

**Sexual Harassment of Kitchen Department's Staff in Hotel Business:
A Study of Perspectives from The Internship Students of Dusit Thani College**
**การคุกคามทางเพศของผู้ปฏิบัติงานแผนกครัวในธุรกิจโรงแรม : ศึกษาผ่านมุมมองนักศึกษา
ฝึกงานวิทยาลัยดุสิตธานี**

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the problems and effects of sexual harassment experienced by internship students of the kitchen departments within the hotel business. This study also investigated ways to prevent and solve the problems of sexual harassment in the workplace. The in-depth interview method was conducted for this qualitative research. The data were collected from Dusit Thani internship students, a total of 10 students that interned in hotel businesses in Thailand during the academic year 2013. The results showed that sexual harassment within the kitchen departments in hotel businesses rarely occurred. This problem mostly occurred with internship students rather than hotel staff. The internship students tended to be harassed by hotel staff who were not ranked in high positions. The most frequent harassment was verbal harassment. The sexual harassment had effects on the victim's mentality. It created stress, fear and anxiety. These effects led to performance effects at the workplace. However, there were three ways to prevent this problem, which were 1) Internship students needed to know how to behave appropriately in order to avoid the risk of harassment, along with knowing the right way to solve the problem in case it occurred. 2) The institutions must educate those students about the issue of sexual harassment and how to respond if that problem occurred with them before sending them to work, and 3) the organizations that accepted internship students to work must provide guidelines for the prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace by providing knowledge of sexual harassment through various

channels for employees and internship students along with enforcing the regulations and punishment in sexual harassment problems seriously.

Keywords: Sexual harassment, Hotel business, Internship student

บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษาในครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาสภาพปัญหา และผลกระทบที่เกิดจากการคุกคามทางเพศของนักศึกษาฝึกงานแผนกครัวในธุรกิจโรงแรมที่ถูกคุกคามทางเพศ และศึกษาแนวทางการป้องกันและแก้ไขปัญหาการคุกคามทางเพศในที่ทำงานตามทัศนะของนักศึกษาฝึกงานแผนกครัวในธุรกิจโรงแรมที่ถูกคุกคามทางเพศ โดยเป็นการศึกษาเชิงคุณภาพ เก็บข้อมูลโดยการสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึกจากนักศึกษาวิตาลัยดุสิตธานีที่ฝึกงานในธุรกิจโรงแรมในปีการศึกษา 2556 จำนวน 10 คน ผลการวิจัยพบว่า ปัญหาการคุกคามทางเพศที่เกิดขึ้นในแผนกครัวของธุรกิจโรงแรมเกิดขึ้นไม่บ่อยนัก ผู้ที่ถูกคุกคามทางเพศส่วนใหญ่เป็นนักศึกษาฝึกงานมากกว่าพนักงาน ผู้ที่คุกคามทางเพศส่วนใหญ่จะเป็นแค่ระดับพนักงาน ลักษณะของการคุกคามทางเพศที่เกิดขึ้นบ่อยที่สุด คือ การคุกคามด้วยวาจา ผลกระทบที่เกิดจากการถูกคุกคามทางเพศ คือ มีผลต่อสภาพจิต เกิดความเครียด ความกลัว และความอึดอัด นอกจากนี้ยังส่งผลกระทบต่อการทำงาน คือ ไม่อยากไปปฏิบัติงาน สำหรับแนวทางในการป้องกันและแก้ไขปัญหาการคุกคามทางเพศตามทัศนะของนักศึกษาฝึกงานนั้น แบ่งออกเป็น 3 กลุ่ม คือ ตัวนักศึกษาฝึกงานจะต้องรู้จักการวางตัวให้เหมาะสม รวมทั้งต้องแก้ไขปัญหาย่างถูกวิธีในกรณีที่เกิดปัญหาดังกล่าวขึ้น สถาบันการศึกษา ต้องมีการให้ความรู้ ความเข้าใจเกี่ยวกับปัญหาการคุกคามทางเพศก่อนส่งนักศึกษาออกไปฝึกงาน และมีมาตรการในการดำเนินการหากปัญหาดังกล่าวเกิดขึ้นกับนักศึกษาฝึกงาน ส่วนองค์กรที่รับนักศึกษาฝึกงานต้อง ต้องมีแนวทางในการป้องกัน โดยการให้ความรู้ความเข้าใจเกี่ยวกับปัญหาการคุกคามทางเพศ ผ่านช่องทางต่าง ๆ ให้กับพนักงาน และนักศึกษาฝึกงาน และหากปัญหาดังกล่าวเกิดขึ้นจะต้องดำเนินการกับผู้ที่ถูกคุกคามทางเพศอย่างจริงจัง

คำสำคัญ : การคุกคามทางเพศ ธุรกิจโรงแรม นักศึกษาฝึกงาน

Background

Currently problems of sexual harassment are discussed often because people are giving more importance to issues of human rights, particularly with regard to sexual harassment in the workplace. Thailand has taken measures to challenge this issue and in 1998, Article 16 of a Royal Decree was proclaimed for labour protection. The main point is that “ it is prohibited for employers, supervisors and inspectors to sexually harass sub-ordinates who are females or juveniles” (Royal Decree, 1998) and in the year 2551 there was an amendment to the law to include sexual annoyance (Royal Decree, 2551).

Sexual harassment occurs within organizations of all types, with hotel businesses being one type which often appears in the news, in connection with occurrences of sexual harassment. This is consistent with the findings of Yeung (2004), which described that ‘problem of sexual harassment is one of the ethical issues which is the second most important within the hospitality industry’ as demonstrated in the following details.

Table 1 : Ethical Problems in the Hospitality Industry

Level of Importance	Ethical Problems in the Hospitality Industry
1	Theft of resources by staff
2	Sexual Harassment within the Workplace
3	Waste Disposal not meeting accepted guidelines
4	Acceptance of bribery by staff
5	Production of goods which fail to meet safety standards

In terms of sexual harassment experienced by internship students as a result of them working within the hospitality industry, students are required to experience supervised field training as specified within the curriculum in order to develop their skills and gain experience. The researcher was in a position within the faculty which organized the internships and also as an instructor of Business Ethics and was able to hear about issues related to sexual harassment occurring while the students were on their internships. Although sexual harassment was not encountered at all organizations, it is considered an important issue which should be studied more deeply.

Therefore, in this research, the researcher need to study the issue of sexual harassment experienced by internship students within kitchen departments within the hotel industry by covering the extent of the problems and the impact that sexual harassment has on the internship students. Also, included in the study were approaches to protecting against and solving problems that result from the above, from the perspective of the students in order to gain a deeper understanding of the problems and provide approaches to protection both within kitchen departments in hotels and other types of organizations.

Objectives

1. To study the types of problems and effects occurring through sexual harassment of internships students working within kitchen departments within hotel businesses.

2. To study ways to protecting and solving problems caused by sexual harassment through the perspective of internships students working within kitchen departments within hotel businesses.

Literature Reviews

This research is based on theories and previous research as follows.

Sexual Harassment

The following provide definitions of sexual harassment:

Mackinnon (1979) describes it as "the unwanted imposition of sexual requirements in the context of a relationship of unequal power"

Bravo and Cassedy (1992) describe it as "to harass someone is to bother him or her. Sexual harassment is bothering someone in a sexual way"

Physical sexual harassment involves use of physical violence, touching or unnecessary close proximity.

Verbal sexual harassment involves expressing opinions or questioning about appearance or personal lives, sex or talking on the telephone about sexual matters.

Non-verbal sexual harassment includes behaviours such as making mouth shapes, use of body posture, or gestures in a sexual way or use of equipment in a sexual way

It is possible to conclude that sexual harassment can be defined as "a sexual action or behavior that is not appropriate for other persons that is threatening, through touching, verbal, or non-verbal behavior which leads to discomfort, annoyance, shame or dishonor by the affected person"

Factors affecting sexual harassment

If discussing factors affecting sexual harassment, it is necessary to consider structure within society, particularly the authority within a patriarchal society, where males are dominant and females have secondary status. Due to this, females so often fall victims of sexual harassment. This is often seen in Asian countries where males are considered more valuable than females and hence this power is probably a contributing factor to the problem of sexual harassment amongst many other related factors. Other considerations are factors such as physiology which can serve as a basis for belief that females and males have a natural instinct of attraction and interest in the opposite sex. This can serve as a stimulus for one party whether there are grounds for it or not. So, males observe that things which can lead to sexual harassment are 'sex appeal'

and friendliness that females demonstrate. Therefore, sexual behaviours that males display to females sometime arise and the males may not be aware that they may be perceived as sexual harassment (Bargh and Paula, 1995).

In terms of sexual harassment which occurs within organizations, this can be as a result of organizational structure and so in the past it has been observed that people in positions of command such as directors of organizations are predominantly male and this can reflect the relationship of power, which can lead to opportunities arising where sexual harassment is used as conditions for reward or punishment of sub-ordinates (Powell, 1993), particularly for females.

If analyzing causes contributing to sexual harassment cases in organizations within the hospitality industry, problems arising include situations of this nature.

Factors based on type of work. As the hospitality industry is a type which focuses on the provision of service, it is impossible to avoid the direct interaction of service staff with customers, such as flight attendants welcoming boarding travelers, service staff on public transport and staff greeters or front desk attendants within hotels, etc. Hence this interaction and servitude can also be causes of sexual harassment in the workplace.

Factors caused by types of operations. As described previously, the main importance with the hospitality industry is to maximize the effectiveness of the service encounter in order to impress the guests or customers receiving the service. In support of this many hospitality organizations will assign females to work in these roles (Gilbert, Guerrier and Guy, 1998). The majority of staff in flight attendant crews or hotel front offices, housekeeping roles, food and beverage, for example, are females and as a result these staff have a higher risk of exposure to opportunities for sexual harassment, particularly from guest or customers.

Factors caused by organizational structure. The structures within organizations in the hospitality industry are similar to many other types. That is that males will probably have the most important roles including directors and roles in administration. Examples such as within hotel kitchen departments where senior positions, ranging from supervisors, to sous-chefs and executive chefs whom have positions of authority and are able to bargain using rewards or punishment for staff. This power can also lead to instances of sexual harassment towards sub-ordinates, particularly towards female staff members lacking in bargaining power within organizations (Aaron and Dry, 1992, Hamilton and Veglahn, 1992; Laudadio, 1988 cited in Gilbert,

Guerrier and Guy, 1998), which leads to feelings of fear of being able to report unfairness or sexual harassment.

Effects of Sexual Harassment

Instances of sexual harassment have effects on their victims both on their minds and bodies, which together can then have further effects on the organization (Bravo and Cassedy, 1992) who categorized the type of effects on victims' abilities to work. These results are shown in the following table.

Table 2 : Effects of Sexual Harassment

Effects on the Mind	Effects on the body	Effects on the Organization
Confusion as to why it has happened to them	Physical effects of stress	Lack of enthusiasm and spirit in operation
Loss of face and stress	Sleeplessness	Lack of attachment to the organization
Self-blame	Lack of appetite	Increase in staff turnover
Shame	Weakness and increased illness	
Lack of enthusiasm	Periods of Contemplation	
Feeling of submission		
Lack of trust of colleagues		
Irritability		
Depression		
Symptoms of anxiety		

Bravo and Cassedy (1992)

Research Methodology

This research will employ a Qualitative Research methodology and be conducted using the following method.

Population and Sampling

The population used as a basis for this research is students from Dusit Thani College who carried out internships within the kitchen departments of hotel businesses in Thailand during the academic year 2013.

Sampling Methods

This research used the purposive sampling method by the selection of internship students who have experienced sexual harassment during their industry training, a total of 10 students.

Data Collection

This research used the in-depth interview method until sufficient data is achieved (Data Saturation).

Research Tools

The research tool used in this research was a semi-structured interview form (questionnaire).

Data Analysis

The method of data analysis used in this research was 'content analysis', where data collected using the sampled interview method enabled the comparison of data with approaches, theories and previous research analysis. This allowed analysis with a level of confidence defined by data triangulation, combining people, time and place of the data collection.

Research Result

This research provided the following results.

1. Place of Problem and Effects showed these important results:

The study demonstrated that the majority of the sampled group have a good knowledge and understanding regarding sexual harassment and this enabled them to be 'on guard' against the risk of sexual harassment. It can be concluded that sexual harassment is an unacceptable behavior of a sexual nature aimed at another person where the other person is unwilling to engage in the behavior. It can include verbal such as sexually suggestive language in the workplace, criticizing or commenting about a person's physical appearance, asking questions about sexual behavior, persuasion to have private meals together outside the workplace, for example. Additionally, physical contact where hand holding and embracing are examples, as well as physical intimidation through posture, gestures and eye contact for examples. However, some of the internship students of the study who had an understanding of the nature of sexual harassment as being limited only to sexual physical contact.

From the study, the opinions of the sample group showed that the problems due to sexual harassment occurred within the kitchen departments of hotels were an important issue. However, the problems described did not occur frequently when compared to other ethical problems. In addition, it was shown that the frequency of occurrence of this type of harassment was typically higher with internship students than with full time staff members and that the majority of people responsible for committing sexual harassment were staff of the same level within the same kitchens and when problems of sexual harassment arose, the majority of the

sampled group chose not to inform others about the problem as they were concerned what the effects might be as well as feeling too embarrassed to let others know about their problems. Those students who did talk, would speak to friends, family and teachers acting in the role of advisors during the internships, as they felt they could trust them enough to divulge much more so than their supervisors within the workplaces or human resource personnel within the organizations.

From carrying out the in-depth interviews about the experiences of sexual harassment with the sampled group, results showed that there were three categories of harassment.

1) Verbal harassment was the most frequent, where inappropriate language was used, for example using ‘dirty talk’ during service operations, commenting on physical appearance, asking questions of a private nature, such as boyfriend/girlfriends and sexual behavior. In addition to this there were instances where students were invited to inappropriate private activities outside of the workplace.

2) Sexual harassment through physical contact this type of harassment happened less than that above and occurred in situations within the sampled group for example hand-holding, shoulder-holding with the most violent situation being approached from behind and being embraced. Various instances took place by other staff members in situations where the student was left alone with them.

3) Sexual harassment through postures and gestures including eye contact (together with smiling) and eyebrows, as examples. This type of harassment occurred least within the three categories.

In terms of the results achieved through this study, the majority of the sample group had suffered effects on their mental states as a result of sexual harassment including stress, discomfort, paranoia, lack of feeling of safety within the workplace. In addition, there were effects on the work operations, for example, feelings of not wanting to go to work, feelings of boredom at work, after suffering sexual harassment, hence also having an overall impact of their effectiveness at work.

2. Approaches to protection against and solving problems due to sexual harassment in the workplace

From interviews with the sample group regarding their opinions towards protecting against and solving problems caused by sexual harassment, the majority had the same opinion that ‘**the approach to the protection against the problem is much more important than**

trying to solve the problem', suggesting that the best way to protect themselves, results from the students themselves. By being aware of how to pose or show a demeanour that is appropriate and keep an appropriate distance from staff when at work are the best ways of protection. In the protection of internship students provided by hotels, the sample group observed that hotels should specify that training is provided to hotel staff to provide them with the knowledge and understanding of the problems of sexual harassment, together with all students who have internships. In addition, hotels should develop guidelines regarding sexual harassment and have clear punishment for those who commit sexual harassment and publish those guidelines and penalties for failing to meet the guidelines, so that all staff within the organization are aware (as well as internship students).

Educational institutions which send students for industry work placements must ensure that those students have the knowledge and awareness of sexual harassment and ensure that the students are suitably able to protect themselves from being in vulnerable situations when on internships within organizations.

The approaches to solving the problems of sexual harassment, in the opinion of the sample group were that in the case where an instance of sexual harassment occurs, the most important role in solving the problem is the human resources department within the organization. It must carry out thorough investigations and apply appropriate punishment for guilty staff, and supervisors and managers must be made aware and internship students must be separated, possibly repositioned with the organization. The sample group also had the opinion that the training institutions should be involved in solving problems in the same way, for example through informing the hotels, should cases arise that hotels are not aware of or of course in the case of violence that the student is immediately removed from the threat.

Discussion

The results of this research confirm that the sample group had good knowledge and understanding of the problems of sexual harassment in the work place. This was established by their ability to correctly define the meaning and describing correct and recognized examples. The majority of the sample group understood that sexual harassment was not only limited to physical contact but included a range of inappropriate behaviours. This is consistent with the definition and findings of the ILO (International Labor Organization: ILO) (2014) which defined sexual harassment to also include physical, verbal and non-verbal harassment as per the

examples previously described within this study. The problem of sexual harassment which occurred within the kitchen departments in hotel business is one of the important ethical problems, although it occurs less frequently than other ethical problems faced. It was found that most cases of sexual harassment were committed by kitchen staff at the same level and as such can be considered different from studies of other staffing groups from within other organizations in the hospitality industry. Many of these studies identified that sexual harassment predominantly occurred between people in positions of power and their sub-ordinates where it occurred in the form of reward or punishment, particularly where sub-ordinates were female. (Aaron and Dry, 1992; Hamilton and Veglahn, 1992; Laudadio, 1988 cited in Gilbert, Guerrier and Guy, 1998). This abuse of power often led to victims' unwillingness to report events or claim unfairness, due to fear. In addition, the study found that harassment was experienced by the internships students in three categories. Those being verbal, physical contact and intimidation through posture and gesturing.

The effects of sexual harassment were mostly on students' mental states, for example stress, discomfort, paranoia and lack of feeling of safety in the workplace. There were also effects on the students' practical abilities, for example declining willingness to work, boredom and general decreases in effectiveness and productivity as consistent with Bravo and Cassidy (1992) which concluded that effects were predominantly mental such as confusion, stress, self-blame, shame, depression and anxiety for example. There were also effects on the organization such as lack of spirit and motivation by workers, lack of feeling of belonging to the organization and overall organizational effectiveness.

In terms of approaches to the protection against occurrence and the solution to problems arising from sexual harassment, there were three main groups: those having an important role as mentioned, such as the students themselves, who need to understand who to pose themselves appropriately, having the appropriate demeanor and ensuring that appropriate distance is maintained during work operations. They need to study cases relating to sexual harassment and have awareness of situations where possible harassment might take place, as well as having awareness of ways to protect themselves. Secondly educational institutions which arrange internships for students within industry must have knowledge and understanding of the associated risks and take measures to ensure that students are prepared appropriately. They should also liaise closely with the human resources department within the organization to ensure that to minimize risk and ensure that any students subjected to violent behavior are

extracted as a matter of priority. Finally, those organizations which employ internship students must have clear guidelines for the protection against sexual harassment and solving associated problems. They should provide adequate training to staff regarding sexual harassment and specify clear serious measures regarding punishment for such behavior.

Suggestions

It is suggested that opportunities for further research should include:

1) Suggestions to internship students

Students who will take industrial internships should be aware of the importance of the problems associated with sexual harassment and should have the necessary and correct knowledge and understanding of sexual harassment. They also need to study approaches that they can use to protect themselves and solve problems that they may face, before they undertake internships within organizations. They should consider that the best approach towards this is to pose appropriately with the correct demeanour and ensure sufficient distance exists between staff during work operations. They should know how to decline sexual behaviour appropriately if situations should arise to themselves or people close to them, and know how to solve problems through seeking advice from staff that they can trust and who have the suitable authority to help to solve the problems described, such as their direct manager, or through the human resources department or their work placement supervisor.

2) Suggestions for Educational Institutions sending Internship Students

These institutions should develop approaches for the protection against problems of sexual harassment that may occur during the internships of students, for example by providing staff with appropriate knowledge and understanding of sexual harassment as well as approaches towards protection against it. In addition to this institution should work in participation with organizations providing internships to set specific protection guidelines and adhere to them in a serious manner.

3) Suggestions for Organizations Providing Internships

Organizations should specify the reporting of sexual harassment within their organizational policies. They should specify particularly clauses for the protection against and solutions for the problems as described previously. They should also ensure that staffs have the awareness and knowledge of the subject as well as the internship students using different channels. For example, providing training, providing media, providing hotlines for receiving complaints and

answering problems as described. However, factors regarding sexual harassment are a topic which can lack details and so directors and anyone associated with these types of problems within organizations must take action which is both prudent and concise.

Suggestions for further studies

In this qualitative research, it is necessary to study more deeply the problems of sexual harassment experienced by internship students within kitchen departments of hotels and so further research in order to gain additional wider data, the researcher will probably study the topic from the perspective of different parties having involvement in the problems described, for example hotel directors, staff, customers. Alternatively, a comparative study could be made to study other departments with hotels or in organizations of other types outside of the hotel industry, in order to inform other organizations and also gain a much deeper understanding of the factors already described in this paper.

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