as a public health and human right issue of worldwide scope (Guedes et al., 2016). The international community is much alarmed on this prevalence like the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women of 1993 and the Beijing Platform for Action of 1995 (World Health Organization, 2021). The passage of Republic Act 9262 or the Anti-Violence against Women and their Children Act of 2004, is the biggest step the government has taken so far towards ending VAWC (UNICEF, 2020). The government has also partnered with the United Nations (UN) agencies and civil society organizations in pursuing its goals of ending VAWC and helping people who suffered from gender-based violence (United Nations, 2020). Unfortunately, many cases of VAWC are unreported and victims choose to live in silence and shame, carrying the stigma throughout their lives instead of blowing the whistle on the perpetrators who frequently are the victims' relatives or acquaintances (Forum on Global Violence Prevention, 2011). Most victims choose not to report incidents of abuse mainly because they are not aware of their legal rights emphasizing the need to increase public awareness on women's rights. A lot of people are not aware that VAWC is a public offense and there are laws in place to protect women from abuse. But notably, "ignorantia legis non excusat," meaning, the ignorance of the law is not an excuse from compliance therewith. And the law does not protect those who slumber on their rights. It's not only women, but also men and potential offenders, should be aware of the law. Both men and women should also be aware of the fact that VAWC are unconstitutional and have major legal consequences. According to the United Nations, World Health Organization in 2021, VAWC is "any" act of gender-based violence against women, whether in public or private life, that causes or is likely to inflict

physiological, sexual, or psychological pain or suffering to women, including threats, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty. Gender-based violence is any form of violence directed towards women based on their sex. It is undeniable that the VAWC is a grave public health concern with multiple impacts on women's mental, physical, and reproductive health. Based on the reports of the Daily Tribune Philippines (2021), violence against women happens in one out of every four Filipinas. As a brief history, on March 2004 the then President Macapagal-Arroyo signed R.A. 9262 which defined VAWC as "any act or a series of acts committed by any person against a woman who is his wife, former wife, or against a woman with whom the person has or had a sexual or dating relationship, or with whom he has a common child, or against her child whether legitimate or illegitimate, within or without the family abode, which result in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering, or economic abuse including threats of such acts, battery, assault, coercion, harassment or arbitrary deprivation of liberty". It includes, but is not limited to, physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, and economic abuse. The penalties to the violators are imprisonment, paying a fine of not less than one hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00) but not more than three hundred thousand pesos (300,000.00), and the violators shall undergo mandatory psychological counseling or psychiatric treatment and shall report compliance to the court. Although there is a law protecting the welfare of women and children, there is always a question as to the level of awareness regarding the content and implementation of R.A.9262. Additionally, domestic violence is an epidemic worldwide, and researchers indicate that from one quarter to one half of all women in the world have experienced abuse by intimate partners (The Advocates for Human Rights, 2006). Initially viewed mainly as a human rights issue, it is increasingly seen as an important public health problem (Krug et al., 2002). The physical health consequences of violence against women include fractures, abdominal/thoracic injuries, chronic health conditions, chronic pain and gastrointestinal disorders. Women subjected to domestic

violence are three times more likely to have a gynecological problem than non-abused women. As can be gleaned from the law, it is hereby declared that the State values the dignity of women and children and guarantees full respect for human rights. The State also recognizes the need to protect the family and its members particularly women and children, from violence and threats to their personal safety and security.

Towards this end, the State shall exert efforts to address violence committed against women and children in keeping with the fundamental freedoms guaranteed under the Constitution and the Provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination Against Women, Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other international human rights instruments of which the Philippines is a party. Particularly among the future law enforcement authorities in the country, the extent of awareness on this significant legislation is vital to successfully realize and accomplish the thrust of RA 9262. Our future policemen are without excuses to understand and grasp the essence of the said statute wholeheartedly and sincerely.

Methodology

This study embraced the quantitative type of research which involves the quantitative data that are numerical requiring statistical analysis methods to interpret the data. A survey approach and evaluation were done to accomplish this research endeavor. The sample size was selected using the Slovincs formula which states that $n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$. Further, this was conducted in the University of Cebu Lapu-Lapu Mandaue (UCLM). The school is located at A.C. Cortes Ave. Looc, Mandaue City. The research instrument of this study was an adapted or modified survey questionnaire. Here, the data were collated, tabulated, and subjected to statistical treatment. To determine the percentage of the respondents, Simple Percentage was used. The frequency of the respondents generated were divided by the total number of teachers then, multiplied by 100%.

Results and Discussions

As to the age of the respondents, about seventy-two percent among the respondents comprise the nineteen to twenty-one years old category. About thirteen percent belong to the age bracket of fifteen to eighteen years old. And almost fifteen percent are respondents who are twenty-two to twenty-four years old. Almost seventy-nine percent of the respondents are second year level Criminology students and only eighteen percent are first year level students. As regards the gender, seventy-two percent among them are male and about twenty-eight percent are female respondents. Regarding the family size, forty-one percent among them has one to three children in the family; about thirty-one percent among them has four to six children in the family; almost fifteen percent among them does not belong to these groups; and thirteen percent has seven children and above in their family. In the matter of family income, about fifty-four percent among the respondents consists of those with family income of P10,000 and below per month. Nineteen percent has a family income of P11,000-15,000 per month; about eleven percent has a monthly family income of P21,000 to 30,000 and the eight percent among the respondents has a family income of P31,000 and above per month.

On the acts of violence, about thirty-nine percent of the respondents invoked that they are not aware that hitting, kicking, punching, or causing harmful injury to the woman or child constitute an act of violence. About twenty-four percent said that they are very aware on the said acts as acts of violence; twenty-five percent are aware, and the twelve percent are slightly aware that these are acts of violence. The acts of grave threat that cause a woman or her child a traumatic experience or risk of imminent danger is not known as an act of violence according to the thirty-seven percent of the respondents. About twenty-nine percent among them invoked that they are aware on this as an act of violence; about seventeen percent among the respondents stated that they are very aware on this. On shouting, blaming, use of profane language to a woman or her child to feel low self-esteem, this is not known as an act of violence

according to the almost thirty-four percent of the respondents. About thirty-one percent of the respondents are aware on this; almost nineteen percent are very aware and about seventeen percent among the respondents are strongly aware on this act of violence. Additionally, thirty-two percent among the respondents are aware that depriving a woman and her children on financial support to become dependent; about thirteen percent are very aware; almost twenty-seven percent are slightly aware; and twenty-eight percent among the respondents are not aware at all. About thirty percent among the respondents are aware that depriving a woman and her child to provide the basic needs and sustain the educational needs of their child is an act of violence. Twenty-two percent among them are slightly aware; about seventeen percent of the respondents are very aware and the thirty-one percent of them are not aware at all. About thirty-three percent among the respondents are not aware that preventing a woman to practice her profession or to work in any establishment to gain additional income is an act of violence. Thirty-one percent are aware on this; about twenty-one percent are slightly aware; and around fifteen percent are very aware on this act of violence. About thirty-three percent among the respondents are aware that controlling a woman to make her own decisions or actions is an act of violence; almost thirty percent are not aware on this; about thirteen percent are very aware and almost twenty-five percent of the respondents are slightly aware on this act of violence. Notably, around forty percent among the respondents are not aware that forcing a woman and/or her children to watch a pornographic scene and engage in any sexual activity and/or acts of lasciviousness; twenty-six percent among them are aware; seventeen percent are very aware and about seventeen percent also are slightly aware on the matter. Furthermore, around forty percent among the respondents are not aware that forcing a woman and/or her children to engage in copulation is an act of violence. Fourteen percent are very aware; twenty percent are slightly aware; and around twenty-seven percent among the respondents are aware on this act of violence. Limiting a woman and her children to attend social

gatherings with her family, relatives/close kin, or even to meet neighbor's is an act of violence and this known to twenty-four percent of the respondents. Ten percent are very aware; twenty-eight percent are slightly aware and around thirty-seven percent among them are not aware on this. Moreover, forty percent among the respondents are not aware that staying of intimate partner or husband in the house of a woman, with her child without any consent or against her will; about twenty-four percent of the respondents are slightly aware; about ten percent are very aware and twenty-six percent are aware on this act of violence.

As to the terms and conditions on the anti-VAWC law, about thirty-two percent among the respondents are not aware that this VAWC is not committed by men alone; twenty-eight percent said that they are aware; other twenty-eight percent invoked that they are slightly aware and about twelve percent among the respondents are very aware on this statement. About thirty-six percent of the respondents are aware that VAWC includes physical, sexual, psychological violence and economic abuse against women and their children; about twenty-three percent among the respondents are not aware on this statement; twenty-four percent among them are slightly aware and around seventeen percent are very aware on this premise. On the statement that children covered in VAWC are those below 18 years of age or older but are incapable of taking care of themselves, twenty percent of the respondents are not aware on this. About thirty percent are aware on this premise; around fifteen percent are very aware and about thirty-one percent of the respondents are slightly aware on the statement. Around thirty-five percent of the respondents are aware that battery covered VAWC law is an act of inflicting physical harm upon the woman or her child resulting to physical and psychological distress. Only around twenty-two percent of the respondents are not aware; eleven percent are very aware; and around thirty-two percent of the respondents are slightly aware of this provision. On the statement that one can file a VAWC case against a live-in partner who is physically abusive, thirty-seven percent among them are aware on this

statement; thirty-three percent are slightly aware; ten percent are very aware; and the nineteen percent are not aware on the statement. Around twenty-six percent among the respondents are not aware that they can file a VAWC case against their husband who is engaging in extra-marital affairs; about fifteen percent are very aware; around twenty-nine percent are slightly aware on the statement; and the thirty percent are aware on the said premise. On the premise that one can file a VAWC case against a husband who is threatening to kill her, around twenty-three percent among them are slightly aware on the statement; thirty-five percent are aware; around eighteen percent are very aware; and about twenty-four percent of the respondents are not aware on the statement. That one can file a VAWC case against her boyfriend who does not give financial support to the common child, thirty percent among the respondents are aware of this statement. Thirteen percent of the respondents are very aware; around thirty percent among them are slightly aware and the twenty-seven percent are not aware on the statement. That one can file a VAWC case against her boyfriend who threatens to kill her if she breaks up with him, around twenty-eight percent of the respondents are aware of this provision; around twenty-two percent are slightly aware; nineteen percent are very aware and around twenty-six percent of the respondents are not aware at all. For the reasons of unreported violence incidents, thirty-two percent are aware that one reason of this unreported cases is the fear of threat and harm for herself and her family. Sixteen percent are very aware of this; twenty-four percent are not aware, and the twenty-seven percent of the respondents are slightly aware on the statement. Around thirty-one percent among the respondents are aware that the fear of losing financial support from the abuser is one reason of these unreported cases. Twenty-seven percent are slightly aware; thirteen percent are very aware, and the twenty-nine percent are not aware of this premise. That the victim here is afraid that filing a case will have an emotional impact on the children, around thirty-eight percent among the respondents are aware on the premise; around twelve percent are very aware; twenty-eight

percent are slightly aware and the twenty-two percent of the respondents are not aware on the statement. That one does not know whom to approach for help, thirty percent of the respondents are aware on the premise; fourteen percent are very aware; around thirty-one percent are slightly aware and about twenty-five percent of the respondents are not aware on the statement. In the belief that personal matters were the cause of the abuse, around thirty percent of the respondents are aware on the statement; thirty-one percent are slightly aware; only eleven percent are very aware, and the twenty-eight percent of the respondents are not aware on the statement. That the victim does not want the abuser to be in serious trouble, thirty-four percent of the respondents are aware on the premise; ten percent are very aware; around twenty-four percent are slightly aware and about thirty-two percent of the respondents are not aware on the premise. That the victim has hope that the abuser will change later on in life, around thirty-one percent of the respondents are aware on the statement; around ten percent are very aware; thirty-three percent are slightly aware; and the twenty-six percent are not aware on the statement. That the victim does not know enough about the law that protects women and children, thirty-three percent are aware on the statement; around nine percent are very aware; about thirty-three percent of the respondents are slightly aware; and the twenty-five percent among them are not aware on the premise. That there is no support from friends and relatives, thirty-five percent among the respondents are aware on this; around ten percent are very aware; twenty-five percent are slightly aware and around thirty percent of the respondents are not aware at all on the premise. That the family (mother-in-law, relative, or parents) encouraged the victim not to complain about the betterment of one's children and spouse, twenty-eight percent among the respondents are aware on the statement; around ten percent are very aware; thirty percent are slightly aware and around thirty-two percent are not aware on the statement. That the victim prefers to keep quiet and keeps it to herself, around thirty-one percent of the respondents are aware on the statement; twelve percent are very aware; thirty percent are

slightly aware; and the twenty-seven percent of the respondents are not aware at all. As to the best medium for other people to know about RA 9262 VAWC Law, around ninety-three percent among the respondents said in the affirmative on law books; around eighty-eight percent among them on TV and radio advertisement; seventy-one percent among the respondents on experiences; ninety-one percent on seminars and orientations; around seventy-five percent among the respondents on posters and advertisements; eighty-six percent among them on newspapers and magazines; and the ninety percent of the respondents invoked the online sources. With respect to the recommended ways to lessen the abuse of women, the use of pamphlets and flyers should be available in selected public places is affirmed by the eighty-one percent of the respondents. Ninety-two percent of the respondents invoked the strong implementation of the law; ninety-three percent on seminars and orientations; eighty-seven percent on advertisements and commercials about VAWC; to include the VAWC Law in school curriculum; and the eighty-nine percent on the free counseling for women.

Conclusion

As to the profile of the respondents, around seventy-two percent among the respondents comprise the age bracket of nineteen to twenty-one years old; seventy-nine percent are second year level students; seventy-two percent are male respondents; forty-one percent has one to three children in the family; and fifty-four percent among the respondents have a monthly family income of ten thousand pesos and below. Significantly, as noted in this research study, many of the respondents are not aware of the following as acts of violence: Hitting, kicking, punching, or causing harmful injury to the woman or child; Acts of grave threat that cause a woman or her child a traumatic experience or risk of imminent danger; Shouting, blaming, use of profane language to a woman or her child to feel low self – esteem; Depriving a woman and her child to provide the basic needs, and sustain the educational needs of their child; Preventing

a woman to practice her profession or to work in any establishment to gain additional income; Forcing a woman and/or her children to watch a pornographic scene and engage in any sexual activity and/or acts of lasciviousness; Forcing a woman and/or her children to engage in copulation; Limiting a woman and her children to attend social gatherings with her family, relatives/close kin, or even to meet neighbor's; and Staying of intimate partner or husband in the house of a woman with her child without any consent or against her will. The good point is, the respondents are aware on the following as acts of violence- Depriving a woman and her children on financial support to become dependent and Controlling a woman to make her own decisions or actions. As to the provisions of the law, they are aware on the following- Request for the Barangay Protection Order to secure Permanent or Temporary Protection against the offender not to harm the woman and her child; Assistance of the barangay desk officer to file an action against the offender who commits violence against women and their children; Any concerned citizen who has knowledge of the commission of domestic violence may file (in behalf of the victim – survivor) a complaint against the offender; Assistance from clinical or psychological experts to help a woman suffering from Battered Woman Syndrome; Legal assistance from the Public Attorney's Office to defend a woman and her child against any form of domestic violence. But some of the respondents are not aware on the following provisions of law- The privilege of filing 10 days leave of absence with pay to cope up with suffering; Filing of complaint even uncommon relationship, such as lesbian/gay, or whom she has a sexual or dating relationship with LGBTQi+ that commits intimate partner violence; and Filing a VAW case against her intimate partner, husband, or any person who commit domestic violence in barangay or lawful authority. Furthermore, many of the respondents are aware of the following terms and conditions of the law- that VAWC includes physical, sexual, psychological violence and economic abuse against women and children; battery covered VAWC law is an act of inflicting physical harm upon the woman or her child

resulting to physical and psychological distress; that physical violence under VAWC Law refers to an act that include bodily or physical harm; that one can file a VAWC case against his live-in partner who is physically abusive; that one can file a VAWC case against her husband who is engaging in extra-marital affairs; that one can file a VAWC case against her husband who is threatening to kill her and one is afraid he will do it; that one can file a VAWC case against her boyfriend who does not give financial support to their common child; and that one can file a VAWC case against her boyfriend who threatens to kill her if she breaks up with him. But around thirty-two percent invoked that they are not aware that VAWC is not committed by men alone. And that they strongly aware that children covered in VAWC are those below 18 years of age or older but are incapable of taking care of themselves. Many of the respondents are aware of the following reasons for the unreported violence incidents- Fear of threat and harm for herself and of the family; Fear of losing financial support from the abuser; Afraid that filing a case will have an emotional impact on the children; Do not want the abuser to be in serious trouble; Do not know enough about the law that protects women and children; and many prefer to keep quiet and keep it to themselves. But they are strongly aware on the following reasons - Do not know whom to approach for help; In the belief that personal matters was the cause of the abuse; Have hope that the abuser will change later on in life; Ashamed to be the topic of conversation in the barangay. Additionally, for the best medium for other people to know about RA 9262 VAWC Law, law books ranked one; seminars and orientation as second; the online sources as third; tv and radio advertisements as the fourth; newspapers and magazines as fifth; posters and advertisements as sixth; and experiences ranked the least source or medium of information. Finally, as to the recommended ways to lessen the abuse of women, more than the majority of the respondents stressed on the following- Seminars and Orientation; Strong implementation of the law; Pamphlets and flyers should be available in selected public places; Advertisements and commercials about VAWC;

Include the VAWC Law in school curriculum; and the Free counseling for Women.

Recommendations

Based on the study, more than the majority of the respondents emphasized the following- Seminars and Orientation; Strong implementation of the law; Pamphlets and flyers should be available in selected public places; Advertisements and commercials about VAWC; Include the VAWC Law in school curriculum; and the Free counseling for Women as the way to increase or improve the awareness level among the Criminology students as respondents of this research undertaking.

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