

SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF KITCHEN DEPARTMENT'S STAFF IN HOTEL BUSINESS: A STUDY OF PERSPECTIVES FROM THE INTERNSHIP STUDENTS

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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.

BACKGROUND

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.

BACKGROUND

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

BACKGROUND

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.

BACKGROUND

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. It is considered an important issue which should be studied more deeply.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the types of problems and effects occurring through sexual harassment of internship students working within kitchen departments within hotel businesses.
2. To study approaches to the protection against and solving problems caused by sexual harassment through the perspective of internship students working within kitchen departments within hotel businesses.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is a Qualitative Research and was conducted using the following method.

Population

The population (Key Informants) 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.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sampling Methods

This research used the purposive sampling method by the selection of internships students who have experienced sexual harassment during their industry training.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data Analysis

The method of data analysis used in this research was 'descriptive analysis'.

RESEARCH RESULT

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.

RESEARCH RESULT

The majority of the sample group understood that sexual harassment was not only limited to physical contact but included a range of inappropriate behaviours.

RESEARCH RESULT

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.

RESEARCH RESULT

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.

RESEARCH RESULT

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.

RESEARCH RESULT

The effects of sexual harassment were mostly on students' mental states e.g.,

- Stress
- Discomfort
- Paranoia
- 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*

RESEARCH RESULT

In terms of approaches to the protection against occurrence and the solution to problems arising from sexual harassment, there were three main groups:

- **Students**
- **Educational Institutions**
- **Organizations**

RESEARCH RESULT

Students themselves need to:

- understand how to pose themselves appropriately
- have the appropriate demeanor
- maintain appropriate distance during work
- study cases relating to sexual harassment
- have awareness of situations where possible harassment might take place
- have awareness of ways to protect themselves

RESEARCH RESULT

Secondly educational institutions need to:

- have knowledge and understanding of associated risks
- take measures to ensure that students are prepared
- liaise closely with human resources department to minimize risk
- ensure that students subjected to violent behavior are extracted as a matter of priority

RESEARCH RESULT

Finally hosting organizations must:

- have clear guidelines for the protection against sexual harassment and solving associated problems
- provide adequate training to staff regarding sexual harassment
- specify clear serious measures regarding punishment for such behavior

SUGGESTIONS

Suggestions to internship students

Students who will take industrial internships should:

- be aware of the importance of the problems associated with sexual harassment
- have the necessary and correct knowledge and understanding of sexual harassment
- study approaches that they can use to protect themselves and solve problems that they may face, before they undertake internships within organizations

SUGGESTIONS

1) Internship students should:

- consider that the best approach towards this is to pose appropriately with the correct demeanour
- ensure sufficient distance exists between staff during work operations

SUGGESTIONS

1) Internship students 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

SUGGESTIONS

2) Educational Institutions sending Internship Students 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)
- work in participation with organizations providing internships to set specific protection guidelines and adhere to them in a serious manner

SUGGESTIONS

3) Organizations Providing Internships should

- specify procedures for reporting of sexual harassment within their organizational policies
- specify particularly clauses for the protection against and solutions for the problems

SUGGESTIONS

3) Organizations Providing Internships should

- ensure that staff have 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*)
- take action which is both prudent and concise

SUGGESTIONS

Suggestions for further studies

- ✘ Study the topic from the perspective of different parties having involvement in the problems described, for example hotel directors, staff and customers

SUGGESTIONS

Suggestions for further studies

- ✘ Carry out a comparative study 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.

Q&A

**THANK YOU
AND
SWASDEE KRAB**

