



UNDERSTANDING AWARENESS LEVELS OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE UNDER RA 9262 AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Abstract

This study explores the awareness levels of college students regarding intimate partner violence (IPV) as defined under Republic Act 9262, the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004, in the Philippines. Utilizing a quantitative descriptive approach, the research involved a survey administered to 433 students from Colegio de San Francisco Javier. Results indicate moderate awareness of IPV among respondents, with social media emerging as the primary source of information. The study underscores the necessity for enhanced education programs and training workshops to improve the understanding and enforcement of RA 9262. Furthermore, the role of government agencies such as the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC), and the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) is highlighted as crucial in supporting initiatives that address IPV effectively. The findings suggest that integrating these efforts into the educational framework is essential to foster a more informed and proactive student body.

Keywords and phrases: *Intimate Partner Violence, RA 9262, Awareness Levels, College Students, Information Dissemination, Philippines*

Introduction

Violence against women and children, particularly intimate partner violence (IPV), is a pervasive issue that transcends cultural, economic, and geographic boundaries. Globally, IPV is recognized as a significant human rights violation, with profound implications for public health and social stability. In the Philippines, the passage of Republic Act No. 9262, known as the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004, marked a pivotal step in the country's legislative efforts to combat gender-based violence. This law provides a comprehensive legal framework aimed at protecting women and children from various forms of abuse, including physical, sexual, psychological, and economic violence within intimate relationships.

Despite the existence of RA 9262, the prevalence of IPV in the Philippines remains alarmingly high, with many cases going unreported or inadequately addressed due to a lack of awareness and understanding of the law's provisions. Studies, such as those conducted by Bacolod and Israel (2020), highlight that while legal frameworks are essential, their effectiveness is often undermined by insufficient dissemination and public understanding, particularly among younger and less educated populations. This gap

between legislation and awareness is not unique to the Philippines; it is a challenge faced by many countries globally, as noted by Heise (2011), who emphasizes the need for integrated approaches that combine legal measures with comprehensive educational and social interventions.

The importance of education in preventing IPV cannot be overstated. Jewkes, Flood, and Lang (2015) argue that changing social norms and reducing gender inequities are crucial in the global fight against violence against women. Their work suggests that education, especially when targeted at young people, can play a transformative role in shaping attitudes towards gender relations and violence. This is particularly relevant in the context of this study, which focuses on assessing the level of awareness of RA 9262 among college students—a demographic that will play a crucial role in shaping future societal norms and practices.

The current study seeks to explore the level of awareness of IPV and RA 9262 among students at Colegio de San Francisco Javier. It aims to identify the primary sources of information that influence students' understanding of IPV and examine the perceived needs for further education and training. This focus on educational gaps aligns with the findings of Ellsberg et al. (2015), who argue that effective IPV prevention requires not only the existence of legal protections but also a deep societal understanding and acceptance of these laws. Additionally, the study explores how students view the role of government agencies in supporting IPV education and intervention, an aspect that Decker et al. (2019) identify as critical for the success of any legal mandate.

By examining these factors, this research aims to contribute to the development of more effective strategies for information dissemination and legal education within academic institutions. The findings of this study are expected to provide valuable insights that can inform both educational programs and public policies aimed at reducing IPV and enhancing the protection of women and children in the Philippines.

Methods

The study employed a quantitative-descriptive research design to assess levels of awareness and perception among female students at Colegio de San Francisco Javier during the 2023-2024 academic year. With a total enrollment of 677 students, a sample size of 433 respondents was determined using Slovin's formula, ensuring a representative sample with a 5% margin of error. The students were randomly selected to participate in the online survey, allowing for systematic data collection and analysis to accurately reflect the current state of knowledge and the factors influencing it.

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire divided into four sections: demographic information (age, year level, civil status, number of children), awareness of IPV and RA 9262 (25 statements measured on a Likert scale), perceived needs for training and education, and perceptions of the role of government agencies in IPV intervention. The questionnaire was validated by experts in social work and legal studies to ensure its relevance and accuracy. Descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages,



and weighted means, were used to analyze the data, enabling the identification of trends and patterns that provided a comprehensive overview of the respondents' awareness levels and educational needs.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were central to the study's design and implementation. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring they were fully aware of the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks. Data confidentiality was strictly maintained, with all identifying information anonymized in the analysis and reporting. The study adhered to the ethical guidelines set forth by the institutional review board and relevant national and international regulations.

Results

The study sampled 433 female students from various academic programs at Colegio de San Francisco Javier, providing a representative snapshot of the institution's demographic trends. The majority of respondents were single (68.40%), which is consistent with the broader demographic patterns among young adults in the Philippines, where delayed marriage and family formation are increasingly common. A significant portion of the respondents (44.11%) were enrolled in the Bachelor of Social Work program, reflecting a strong interest in fields related to social welfare and community development. The distribution across year levels was relatively even, with third-year students comprising the largest group (31.20%). Additionally, most respondents reported having no children (96.50%), further highlighting the trend of delayed family formation and its potential impact on their educational and social priorities.

Sources of Information

Social media emerged as the predominant source of information on intimate partner violence (IPV), with 45.43% of respondents identifying it as their primary source. This aligns with global trends in information consumption, where digital platforms have become the leading source of news and educational content among young adults. The reliance on social media, however, raises concerns about the quality and accuracy of the information being consumed. As noted by Ellsberg et al. (2015), while digital platforms can effectively reach large audiences, they often lack the depth and reliability of traditional media. Television was identified as the second most common source of information (22.95%), followed by other media forms such as radio and print, suggesting a diverse media consumption pattern among the respondents.

Awareness Levels

The survey revealed a moderate level of awareness among respondents regarding IPV as defined under RA 9262, with a total weighted mean of 2.85. This finding suggests that while students possess a basic understanding of the law and its provisions, there are significant gaps in their knowledge, particularly concerning the specific rights and

protections afforded to women and children under the legislation. The moderate awareness levels are consistent with studies such as those by Bacolod and Israel (2020), which highlight the challenges in translating legal frameworks into widespread public knowledge, especially in younger populations. These gaps underscore the need for more targeted educational interventions that not only inform but also empower students to utilize legal protections effectively.

Perceived Needs for Training

Respondents identified several critical areas where further education and training are necessary to enhance their understanding and ability to address IPV. Three key areas emerged as priorities:

1. **Women's Rights Training:** There is a strong demand for comprehensive education on women's legal rights, which is essential for empowering students to recognize and resist IPV.
2. **Livelihood Training for Women and Children:** Practical skills training is seen as crucial for supporting victims of IPV, enabling them to achieve economic independence and stability, which are key factors in reducing vulnerability to violence.
3. **Seminar-Workshops on Proper Procedures for Handling Domestic Violence Cases:** There is a clear need for practical guidance on how to navigate legal and social support systems when dealing with IPV, reflecting the respondents' desire for actionable knowledge.

These findings indicate a recognition among students of the need for both preventive education and practical support, which aligns with the recommendations of Jewkes, Flood, and Lang (2015), who emphasize the importance of comprehensive, context-sensitive educational programs in preventing gender-based violence.

Role of Government Agencies

The survey also highlighted the critical role that government agencies play in supporting IPV education and intervention efforts. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) was identified as the most crucial agency, reflecting its mandate to provide social protection and promote the welfare of vulnerable groups. This was followed by the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) and the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), both of which are seen as key stakeholders in the fight against IPV. Respondents emphasized the need for these agencies to take a more active role in providing resources, training, and support to both victims and those working to prevent IPV. This finding is consistent with the insights of Decker et al. (2019), who argue that effective IPV prevention requires strong, well-coordinated support structures that are deeply integrated into both local communities and educational settings.

Discussion

The results of this study reveal a moderate level of awareness among students regarding intimate partner violence (IPV) and the provisions of RA 9262, the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act. The findings are consistent with global trends observed in similar studies, where legal awareness, particularly in younger populations, is often incomplete. As noted by Ellsberg et al. (2015), the prevention of violence against women and girls requires more than just the existence of legal frameworks; it demands a deeper societal understanding and acceptance of these laws, coupled with educational interventions that challenge prevailing norms.

The study identified social media as the primary source of information for the respondents, a finding that reflects the growing influence of digital platforms on youth awareness. However, while social media can be a powerful tool for information dissemination, its reliance poses risks due to the potential for misinformation and the superficial understanding that may result from brief, often sensationalized content. This aligns with the observations made by Jewkes, Flood, and Lang (2015), who argue that effective prevention of violence against women requires targeted, in-depth educational efforts that engage individuals in meaningful reflection and dialogue.

Moreover, the study's findings suggest that while students are aware of the basic tenets of RA 9262, there is a significant gap in their understanding of the law's practical applications and the protections it offers. This gap is particularly concerning given the study by Campbell et al. (2003), which highlights the critical importance of informed and proactive interventions in reducing the risk of femicide in abusive relationships. The moderate awareness observed in this study indicates that students may not fully grasp the legal recourses available to them or how to effectively leverage these protections in real-life scenarios.

Another key finding is the students' perception of the role of government agencies in IPV education and intervention. While respondents recognize the importance of agencies like the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), their reliance on these bodies appears to be limited by a lack of direct engagement and accessible resources. Decker et al. (2019) emphasize that for government mandates to be effective in preventing IPV, they must be accompanied by tangible support structures that are well-integrated into local communities and educational institutions.

Furthermore, the study's identification of a need for more comprehensive training programs on women's rights and IPV prevention highlights a critical area for intervention. As Abramsky et al. (2011) found, factors associated with IPV are deeply entrenched in societal norms and behaviors, making it essential for educational programs to not only inform but also transform the attitudes and beliefs that perpetuate violence. This suggests



that beyond legal education, there is a need for programs that foster empathy, critical thinking, and a proactive stance against violence in all its forms.

In summary, the study underscores the importance of a multifaceted approach to IPV prevention, one that integrates legal education with broader efforts to shift societal attitudes and norms. By addressing both the knowledge gaps and the underlying social factors that contribute to IPV, educational institutions and policymakers can work together to create a safer and more informed society. These findings call for enhanced collaboration between schools, government agencies, and communities to develop and implement strategies that are both effective and sustainable in the long term.

Challenges and Limitations

While this study provides valuable insights into the awareness levels of college students regarding IPV and RA 9262, it is not without its limitations. The use of an online survey may have excluded students who lack access to digital devices or the internet, potentially skewing the results. Additionally, the focus on a single institution limits the generalizability of the findings to other regions or populations. Future research could address these limitations by employing a more diverse sample and using a mixed-methods approach to capture a broader range of perspectives and experiences.

Conclusions

The findings of this study indicate that while there is a moderate level of awareness among college students regarding intimate partner violence (IPV) and the provisions of Republic Act 9262, significant gaps remain. These gaps suggest that the existing educational and informational efforts are insufficient to fully equip students with the knowledge and understanding needed to effectively prevent and respond to IPV. The reliance on social media as the primary source of information further complicates this issue, as it often provides fragmented and sometimes inaccurate representations of legal protections.

This study's conclusions are consistent with global research, such as the work of Ellsberg et al. (2015), which highlights the need for comprehensive educational strategies that go beyond merely informing the public about legal frameworks. To be truly effective, these strategies must engage individuals in deeper, more reflective learning that challenges existing social norms and behaviors that perpetuate violence. Similarly, the research by Jewkes, Flood, and Lang (2015) emphasizes the importance of addressing underlying gender inequities through targeted educational interventions that can foster long-term societal change.

Furthermore, the study underscores the critical role of government agencies like the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) in supporting educational initiatives. However, as Decker et al. (2019) argue, for these agencies to be truly effective, their efforts must be well-integrated into local communities and educational institutions, ensuring that they are accessible and



relevant to the populations they serve. The moderate awareness levels found in this study suggest that more needs to be done to bridge the gap between legislation and public understanding, particularly in academic settings.

Integrating Comprehensive IPV Education into Curricula: Based on the findings, it is recommended that educational institutions, particularly colleges and universities, integrate comprehensive modules on intimate partner violence and RA 9262 into their curricula. These modules should not only cover the legal aspects of IPV but also address the social and cultural factors that contribute to violence. As Jewkes et al. (2015) suggest, education that challenges societal norms and promotes gender equity is essential for preventing violence.

Enhanced Collaboration Between Schools and Government Agencies: There is a need for stronger partnerships between educational institutions and government agencies such as the DSWD and CHR. These collaborations should focus on developing and delivering training programs that are tailored to the needs of students and that provide practical knowledge on how to access and utilize legal protections. Decker et al. (2019) emphasize that such collaborations are critical to ensuring the effectiveness of legal mandates.

Leveraging Digital Platforms for Accurate Information Dissemination: Given the reliance on social media as a primary information source, it is crucial to develop strategies that use these platforms to disseminate accurate and comprehensive information about IPV and RA 9262. Educational campaigns should be designed to engage young people where they are most active online, while also ensuring that the content is both informative and accessible. As Ellsberg et al. (2015) note, leveraging digital media effectively can play a significant role in public education efforts.

Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation of Educational Programs: It is recommended that schools and government agencies establish mechanisms for the continuous monitoring and evaluation of IPV educational programs. These evaluations should assess not only the reach of these programs but also their impact on students' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors regarding IPV. This aligns with the findings of Campbell et al. (2003), who stress the importance of informed and proactive interventions in reducing violence.

Targeted Interventions for At-Risk Populations: Finally, there should be a focus on developing targeted interventions for populations that are at higher risk of experiencing IPV, such as young women and those from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds. As Abramsky et al. (2011) found, these groups often face additional barriers to accessing legal protections and support services, making tailored educational efforts particularly important.

The fight against intimate partner violence is a complex and ongoing challenge that requires the combined efforts of educators, policymakers, and communities. By increasing awareness and understanding of RA 9262 among young people, we can take a

significant step towards creating a safer and more equitable society for all.

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Disclosure: Use of AI Tools

In compliance with Threshold's guidelines for the ethical use of artificial intelligence (AI) and automated tools in academic research, the authors disclose the use of OpenAI's ChatGPT for enhancing the quality and clarity of the manuscript. ChatGPT was utilized to assist in refining the language, structure, and formatting of the text, ensuring a high level of academic rigor and coherence. The authors confirm that all data analysis, critical interpretations, and conclusions presented in this manuscript were conducted independently by the research team. The AI tool was employed strictly for editorial assistance and did not influence the scientific content or ethical considerations of the study. All intellectual contributions from the AI tool are in accordance with the authors' original intentions and have been reviewed and approved by all co-authors. The use of ChatGPT complies with Threshold's ethical standards and guidelines for transparent reporting of AI involvement in research. The authors remain fully responsible for the integrity and accuracy of the content presented in this paper.

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