

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents (1) summary of the study, (2) summary of the findings, (3) discussion of sexual harassment, and (4) conclusion and recommendations for further research.

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This section summarizes the objectives of the study and methodology of the research as follows:

5.1.1 Objectives of the Study

This research aimed to survey the prevalence of sexual harassment experienced among undergraduate female students at Thammasat University, describe physical symptoms of sexual harassment, and reveal the perpetrator profile for each types of sexual harassment.

5.1.2 Respondents, Materials and Procedures

394 undergraduate female students at Thammasat University were respondents of the research. The sample size was based on Taro Yamane Method at 95% confidence level and +/- 5 tolerance error of population. The design of the questionnaire was based on sexual harassment approach to use as a tool of data collection, and the respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire by the self administer method one time completed. SPSS was used to analyze the collected data.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDING

The results of the study can be summarized as follows: Sexual harassment prevails at Thammasat University; the majority of sexual harassment victims reported they felt uncomfortable and stressed; sexual harassment at Thammasat University could be considered as peer harassment; and some respondents were concerned about the sexual harassment as serious problem which should be solved.

The majority, around 85% of the respondents, had direct experience of at least one type of sexual harassment, and 66% reported they knew other female students personally experiencing sexual harassment. 64% of the victims of sexual harassment

felt uncomfortable and stressed when they were harassed. The majority of victims identified students as perpetrators. Moreover, some respondents suggested the solution of the problem by campaigning and setting regulations/measures.

The results of this study are consistent with the previous studies which revealed the prevalence of sexual harassment on campus, showed the negative effects to the victims, and reported that peer harassment is more likely to occur on campus.

5.3 DISCUSSION

5.3.1 Sexual Harassment Considered as a Common Problem of Women

The prevalence of sexual harassment of this research harmonizes with the previous research which revealed the prevalence of sexual harassment on campus in many countries, and the perpetrators are more likely to be their peers. In Canada (Osborne, 1992), sexual harassment is a pervasive and wide-spread problem on campuses across the country. The picture constructed by Canadian university surveys and reports revealed that sexual harassment is experienced by many women in Canadian institutions of higher learning. In 1989-1990, 126 reports of sexual harassment indicated that 16-38% of female respondents experienced sexual harassment in educational institutions. In the United States, a survey by the American Association of University Women found 87% of girls reported having experienced some forms of peer harassment at school or in academia (Cummings, 2002). Most studies examining the prevalence of harassment in education reported that 20-40% of undergraduate women experienced some type of sexual harassment while they were in school or in academia. Undergraduate women were more likely to report other students as perpetrators (Ellen, 2006).

According to the prevalence of sexual harassment in many countries, sexual harassment could be considered as a common problem for women. It occurred in different places and cultures. Similarly, in Thailand, although there is a limited amount of relevant research, the prevalence of sexual harassment has been reported. The sexual harassment was a concern in some countries which invested in a lot of research of this issue to reveal the magnitude of the problem such as the United States, and Canada. To protect females from sexual harassment, the two countries have created laws and regulations concerning sexual harassment.

5.3.2 Attitude toward Sexual Harassment of People Maintains the Incident

Sexual harassment is a complex and pivotal issue rooted in fundamental attitudes, beliefs and behaviors (Judith, 1997). Explanation of the root of sexual harassment in this research is based on sexual harassment theory which focuses on male dominance/patriarchy approach. This theory explains the patriarchal system socializes us to male aggressive/female passive norms. The society believes males have a stronger sex drive that nationally predisposes them to aggress sexually against women while females are socialized to be passive. Males socialized by this norm will harass females without guilt and they believe sexual harassment does not violate women, so the perpetrators are protected by this attitude. The results of this research show one respondent's opinions which supports this explanation of sexual harassment: *"Sexual harassment may be a funny thing for someone's attitude, but for the victims, they never like such thing."* With an attitude toward sexual harassment like this, females are left to face the harassment themselves; it is no surprise if women faced with sexual harassment have no idea to ask for help from their institutions, communities or societies because this incident is not realized as violence against women. This is another opinion of the respondents that supports the explanation: *"Non-verbal harassment is a normal incident of the society that I could not prosecute or take any action to the perpetrators, so I tried to avoid from them and reviled them in my mind."*

5.3.3 The sexual Harassment Interfered Student's Ability

The finding shows the sexual harassment tends to harm and reduce female students' potentials. The opinion of a respondent showed the negative effects of sexual harassment: *"It is a bad thing when experiencing in the sexual harassment, not only they were physical abused but also mentality."* Some respondents considered sexual harassment as a serious problem; it is necessary to set some measures or regulations in the university to protect female students from the harassment according to a respondent's opinion: *"Sexual Harassment is a serious problem and it should not happen in the university then we should have some measures to protect the students."*

The sexual harassment in this research can be described as violence against women due to their negative effects. The finding of the study shows 64% of

the sexual harassment victims felt uncomfortable and stressful; 19% felt lost confidence; 17% felt lost concentration on study and doing activities. The results are in conformity with the psychological effects of harassment which may include depression, tension and irritation. Sexual harassment blocks a woman's opportunities by chilling her environment, threatening her personhood, and reducing her from a person to a sexual object. Especially for female academics, sexual harassment may indeed be taxing in terms of long-term career prospects, and may isolate them from intellectual networks (Sev'er, 1995).

5.3.4 Prevalence of Peer Harassment Reflects the University's Ignorance

According to Judith (1997), sexual harassment can occur between colleagues of equal power or status (peer harassment) and is the most frequent form of sexual harassment in school or in academia setting. Failing to protect a student from peer harassment and ignoring the peer harassment of school or university sustains the prevalence of sexual harassment among the female students. In this study, a respondent's opinion supporting the above explanation is "*University should have some effective measures or regulations to protect female students from sexual harassment.*" Another opinion is "*Education in the university did not improve mentality of students; there were some group of male students verbal harassed female students.*"

5.4 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This research revealed the prevalence of sexual harassment among the female students and its negative effects. These incidents must be considered as a serious problem for the victims, but it is still not realized by the educational institution or the society due to the dept-attitude on gender inequality and relationship of power between males and females according to the sexual harassment approach. The respondents' opinions showed their concern about this problem. The lack of concern about sexual harassment by the institution reflects the social attitude toward sexual harassment which is considered sexual harassment as an individual and small problem. In fact, more than 50% of population in the world are women but this common problem of women is not accepted as a public problem.

Although Thailand has limited research on sexual harassment in school and campus, the research always shows the prevalence of sexual harassment among the students. To raise awareness on this issue, the magnitude of sexual harassment should be revealed to the public. So, further research should increase the size of sample to a larger size and expand the survey to other universities both in Bangkok and in provincial areas so as to obtain more valid results.

For the methodology, it should consist of both qualitative and quantitative method. The findings based on a large sample are credible for the research in term of statistics, and the qualitative method will show the in-dept information of the sexual harassment and its effects on the victims.

Sexual harassment should be revealed as a public problem which many women are facing and which can tarnish women's ability and potential.