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Public Awareness of Anti-Violence against Women and Children Law in Tagum City: Basis for Information Dissemination Plan

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Abstract

Purpose: This quantitative study intended to investigate people's awareness regarding RA 9262, the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004, and to propose an intervention based on the study results.

Materials and Methods: There were 384 respondents selected through stratified sampling who answered the standardized survey questionnaires. The respondents were 18 years old and above and randomly picked. Furthermore, the research design in this study was quantitative, non-experimental, and descriptive-correlational. After the collection of data, responses were encoded for data analysis. Mean and Standard Deviation statistics described the respondents' awareness of the protection, liability, physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, penalties, and protective measures of RA 9262. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) determined the significance of the difference between variables.

Findings: The mean and standard deviation showed high respondents' awareness of all the salient provisions of RA 9262: subject of protection, subject to liability, physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, economic violence penalties, and

protective measures. The ANOVA results revealed significant differences in people's awareness of RA 9262 by age, marital status, educational attainment, employment status, and the number of years living together. Those with better awareness of the said law are the 42 to 49-year-olds, married, with higher educational attainments, with higher employment status, and with a partner for more than ten years.

Implications to Theory, Practice and Policy: The study offered intervention strategies to increase awareness of the A-VAWC law at the community level. The local government unit of Tagum City may target awareness-raising and education campaigns to reach those groups with lower levels of awareness and understanding. Future researchers may investigate other factors that influence awareness and understanding of RA 9262 among different demographic groups. Policy makers may also include updating of gender and development related laws to improve proposed intervention strategies.

Keywords: *Public Administration, RA 9262, Anti-Violence, Women, Children Act, A-VAWC Law, Awareness*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Republic Act 9262, also known as the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act, remains largely unknown to the majority of people in the Philippines, as indicated by several studies (Caban, 2022; De Asis et al., 2021; Gabriel, 2017; Mabilangan et al., 2019). Globally, violence against women is a significant problem, with 35% experiencing physical or sexual violence from intimate or non-intimate partners (United Nations, 2022; UN Women, 2022). In the Philippines, there were 5,339 reported cases of violence against women and children in the first half of 2022, with nearly 700 cases in Northern Mindanao alone. However, these figures only represent reported incidents and there may be numerous unreported cases (Lagsa, 2022). Addressing this issue is crucial to preventing further suffering among women at the hands of their partners.

Research by Gonzalez III et al. in 2022 revealed that educated women who experienced sexual abuse were likelier to report such incidents to authorities, primarily because they were aware of the legal consequences. This statement underscores the significant connection between information, education, and communication (IEC), educational achievement, and awareness of Republic Act 9262, as demonstrated in Caban's 2022 study. Furthermore, the impact of awareness was evident in how many individuals gained knowledge of the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children (AVAWC) law through television programs that discussed intimate relationship abuse. RA 9262 awareness empowers women facing domestic violence by informing them of their rights and legal protections, educating them about what constitutes violence and its consequences, and offering guidance on seeking help and support, ultimately helping to prevent violence.

The enactment of RA 9262 aims to raise awareness among women about their rights against abusive husbands and protect their innocent children from abuse. Additionally, it seeks to ensure that women victims of physical harm continue to receive the financial support entitled to them by law (Philippine Commission on Women, 2022). RA 9262 encompasses various forms of violence, such as sexual violence, psychological violence, and economic abuse (Abarca, 2022). Despite its importance, only a small percentage of Filipinos know and comprehend RA 9262 (Caban, 2022; Caparas & Amparado, 2012; Gabriel, 2017; Mabilangan et al., 2019; Santiago & Aya, 2014).

In the Philippines, a joint policy document was signed by the Department of Justice, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, and the Department of the Interior and Local Government, aiming to expand emergency hotline coverage. This policy allows women, children, and others experiencing gender-based violence emergencies to call the toll-free E911 hotline. This initiative has also created opportunities to introduce gender-sensitive and survivor-centric care concepts to government agencies. The overarching mission continually enhances the government's response to alleviate victim-survivor challenges (Chi & Tolosa, 2022).

Problem Statement

Only a small percentage of people in the Philippines are knowledgeable about the law on anti-violence against women and their children (RA 9262) (Caban, 2022; De Asis et al.,

2021; Gabriel, 2017; Mabilangan et al., 2019). Violence against women is a pressing global social issue. Thirty-five percent of women worldwide have experienced physical or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence (United Nations, 2022; UN Women, 2022). A search on the internet showed that there had been many studies on awareness of RA 9262 in some parts of the country but none in Tagum City. Significantly, a research gap existed in the public awareness of A-VAWC law (RA 9262) in Tagum City. Therefore, this study is relevant and timely to help disseminate information about RA 9262 and eventually lessen the occurrence of violence against women and their children.

The primary aim of this study is to conduct a comparative-evaluative examination of the level of public awareness in Tagum City regarding Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children (A-VAWC). This research intends to establish a foundation for developing effective community information dissemination and educational initiatives.

Objectives of the Study

Firstly, the study assesses the significance of differences in awareness levels among respondents, categorized according to their demographic profiles. This endeavor aims to elucidate the influence of age, gender, educational attainment, and other demographic variables on A-VAWC awareness. Secondly, the study's findings will formulate a comprehensive dissemination plan, which will address the unique awareness needs of distinct demographic groups within Tagum City, ensuring that information dissemination efforts are precise and impactful.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the following theories: The Cycle of Violence Theory by Lenore E. Walker, the Attachment Theory by John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth, and the Social Learning Theory by Alberto Bandura. The Cycle of Violence Theory suggests that patterns of violence experienced in childhood will repeat in adulthood. For instance, victims of violence and maltreatment will continue that pattern by perpetrating violence and maltreatment when they become adults. Attachment theory can help us understand why perpetrators behave the way they do. It shows how childhood experiences affect how people handle close relationships. Attachment theory can help us understand why perpetrators behave the way they do. It shows how childhood experiences affect how people handle close relationships. Therapists can use this to tailor their interventions to the client's attachment status. This means that one-size-fits-all approaches will not work. Attachment theory also shows that domestic violence is not just caused by social conditioning but also by psychological and biological factors. So while social changes are essential, violence will not stop unless these factors are addressed.

Social Learning Theory is a common way to explain marital violence. It says that people learn behavior from what they see as children. This includes violence learned from family members or by witnessing violence. This behavior is reinforced in childhood and used in adulthood to deal with stress or resolve conflicts. Children learn what is "appropriate" for intimate relationships by watching their parents and others. If a child grows up in a family where anger and aggression are used to handle stress, they are more likely to use those

behaviors as adults. The family teaches that violence is acceptable and effective for solving problems.

Conceptual Framework

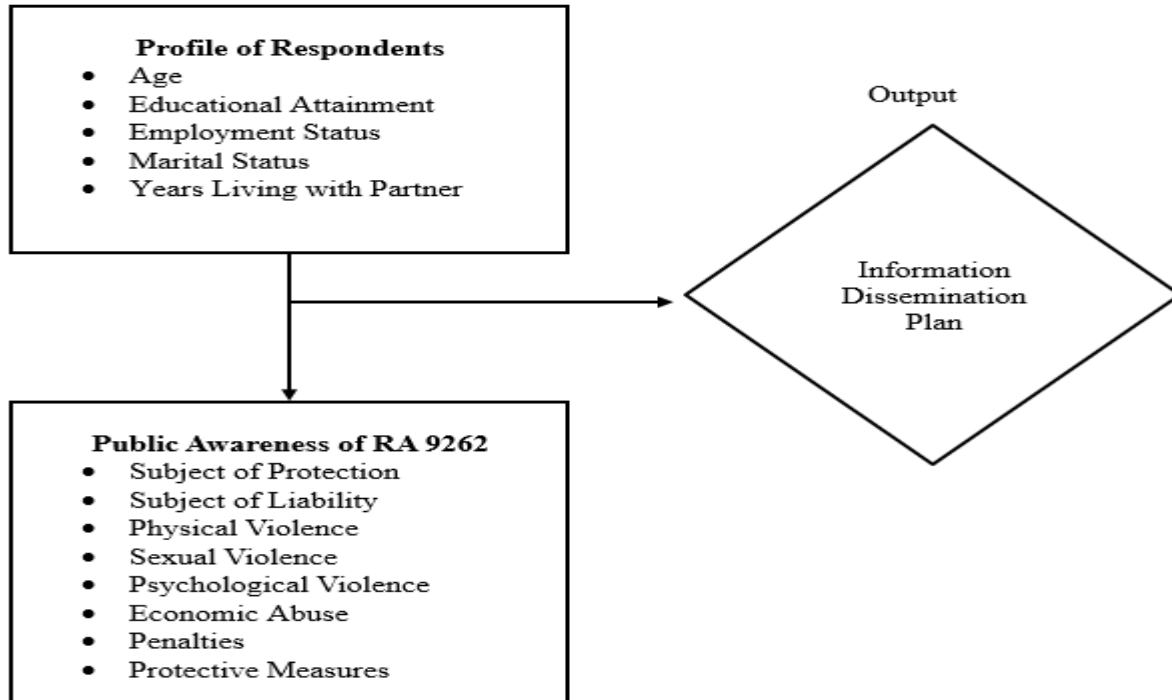


Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework of the Study

2.0 MATERIALS AND METHODS

There were 384 respondents selected through stratified sampling who answered the standardized survey questionnaires. The respondents were 18 years old and above and randomly picked. The instrument used to collect the data was a survey questionnaire about the Republic Act 9262. The panel of experts validated the items, earning a validity index of 4.5. Moreover, the questionnaire underwent pilot testing, yielding a Cronbach's Alpha of .984. Both the validity index and Cronbach Alpha ratings indicated the high acceptability of the results, indicating that the items were consistent and reliable.

The research design in this study was quantitative, non-experimental, and descriptive-correlational. Quantitative because the study measured numerical data (Bloomfield & Fisher, 2019; Rutberg & Bouikidis, 2018). Non-experimental because it pertained to non-causal statistical relationships between variables (Seeram, 2021). The study was also descriptive as it described the characteristics of the population studied, focusing on the "what" rather than the "why" of the topic (George & Mallery, 2018; Kaliyadan & Kulkarni, 2019; Mishra, Pandey, Singh, Gupta, Sahu, & Keshri, 2019). The study tested the significance of the differences in the variances between variables.

The data collection started with writing a request to conduct the study to the mayor of Tagum City, with the endorsement letter from the dean of the professional schools of the University of Mindanao. Before administering the questionnaire, the researcher also complied with the University of Mindanao Ethics Research Committee (UMERC) requirements. Then, after the approval, the researcher immediately administered the questionnaire to the 47 respondents from each barangay in Tagum City. After the collection of data, responses were encoded for data analysis. Mean and Standard Deviation statistics described the respondents' awareness of the protection, liability, physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, penalties, and protective measures of RA 9262. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) determined the significance of the difference between variables.

3.0 FINDINGS

In Table 1 is presented the respondents' age, educational attainment, employment status, marital status, and years of living with the partner. These characteristics and information are necessary for classifying the 300 respondents to achieve the purpose of this study. The age bracket with the most respondents was 26-33 ($f=70$, or 23.33%), followed by 18-25 and 50 and above, which tied at $f=67$, or 22.34%. Age bracket 34-41 had a frequency of 56, or 18.67 percent. Age bracket 42-49 had the lowest number ($f=40$, or 13.33%) of respondents. Moreover, the data also show the educational attainment of 300 respondents. The majority of the respondents (51.33%) have attained a college-level education, while only 1% have only completed elementary school. The next largest group are those who have completed high school (32.33%), followed by those who have completed graduate school (12.33%), and finally, those who have completed post-graduate studies (3.01%).

Table 1: Profile of Respondents

Indicator	Frequency (f) n=300	Percentage 100%
Age		
18-25	67	22.34
26-33	70	23.33
34-41	56	18.66
42-49	40	13.33
50 & above	67	22.34
Educational Attainment		
Elementary	3	1
High School	97	32.33
College	154	51.33
Graduate School	37	12.33
Post Graduate	9	3.01
Employment Status		
Permanent	130	43.33
Casual	51	17
Job Order	114	38
N/A	5	1.67
Marital Status		
Single	90	30
Married	194	64.67
Widowed	9	3
Separated	7	2.33
Number of Years Living Together with a Partner		
Less than ten years	101	33.67
More than ten years	132	44
N/A	67	22.33

On the other hand, the employment data show that the largest group (43.33%) have permanent employment, followed by those on job order (38%), and then those who are casually employed (17%). Meanwhile, a small percentage of the respondents (1.67%) did not disclose their employment status (N/A). Furthermore, the data show that most respondents (64.67%) are married, while 30% are single. In addition, a small percentage are widowed (3%) or separated (2.33%). Finally, the largest group (44%) have been living together with a partner for more than ten years, while 33.67% have been living together for less than ten years. Therefore, a significant percentage (22.33%) responded that this item did not apply to them.

Level of Awareness of Republic Act 9262

In Table 2 is displayed the data on respondents' level of awareness of RA 9262. The data shows the level of awareness of RA 9262 among respondents. The indicators are the salient features of

the law, such as the subject of protection, subject of liability, physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, economic violence, penalties, and protective measures. The mean represents the average level of awareness for each indicator, and the descriptive level specifies whether the awareness is high or low. In this case, all indicators have a high level of awareness, with a mean ranging from 3.44 to 3.65. The standard deviation (SD) also measures the diffusion values in the data set. A low SD indicates that the values tend to be close to the mean (average) of the data set, while a high standard deviation indicates the spread out of values over a broader range.

Table 2: Level of Respondents' Awareness of Republic Act 9262

Indicators	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Subject of Protection	1.00	3.64	High
Subject of Liability	1.05	3.44	High
Physical Violence	1.06	3.65	High
Sexual Violence	1.11	3.60	High
Psychological Violence	1.02	3.57	High
Economic Violence	1.00	3.51	High
Penalties	1.06	3.52	High
Protective Measures	1.01	3.46	High
Overall	0.89	3.55	High

In Table 2 is also shown that the standard deviation for each indicator ranges from 0.89 to 1.11, which suggests some variation in the level of awareness among respondents for each indicator. All standard deviation values ranged from 1.00 to 1.11. Therefore, a standard deviation of 1.00 and a mean of 3.5 is within the typical data set. RA 9262 protects a range of individuals who may be affected by violence. These individuals include the wife or former wife of the offender, women with whom the offender has had a dating or sexual relationship, and the offender's child. The law also protects children who are minors, whether they are legitimate or illegitimate children of the woman. Additionally, RA 9262 protects individuals 18 or older with physical or mental illnesses who cannot make decisions for themselves. All of these individuals are *subjects of protection* under RA 9262. RA 9262 was enacted for women to be more aware of their rights against their abusive husband as well as to shield their innocent children from any form of abuse.

In addition, RA 9262's sections provide reliefs to women not only from being physically harmed but likewise to ensure that the victim and her children will continue to enjoy the financial support that they are entitled to as provided by law (Philippine Commission on Women, 2022). As to the subject of liability (persons liable) for violating RA 9262, they are the following: husband or former husband, live-in partner/ex-live-in partner, dating partner or ex-dating partner, boyfriend/girlfriend, or ex-boyfriend/ex-girlfriend, any person with whom the victim has a common child, and father of the child-victim.

RA 9262 covers several acts of violence, among of which are physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, and economic abuse (Abarca, 2022). *Physical violence* under RA 9262 means acts that cause pain and result in injury to women and children, including slapping, hitting, scratching, biting, pushing, or shoving, punching, grabbing, throwing, choking, shaking, using

or pointing a weapon (knife, gun, or other objects). Encouraging others to do any of these is violence.

Under RA 9262, *sexual violence* includes a range of actions that are sexual and harmful to the victim. These actions can include rape, sexual harassment, and acts of lasciviousness. Sexual violence can also involve physically attacking the sexual parts of the victim's body, treating the victim as a sex object, making sexually suggestive remarks, and forcing the victim to watch obscene or indecent material. Additionally, forcing the victim to perform indecent acts or make films of such acts, as well as prostituting the victim, are also considered forms of sexual violence under RA 9262.

Psychological violence refers to actions or behaviors that cause mental and emotional harm to the victim. This can include things like intimidation, harassment, stalking, public humiliation, verbal abuse, and infidelity. It can also involve exposing the victim to the abuse of others, such as family members or pets, or interfering with the victim's right to see their children. These actions can cause significant emotional distress and suffering for the victim. *Economic violence* are actions that aim to make a woman financially dependent on her husband or partner. This violence prevents the woman from engaging in a legitimate profession, business, or activity without valid reasons. It can also involve withdrawing financial support from the woman and her children, depriving her of financial resources or the right to use and enjoy shared property, and destroying household property. These actions are forms of economic violence because they limit the woman's financial independence and control over her life.

The *penalties* for violating RA 9262 vary depending on the severity of the offense. For example, if someone causes slight physical injuries or attempts to place a woman or child in fear of imminent physical harm, they may be in prison for one month and one day to 6 months. If someone causes less serious physical injuries or controls the conjugal or shared money or properties, they may face imprisonment for six months and one day to 6 years. If someone causes serious physical injuries, sexual abuse, or conduct that causes substantial emotional or psychological distress to the woman or child, they may face imprisonment for six years and one day to 12 years. In addition to imprisonment, the law may require the perpetrator to pay a fine of not less than P100,000 but not more than P300,000 and undergo mandatory psychological counseling or psychiatric treatment. They must also report their compliance to the court. (Philippine Commission on Women, 2022)

The Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children (A-VAWC) law provides several *protective measures* to help victims of violence. These measures include protection orders issued by the barangay, which can prohibit the perpetrator from committing acts of violence or threatening to commit them. The law also allows for the temporary or permanent removal of the perpetrator from the victim's residence, regardless of who owns the residence. The government may also grant the victim temporary or permanent custody of any children involved. Additionally, the court may require the perpetrator to provide financial support to the victim and their child if they are legally entitled to (Philippine Commission on Women, 2022).

In all of these items in the survey questionnaire, the respondents have different levels of awareness, which explains the value of the standard deviation. Nevertheless, the findings showed

that 68% of the response fell under the typical data set, and 32% fell way below or farther away from the mean.

Significance of the Difference in Respondents' Awareness of the Salient Features of RA 9262 Analyzed by Profile

In Table 3 is contained the result of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the awareness of respondents regarding the salient provisions of RA 9262, such as Subject of protection, Subject of liability, physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, economic violence, penalties, and protective measures when analyzed by age, educational attainment, employment status, marital status, and the number of years living together. The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tests the differences between two or more means. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) determines whether the mean scores of two or more groups are significantly different. It does this by comparing the amount of variation between the groups to the amount of variation within them. If the variation between the groups is significantly more extensive than within the groups, then the mean difference between the group is significant.

In Table 3 is illustrated the significant difference in respondents' awareness of the salient features of RA 9262 in terms of age. There are five age groups: (A) 18-25, (B) 26-33, (C) 34-41, (D) 42-49, and (E) 50-year-olds and above. The overall result showed that age groups 18-25 (A) and 34-41 (C) significantly differ in their level of awareness of all the salient features of RA 9262, with Group C (M=3.87; SD=0.60) as more aware than Group A (M=3.12; SD=0.84) given the mean scores. Group C (34-41) has better mean scores than Group A (18-25).

On the other hand, Groups A and D have a significant difference in the level of awareness in all the salient features of RA 9262, with Group D (42-49-year-olds) than Group A (18-25-year-olds). Group D has a better mean score (M=3.96; SD=0.57) than Group A (M=3.12; SD=0.84). In other words, groups C and D are better aware of the Anti-VAWC Act 2004. Only a small section of the Filipino people is aware of and understand RA 9262 (Caban, 2022; Caparas & Amparado, 2012; Gabriel, 2017; Mabilangan et al., 2019; Santiago & Aya, 2014). Incidentally, many factors could contribute to this difference in awareness, such as differences in education, exposure to media, personal experiences, and social networks. Furthermore, the result denotes that age is a factor in awareness of the anti-VAWC law. Awareness comes with maturity. The more a person matures, the more aware he or she becomes of his or her environment and acts accordingly.

Table 3: Significant Difference in Respondents' Awareness of RA 9262 in Terms of Age

Salient Features of RA 9262	Age												F	Sig.	Groups with Significant Difference
	18-25 (A)		26-33 (B)		34-41 (C)		42-49 (D)		50 and Above (E)		Total				
	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD			
Subject of Protection	3.19	0.92	3.59	0.99	4.01	0.68	4.02	0.75	3.61	1.24	3.64	1.00	7.391	.000	A & C A & D
Subject of Liability	3.03	1.00	3.53	1.03	3.61	0.82	3.86	0.81	3.36	1.26	3.44	1.05	5.028	.001	A & C A & D
Physical Violence	3.21	1.09	3.57	1.06	3.94	0.73	4.15	0.68	3.63	1.26	3.65	1.06	6.615	.000	A & C A & D
Sexual Violence	3.13	1.01	3.45	1.08	3.98	0.85	4.14	0.71	3.58	1.36	3.60	1.11	8.080	.000	A & C A & D B & D
Psychological Violence	3.20	0.96	3.40	1.03	3.91	0.83	3.93	.72	3.61	1.20	3.57	1.02	5.878	.000	A & C A & D
Economic Violence	3.09	0.94	3.53	0.95	3.72	0.83	3.82	0.82	3.55	1.20	3.51	1.00	4.803	.001	A & C A & D
Penalties	3.04	1.06	3.47	1.03	3.89	0.87	3.84	0.86	3.57	1.16	3.52	1.06	6.530	.000	A & C A & D
Protective Measures	3.04	1.01	3.26	1.04	3.85	0.64	3.92	0.71	3.51	1.16	3.46	1.01	8.674	.000	A & C A & D B & C B & D
Overall	3.12	0.84	3.48	0.82	3.87	0.60	3.96	0.57	3.56	1.15	3.56	0.89	8.716	.000	A & C A & D

In Table 4 is displayed the significant difference in respondents' awareness of the salient features of RA 9262 by educational attainment. The data revealed that the variables with significant differences in awareness based on educational attainment are *subject of protection*, *physical violence*, *economic violence*, and *protective measures*. The overall result revealed significant differences in the level of awareness of RA 9262 between *elementary and high school* (A & B), *elementary and college* (A & C), *elementary and graduate school* (A & D), and *elementary and post-graduate* (A & E).

Table 4: Significant Difference in Respondents' Awareness of RA 9262 in Terms of Educational Attainment

Salient Features of RA 9262	Educational Attainment												F	Sig.	Groups with Significant Difference
	Elementary (A)		High School (B)		College (C)		Graduate School (D)		Post Graduate (E)		Total				
	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD			
Subject Protection of	1.53	0.76	3.50	1.05	3.72	1.01	3.79	0.67	3.91	0.47	3.64	1.00	4.645	.001	A & B A & C A & D A & E
Subject Liability of	1.80	1.22	3.28	1.08	3.55	1.06	3.49	0.79	3.64	0.77	3.44	1.05	2.968	.020	
Physical Violence	1.00	0.00	3.61	1.07	3.69	1.09	3.78	0.81	3.82	0.27	3.65	1.06	5.247	.000	A & B A & C A & D A & E
Sexual Violence	1.93	1.01	3.54	1.19	3.63	1.14	3.74	0.72	3.80	0.48	3.60	1.11	2.047	.088	
Psychological Violence	2.27	1.70	3.64	0.97	3.53	1.11	3.61	0.68	3.80	0.44	3.57	1.02	1.546	.189	
Economic Violence	1.80	1.39	3.52	1.01	3.51	1.03	3.52	0.77	3.93	0.61	3.51	1.00	2.660	.033	A & E
Penalties	2.07	1.85	3.58	1.02	3.47	1.13	3.61	0.74	4.04	0.55	3.52	1.06	2.263	.062	
Protective Measures	1.47	0.81	3.42	0.98	3.47	1.03	3.58	0.89	4.04	0.62	3.46	1.01	4.033	.003	A & B A & C A & D A & E
Overall	1.74	1.08	3.51	0.89	3.57	0.94	3.64	0.62	3.88	0.41	3.55	0.89	3.697	.006	A & B A & C A & D A & E

However, there is no significant difference in their levels of awareness regarding being subject of liability, sexual violence, psychological violence, and penalties. The not significant result means that the amount of evidence to conclude the presence of a significant difference in the level of awareness about RA 9262 between the groups compared was not enough. On the other hand, the significant result means that the difference between groups did not occur by chance. Ignorance of the law excuses no one (*ignorantia juris non excusat*). This maxim is a legal principle holding that a person who is unaware of a law may not escape liability for violating that law merely by being unaware of its content (The Informed Citizen, 2018).

The data also show that of all the groups, the post-graduate group had the most significant mean score with the lowest standard deviation (M=3.88; SD=0.41), which indicates the homogeneity

of all responses of the post-graduate group in the survey. Nevertheless, the results are not absolute because of the potential limitations and sources of bias in the study. For example, the questionnaire was in English, potentially explaining why the elementary group had the lowest mean score because their English proficiency affected their ability to comprehend and answer the questions accurately. Had the questionnaire been translated into Bisaya, the results might have differed.

In Table 5 is presented the data on the significant difference in respondents' awareness of the salient features of RA 9262 regarding employment status. Again, there were four groups analyzed: Permanent (A), Casual (B), and Job Order (C), and those who did not indicate their employment status, Not Applicable (N/A).

Those who did not disclose their employment status might have been those respondents below 25 years old and those still studying up to college. The overall result showed a significant difference between groups A and D (permanent and N/A), B and D (Casual and N/A), and C and D (Job Order and N/A). The result means that those with employment, especially permanent status, are better aware of RA 9262. One reason for their awareness is that the Human Resource Department usually includes RA 9262 when discussing employees' rights and benefits.

Table 5: Significant Difference in Respondents' Awareness of RA 9262 in Terms of Employment Status

Salient Features of RA 9262		Employment Status										F	Sig.	Groups with Significant Difference
		Permanent (A)		Casual (B)		Job Order (C)		N/A (D)		Total				
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Subject Protection	of	3.80	1.00	3.77	0.79	3.49	1.00	1.68	0.67	3.64	1.00	9.456	.000	A & D B & D C & D
Subject Liability	of	3.66	0.97	3.53	1.01	3.21	1.07	2.00	1.03	3.44	1.05	7.613	.000	A & C A & D B & D
Physical Violence		3.77	0.99	3.84	1.07	3.52	1.04	1.56	0.88	3.65	1.06	8.679	.000	A & D B & D C & D
Sexual Violence		3.69	1.04	3.89	1.09	3.42	1.13	2.28	1.03	3.60	1.11	4.979	.002	A & D B & D
Psychological Violence		3.60	1.03	3.92	1.03	3.42	0.93	2.52	1.25	3.57	1.02	4.872	.003	B & C B & D
Economic Violence		3.64	0.97	3.70	1.13	3.35	0.90	2.08	1.07	3.51	1.00	6.031	.001	A & D B & D C & D
Penalties		3.64	1.01	3.54	1.18	3.44	1.01	2.40	1.40	3.52	1.06	2.746	.043	
Protective Measures		3.65	0.99	3.46	0.97	3.32	0.98	2.00	0.94	3.46	1.01	6.050	.001	A & D B & D C & D
Overall		3.69	0.86	3.71	0.86	3.40	0.86	2.07	0.93	3.55	0.89	7.716	.000	A & D B & D C & D

For example, under RA 9262, victims can apply for paid leave of absence of up to 10 days. These ten days are in addition to other paid leaves provided by the Labor Code and Civil Service Rules. In addition, the victim can extend the leave depending on the statement in the protection order.

In Table 6 are displayed the significant differences in the awareness of respondents of RA 9262 in terms of marital status. In the overall result, the data showed no significant difference among the groups, which means that marital status does not significantly impact an individual's awareness of RA 9262.

Table 6: Significant Difference in Respondents' Awareness of RA 9262 in Terms of Marital Status

Factor	Marital Status										F	Sig	With Mean Diff.
	Single (A)		Married (B)		Widow (C)		Separated (D)		Total				
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Subject of Protection	3.41	0.94	3.72	1.04	3.80	0.73	4.17	0.60	3.64	1.00	2.786	.041	
Subject of Liability	3.36	0.91	3.46	1.11	3.31	1.14	3.89	0.63	3.44	1.05	.668	.572	
Physical Violence	3.48	1.07	3.70	1.06	3.58	1.02	4.51	0.40	3.65	1.06	2.524	.058	
Sexual Violence	3.38	0.99	3.66	1.16	4.07	0.88	4.20	0.63	3.60	1.11	2.675	.047	
Psychological Violence	3.37	1.00	3.61	1.03	4.11	0.55	4.20	0.65	3.57	1.02	3.051	.029	
Economic Violence	3.23	0.95	3.59	1.01	4.13	0.91	4.00	0.75	3.51	1.00	4.739	.003	A & B
Penalties	3.32	1.03	3.56	1.07	4.07	0.71	4.34	0.46	3.52	1.06	3.469	.017	
Protective Measures	3.18	0.95	3.55	1.01	3.98	1.04	4.20	0.92	3.46	1.01	5.053	.002	A & B
Overall	3.34	0.83	3.61	0.92	3.88	0.54	4.19	0.52	3.55	0.89	3.608	.014	

* $p < 0.05$

The result suggests that other factors may be more critical in determining an individual's awareness of this law. The result further means that it does not matter whether a person is single, married, or widowed to know and understand domestic violence. Domestic violence is a universal problem. Persons can be victims of domestic violence regardless of marital status. In addition, domestic violence can affect anyone, regardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, faith, or class. Domestic violence can shatter people's lives, resulting in some experiencing mental illness and depression, physical disability to some, and homelessness, alcoholism and drug addiction in others as a result of living an abusive relationship. Governments across the globe are increasingly recognizing and responding to the dangers of children exposed to domestic violence inflicted by men. Nevertheless, even if not directly harmed, exposure to violence may impact their development (Arai et al., 2021). Although children have a right to live in a safe and

violence-free environment (United Nations, 1989; 2022), feminist scholarship points to social structures and institutions that facilitate men's use of domestic violence and further disempower women with gendered power dynamics and policy responses (Azzopardi, 2021; De Simone & Heward-Belle, 2020; Douglas, 2018; Kuskoff & Parsell, 2020; Maher et al., 2021).

On the other hand, being married does not necessarily increase one's awareness of the reality of domestic violence. Anyone in a relationship can be a victim of domestic violence, regardless of marital status. Awareness of domestic violence and its impact can come from various sources, such as personal experience, education, media, and community outreach programs. Although the overall result has no significant difference, the awareness of RA 9262 based on marital status showed significant differences between single and married respondents in economic and protective measures, upon scrutiny of the data per indicator. Married women are more aware of economic violence than single individuals, which suggests that married women directly experience or are directly affected by this, especially by irresponsible partners.

Often, mothers choose to end their relationship with their partners to keep their children safe. However, leaving a violent partner is a time of heightened risks for the safety of mothers and children. Expectations to leave have thus far been heavily criticized by feminist scholars, both for overlooking these risks and for ignoring the many structural barriers that mothers face to safely and permanently ending relationships with their violent partners (Azzopardi, 2021; Kuskoff & Parsell, 2020; Maher et al., 2021). These barriers include lack of financial resources and access to affordable housing which have arguably been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic (Pawson et al., 2021; United Nations, 2020).

In Table 7 is presented the data on significant differences in respondents' awareness of RA 9262 regarding years of living together. The N/A (C) group refers to single respondents or those who did not belong to the two choices. The overall result showed a significant difference between Groups B and C, with Group B having a higher level of awareness than Group C. On the other hand, looking at the individual results showed significant differences in the subject of protection (A & C, and B & C), physical violence (B & C), sexual violence (B & C), economic violence (A & C, and B & C), and protective measures (B & C). However, the respondents' awareness of RA 9262 concerning liability, psychological violence, and penalties did not differ significantly.

Table 7: Significant Difference in Respondents' Awareness of RA 9262 in Terms of Years of Living Together

Factor	Number of Years Living Together with a Partner								F	Significance	Means having difference
	Less than 10 years (A)		More than 10 years (B)		N/A (C)		Total				
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Subject of Protection	3.72	0.86	3.76	1.09	3.29	0.96	3.64	1.00	5.429	.005	A & C B & C
Subject of Liability	3.44	0.98	3.52	1.13	3.28	0.97	3.44	1.05	1.131	.324	
Physical Violence	3.66	1.00	3.78	1.07	3.38	1.10	3.65	1.06	3.201	.042	B & C
Sexual Violence	3.59	1.08	3.78	1.16	3.27	0.96	3.60	1.11	4.922	.008	B & C
Psychological Violence	3.54	1.07	3.71	1.00	3.34	0.95	3.57	1.02	3.041	.049	
Economic Violence	3.60	1.01	3.67	1.01	3.08	0.85	3.51	1.00	8.657	.000	A & C B & C
Penalties	3.45	1.14	3.66	1.01	3.37	1.00	3.52	1.06	1.992	.138	
Protective Measures	3.45	1.04	3.64	1.00	3.14	0.91	3.46	1.01	5.554	.004	B & C
Overall	3.56	0.82	3.69	0.94	3.27	0.83	3.55	0.89	5.015	.007	B & C

* $P < 0.05$

The results convey that those living with their partners for more than ten years have higher levels of awareness about domestic violence than those living together for less than ten years or as single individuals. Further, the result suggests that more years living with a partner exposes one to any form of domestic violence or all forms of it. The usual forms of domestic violence experienced by women are physical, emotional, or sexual.

4.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

In this study, the researcher examined the awareness and understanding of RA 9262 among various groups. The findings show general awareness of the existence of this law; however, there are still gaps in understanding its provisions and how it can be used to protect women and children from violence. The following sections will present the conclusions and recommendations for addressing these gaps and improving awareness and understanding of RA 9262.

The respondents' level of awareness was high. It suggests a high level of awareness and understanding of the law and its provisions among the population surveyed. This could be seen as a positive outcome, indicating that efforts to raise awareness and educate people about RA 9262 have been successful. The implication of these findings is that this high level of awareness and understanding could lead to increased reporting of violence against women and children and more effective use of the law to protect victims.

The study found significant differences in the level of awareness of RA 9262 based on the profile of respondents, such as age, educational attainment, marital status, employment status, and years of living together. These findings suggest that certain demographic groups may have higher or lower levels of awareness and understanding of the law. This study concludes that the higher the age, the better the awareness. As education level increases, so does the level of awareness. An improvement in employment status is associated with an increase in the level of awareness. Individuals who are married tend to have a greater understanding of RA 9262 and an increase in the number of years spent living together is associated with a greater understanding of RA 9262.

Moreover, a high awareness of RA 9262 among the population surveyed may support the theories used in this study: The Social Contract Theory and the Rule of Law. However, it is important to note that awareness of the law is just one factor that can influence behavior and attitudes of individuals.

A high level of awareness of RA 9262 could potentially disrupt the cycle of violence by providing individuals with information about their rights and the legal consequences of violent behavior. However, it is important to note that awareness alone may not be sufficient to change behavior and attitudes. Other factors, such as social norms, economic conditions, and access to support services, may also play a role.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions given above, the researcher suggests the following recommendations: Dissemination of the findings of this study maybe done among the different LGUs, especially in Tagum City as it is important to consider that awareness of the law can influence behavior and attitudes of the people at the community. This includes comprehensive knowledge of RA 9262 through Education and Awareness Raising to reach those groups with lower levels of awareness and understanding.

While awareness of the penalties associated with RA 9262 may deter some individuals from engaging in abusive behavior, it does not necessarily mean that violence against women and children has been eliminated or reduced. Therefore, awareness may not be sufficient to prevent all instances of violence against women and children. Economic conditions and access to support services can also contribute in changing the behaviors and attitudes of individuals. Thus, skills trainings and seminars, support services, and advocacy may be encouraged.

Policy makers may also include updating of gender and development related laws to improve proposed intervention strategies. Future researchers may investigate other factors that influence awareness and understanding of RA 9262 among different demographic groups.

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