



## Deaf's Awareness on Sexual Abuse at The Vinh Long Deaf Club, Vietnam

Nguyen Thi Thu Trang\*

Trade Union University, HaNoi, VietNam

\*Correspondence: trangnt@dhcd.edu.vn

**Received:** March 26, 2024 **Accepted:** June 12, 2024; **Published:** June 30, 2024

### Abstract

*Over the years, the deaf community in Vinh Long province has had to confront issues of harassment and sexual abuse due to their disabilities. Unfortunately, the majority of the deaf population lacks full awareness of harassment and sexual abuse, often misunderstanding behaviors such as teasing and unwanted touching as not constituting to sexual harassment. Therefore, by using qualitative and quantitative methods, this study aims to explore the current state of awareness about sexual abuse among the deaf in Vinh Long City. Simultaneously, the study intends to figure out the factors influencing the awareness of sexual abuse among the deaf and possible solutions for this issue. This article focuses on analyzing some key results from the research, especially the awareness of the deaf community in Vinh Long province on sexual harassment. Many victims knew that sexual harassment is illegal, but they accepted this behavior without reacting to it.*

**Keywords:** deaf, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, awareness.

### Introduction

Sexual abuse is a significant and prevalent social issue globally, affecting all demographics, including the hearing impaired. In Vietnam, there are around 2.6 million hearing-impaired individuals out of 6.1 million people with disabilities. Despite reported cases of sexual abuse against the hearing impaired, there is a lack of comprehensive research and data on the issue. Existing studies show that many hearing-impaired individuals do not correctly identify sexual harassment behaviors. The Vietnamese legal framework has various laws protecting against sexual abuse, but specific policies for the hearing impaired remain inadequate. Local efforts in Vinh Long province have improved the living conditions of the hearing impaired through welfare support, but more research and targeted awareness programs are needed. The study, "Awareness of Sexual Abuse among the Hearing-Impaired in Vinh Long City, Vinh Long Province" aims to evaluate awareness levels, identify barriers, and recommend policies to improve understanding and prevention of sexual abuse in this community.

Research by Lora M. Levett (2015) defines sexual harassment as unwanted advances or sexual behavior, noting women are more likely to be victims. Marican Sabitha (2008) describes sexual harassment as unwanted sexual behavior impacting mental and physical health. ActionAid (2014) emphasizes the severe physical and mental impacts of such abuse.

Studies on sexual abuse often overlook specific disabilities like hearing impairment. Research in Nigeria and Vietnam shows limited awareness of sexual abuse among the hearing impaired, with significant barriers including language and cultural differences. Swartz (1993) highlights the gap in sexual knowledge between hearing and deaf students. Pollard et al. (2014) found that the hearing impaired struggle to benefit from general health education programs. Social perceptions and lack of targeted education further hinder their understanding.

Overall, there's a lack of comprehensive research on the awareness of sexual abuse among the hearing impaired. Factors such as language barriers, cultural misunderstandings, and inadequate educational efforts significantly impact their awareness. Addressing these issues requires targeted

research and improved education to enhance the understanding of sexual abuse among the hearing impaired.

There is no specific international treaty on sexual abuse, but it is addressed in various global documents such as the UDHR, ICCPR, ICESCR, CEDAW, CRC, and CRPD. These documents emphasize the protection of fundamental human rights often violated by sexual abuse, especially for vulnerable groups like women, girls, and persons with disabilities. Countries develop their legal frameworks based on their contexts, recognizing sexual abuse as a severe crime needing regulation. For instance, specific laws like the UK's Sexual Offences Act 2003 and India's POCSO Act 2012 are meant to protect against sexual abuse. International documents stress special protection for women and girls, including those with disabilities.

Vietnam, an active participant in related international treaties, has developed its legal system to protect vulnerable groups. The 2013 Constitution and numerous laws address aspects of sexual abuse. The 2015 Penal Code outlines penalties for sexual abuse, including aggravated circumstances for acts against persons with disabilities. However, Vietnam's laws lack clear definitions of sexual abuse and specific policies for disabled individuals, including the hearing impaired. Issues include undefined terms like "sexual harassment" and insufficient legal distinctions for various violent acts.

Vietnam's legal system reflects two main aspects: prevention and protection policies for women and children (including the hearing impaired) against sexual abuse and support for victims through recovery measures. However, the policies still have limitations, such as lack of specific definitions and legal protections for people with disabilities.

## **Methodology**

### *Desk Review*

The study used desk review to collect and analyze documents, books, and research studies related to sexual abuse and the hearing impaired to evaluate the overall research situation concerning the hearing impaired, providing a theoretical basis for the topic and guiding practical research.

### *Quantitative Method*

This is one of the main methods used in practical research. The questionnaire includes sections on personal information, the awareness of sexual abuse among the deaf, and the challenges and advantages in raising awareness about this issue. In this study, there were 60 deaf respondents selected randomly, including 25 managed by the Department of Labor, War Invalids, and Social Affairs, and 35 members of the Vinh Long Deaf Club.

### *Qualitative Method*

Based on questionnaire responses, in-depth interviews are conducted with 15 cases. The principles of conducting in-depth interviews were based on the principle of respecting the interviewees. The interviewer focuses on creating an open and friendly atmosphere to build trust. Follow-up questions are asked to clarify unclear aspects and verify the accuracy of the interviewees' responses.

Local authorities gathered detailed qualitative information from three members of the Vinh Long Deaf Club and three hearing-impaired individuals on their reactions to sexual abuse and their needs for knowledge and skills in prevention and response.

Interviews were conducted with both parents of deaf respondents to understand the relationship between them and their family and their perspectives on sexual abuse.

In addition, three managers of the deaf group (hearing impaired themselves), two officials from the disability association, and three experts on hearing and speech disabilities were interviewed to understand the factors affecting the deaf on awareness of sexual abuse.

### *Research questions*

By using different methods, this study would answer the following two research questions to explore the awareness of the deaf on sexual abuse and sexual harassment:

- What is the current state of awareness about sexual abuse among the hearing impaired in Vinh Long City?
- What are the factors that influence the awareness of sexual abuse among the hearing impaired in Vinh Long City?

### *Research setting*

Vinh Long province is located in the center and is a miniature image of the Mekong Delta. It is situated between two major rivers: the Tien River and the Hau River. The province has a natural area of 1,487 square kilometers and a population of 1.2 million people, including the Kinh, Khmer, and

Chinese ethnic groups. Administratively, Vinh Long province consists of Vinh Long City and the districts of Long Ho, Mang Thit, Binh Minh, Tam Binh, Tra On, and Vung Liem. To the north of Vinh Long province is Tien Giang, to the northwest is Dong Thap, to the east is Ben Tre, to the southeast is Tra Vinh, and to the south is Can Tho.

According to the report on the implementation of policies for people with disabilities by the Department of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs (2021), as of December 2022, there are 65 deaf people in Vinh Long City. Other than the deaf people participating in the Vinh Long Deaf Club, there are 25 deaf people. The education level mainly reaches 3 out of 12. Many deaf people do not know how to read and they rely on their families. Deaf people in the area usually engage in manual labor such as car washing, selling lottery tickets, or shoe processing. Those in Vinh Long mainly gather at the Vinh Long Deaf Club. Currently, the club has 35 members living in various places in Vinh Long province such as Mang Thit, Tra On, and Vinh Long City. Most members are aged between 18 and 45 years, with 12 males and 18 females. The education level of the members is low, mainly reaching the 5th grade out of 12. Deaf people in Vinh Long province, in particular, still face many difficulties in life.

On the one hand, half of the households with disabled members (including deaf people) face significant financial difficulties, so they cannot have the necessary conditions for functional restoration. On the other hand, due to limitations in disability factors and societal attitudes, deaf people encounter many obstacles in accessing resources for education, healthcare, employment, sociocultural activities, etc. Therefore, participating in community activities is an opportunity for deaf people to raise awareness and equip themselves with skills to enhance their integration into the community. Organized activities at the Vinh Long Deaf Club include: sign language classes; life skills training; exchanges with other deaf clubs in the southern region; and cultural and artistic activities. However, due to various reasons such as limited and repetitive activities, inadequate facilities, and inappropriate methods of operation, the number of club members is gradually decreasing, and activities are less attractive to deaf people. According to Mr. To Viet Vinh, Head of the Vinh Long Deaf Club, to identify sexual abuse, the members of the Vinh Long Deaf Club have received training from nongovernmental organizations such as the Center for the Deaf-PARD, sponsored by the Norwegian Association.

Training sessions mainly focus on topics such as reproductive health care and sexual health for deaf people. Through these training sessions, most deaf people participating in the club are equipped with basic knowledge to take care of their reproductive health. However, club members have not been exposed to knowledge and skills in preventing sexual abuse for deaf people. The research is conducted based on the following demographic characteristics: Gender: With a total of 60 subjects, including 20 males and 40 females. It can be seen that the proportion of deaf females is higher (66.7%) compared to deaf males (33.3%). Age: The majority of the research sample is aged 25–34 (51.7%), followed by under 25 (33.3%), and finally from 35 to 54 accounting for only 15.0%. Education level: The survey results show that the majority of deaf people have primary education (58.3%), followed by lower secondary education (38.3%); illiteracy and high school education account for only 1.7%. Occupation: The main occupation of respondents is self-employment (48.3%), housewives (18.3%), trading (13.3%), unemployment (11.7%), workers/farmers (6.7%), and students (1.7%).

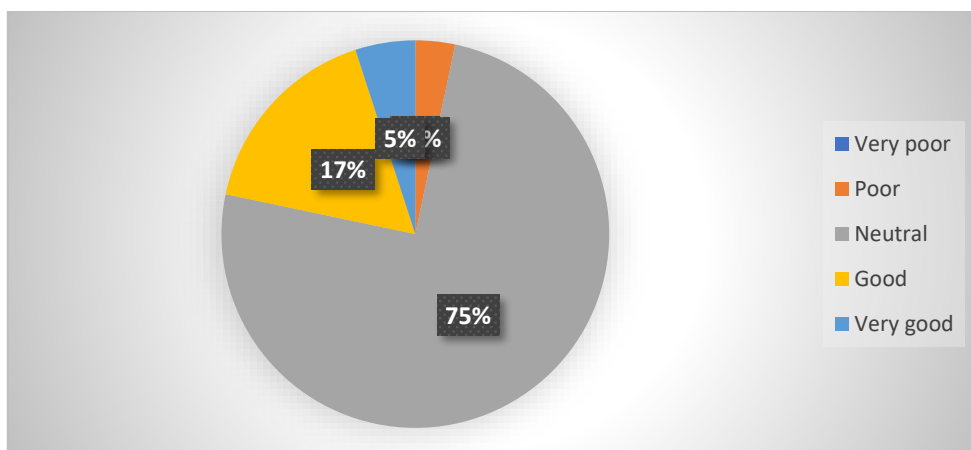
This article is part of a study on the awareness of sexual harassment among the deaf in Vinh Long city, Vinh Long province. The study aims to analyze the current perception of sexual harassment among the deaf in Vinh Long City. In addition, it seeks to analyze the factors influencing the perception of sexual harassment among the deaf in Vinh Long City. From there, it proposes solutions to improve the awareness of this group regarding sexual harassment.

## **Result**

### ***The Current Status of Awareness Among the Deaf About Sexual Harassment***

#### *The current status of awareness about sexual harassment among the deaf*

According to Figure 1, deaf individuals mostly perceive their awareness of sexual abuse as normal (75.0%). Only 16.7% of deaf individuals perceive their awareness of sexual abuse as good, and 5% perceive it as very good. In addition, there is no perception of sexual abuse at a very poor level, and only 3.3% perceive it as poor.

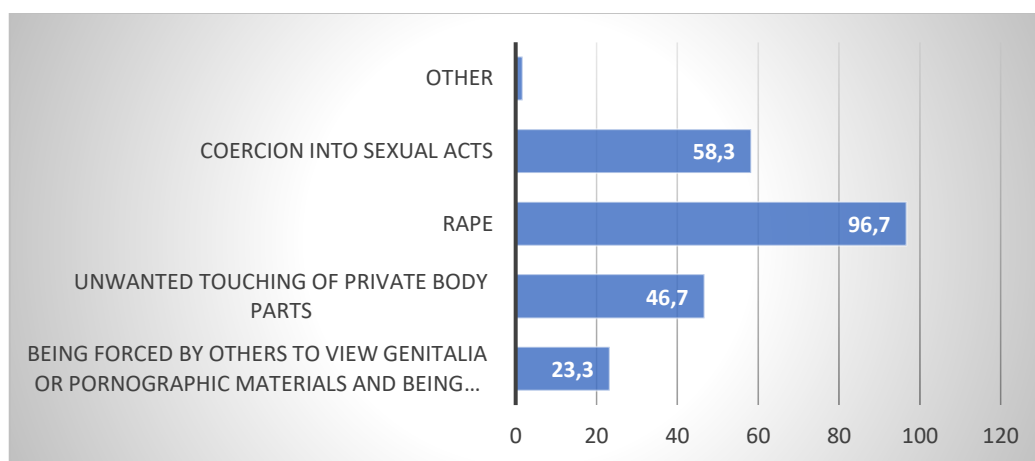


**Figure 1** Awareness Level of the Deaf About Sexual Abuse  
(Source: The research results in 2023)

Chi-square test is used to determine the relationship between pairs of variables related to the perception of sexual abuse among deaf individuals, including gender, education level, and participation in deaf clubs/organizations. The conditions are shown in the Chi-square tests table. If the asymptotic significance (two-sided) value in the Pearson Chi-Square row is less than 0.05, then the values entered into the test will be related to each other; otherwise, if the value is greater than 0.05, the values will not be related. Accordingly, there is no relationship between gender, education level, and participation in deaf clubs/organizations with the perception of sexual abuse at significance  $\alpha$  levels of 0.466; 0.808; 0.067, respectively.

**The current status of awareness about sexual harassment behaviors among the deaf**

To assess the level of awareness of deaf individuals regarding sexual harassment behaviors, including being raped, being coerced into engaging in sexual acts, unwanted touching of private body parts, and being forced by others to view genitalia or pornographic materials. The actual survey results indicate specific understanding among deaf individuals in Vinh Long City, as illustrated in the following figure.

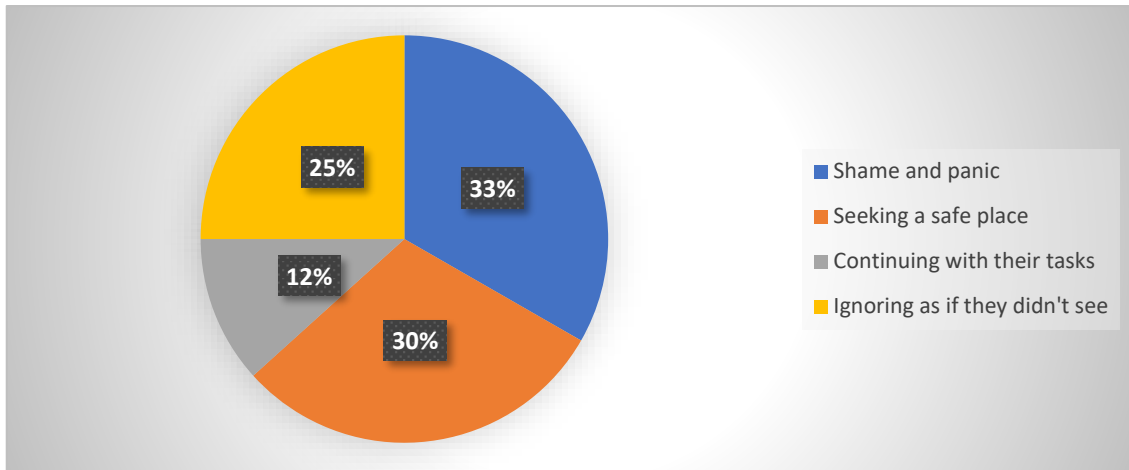


**Figure 2** Awareness of the Deaf About Sexual Harassment Behaviors  
(Source: The research results in 2023)

The results from Figure 2 indicate that the majority of deaf individuals consider serious behaviors related to sexual relations or physical contact, such as rape (96.7%), coercion into sexual acts (58.3%), and unwanted touching of private body parts (46.7%), as sexual harassment. Meanwhile, behaviors such as being forced by others to view genitalia or pornographic materials and being subjected to crude sexual advances through words have lower proportions, with only 23.3% choosing this option. These findings align entirely with those obtained from in-depth interviews. Ms. NTS shared: “Sexual harassment behaviors include rape, groping, and physical contact like being bumped into on a bus, for example. But just texting or sending pictures is not.” (Results of in-depth interviews on...). The awareness of sexual harassment behaviors among deaf males and females is quite similar, as demonstrated through comparing the correlation between gender and the perception of sexual

harassment behaviors during data processing. Thus, it can be seen that deaf individuals, both males and females, have incomplete awareness of sexual harassment behaviors. The majority still believe that only physical contact constitutes sexual harassment.

**The current status of awareness about reactions to sexual harassment**

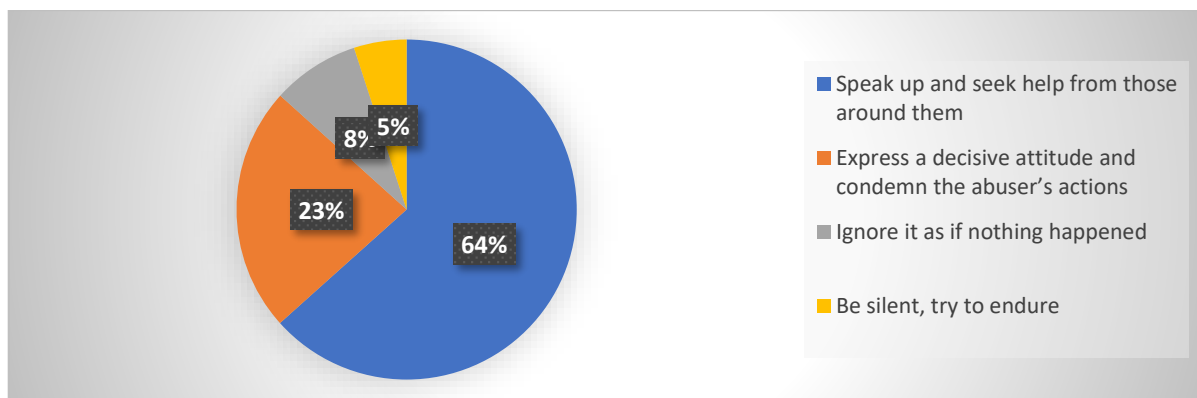


**Figure 3:** The Reaction of Deaf Individuals When Encountering a Situation Where Someone Deliberately Exposes Their Genitals

(Source: The research results in 2023)

Referring to the research findings, it can be observed that the majority of subjects are aware of sexual harassment behaviors. However, 33.3% of those reactions were feelings of shame and panic, while 67.7% exhibited various behaviors, including seeking a safe place, ignoring as if they didn't see, continuing with their tasks, signaling to people around them, and seeking assistance. Regarding the reactions of shame and panic, in-depth interview results showed, "I feel very ashamed when I see a man exposing his genitalia because it's very sensitive." Meanwhile, explaining the behavior of ignoring and continuing with tasks, another subject shared, "When I see someone exposing their genitalia on the street, I look away as if I didn't see anything." However, there are also those who speak out against the behavior of exposing genitalia, as shared above, stating, "Only when I speak up can I put an end to others' behavior of exposing themselves".

Exhibitionism, as defined by *Psychology Today*, is the act of exposing one's genitals unexpectedly and against the expectation of others. The intention behind exhibitionist behavior is solely to expose genitalia, not to assault. Therefore, the safest way to handle such situations is to remain calm, reassure oneself, and show indifference toward the perpetrator. The more indifferent one appears, the more likely the perpetrators will become disinterested and abandon their intentions. Thus, individuals who are deaf may feel confused and unsure how to react when confronted with such behavior.



**Figure 4.** The Reaction of Deaf Individuals When Encountering a Situation Where Someone Deliberately Touches or Gropes Their Body

(Source: The research results in 2023)

At a higher level of harassment, such as being touched or intentionally groped in public places, the majority of deaf individuals (64%) speak up and seek help from those around them. Only 23% choose to express a decisive attitude and condemn the abuser's actions. These results mean that the deaf in Vinh Long do not seem to be fully trained on how to react to harassment behaviors.

Thus, there still exists a difference in perception regarding direct and indirect sexual harassment behaviors, although fundamentally both are forms of sexual harassment.

**The current status of awareness about perpetrators of sexual harassment**

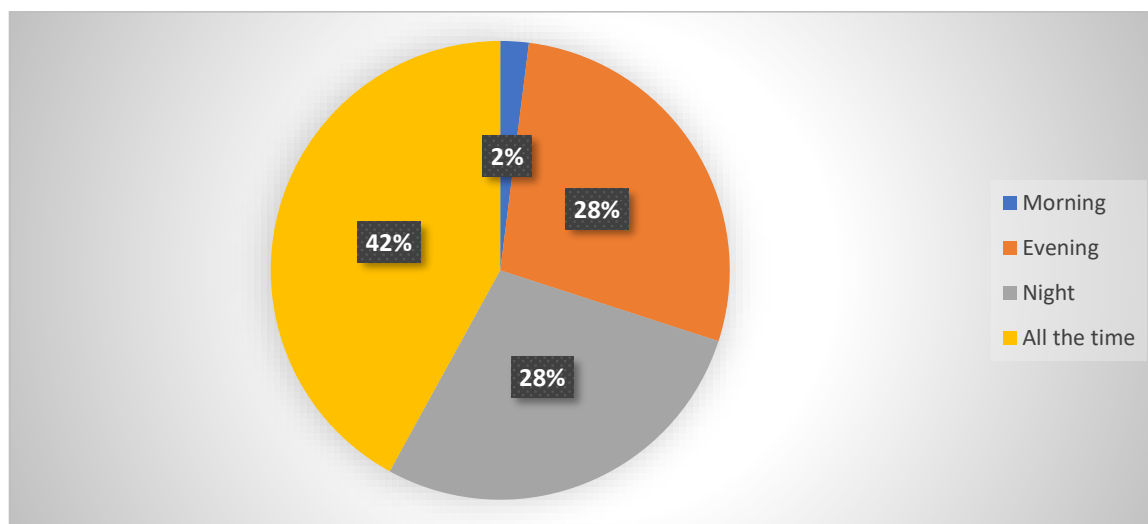
**Table 1.** The Awareness of The Level of Risk Posed by The Perpetrators of Sexual Harassment Towards Deaf Individuals

| Perpetrators   | Average Value | Assessment Level |
|--|---------------|------------------|
| Strangers  | 3.37          | Medium risk      |
| Friends  | 3.45          | Low risk         |
| Relatives  | 3.08          | Medium risk      |
| Same gender  | 3.13          | Medium risk      |
| Different gender   | 3.25          | Medium risk      |
| Individuals with pedophilic disorder                           | 3.08          | Medium risk      |
| Teachers or staffs at school/organizations supporting the deaf | 2.42          | Low risk         |

(Source: The research results in 2023)

The research results show that familiar individuals (including friends) with an average value of 3.45 sexually harass deaf individuals. Meanwhile, some other groups have a moderate level of risk, such as relatives, same-sex individuals, opposite-sex individuals, and individuals with pedophilic tendencies. Some in-depth interview results from two subjects indicate: "I think familiar people are likely to commit sexual harassment because they know us and use the relationship to exploit and harass" and "I have seen many people taking advantage of friendships, inviting deaf individuals to hang out and then harassing them."

**The current status of awareness about the time and location of sexual harassment occurrences**



**Figure 5.** Awareness of The Timing of Occurrences of Sexual Harassment Experienced By Deaf Individuals (Source: The research results in 2023)

According to the summary report, "Safe Cities for Women and Girls: From Dream to Reality" by ActionAid in 2014, more than half of the women and girls surveyed (51%) reported being harassed during daylight hours more than three times in their lifetime. It is noteworthy that 16% of women and girls reported frequently experiencing harassment.

Regarding the timing of sexual harassment incidents: 1.7% stated that such incidents occur early morning; 28.3% stated that they occur in the evening or nighttime; and 41.7% stated that sexual

harassment occurs at all times of the day. These statistics are consistent with the findings from the study, where 41.7% believed that sexual harassment could occur at any time of the day. However, over 50% expressed the view that sexual harassment typically occurs at a fixed time of day such as early morning or evening. From these results, it can be seen that although the awareness of deaf individuals regarding the timing of sexual harassment incidents is quite comprehensive, there is still a percentage of deaf individuals with limited awareness who believe that sexual harassment usually occurs at a specific time of the day.

**Table 2.** Awareness of Areas at Risk ff Sexual Harassment Towards Deaf Individual

| Location                        | Average Value | Assessment Level |
|---------------------------------|---------------|------------------|
| School grounds                  | 2.17          | Low risk         |
| Rest room                       | 2.20          | Low risk         |
| Inside classrooms               | 2.08          | Low risk         |
| Canteens                        | 2.20          | Low risk         |
| Gym centers                     | 2.42          | Low risk         |
| Public rest room                | 2.80          | Medium risk      |
| Dark alleys, poorly lit streets | <b>3.40</b>   | Medium risk      |
| Parks                           | 2.78          | Medium risk      |
| Supermarket/Local markets       | 2.56          | Low risk         |
| Public Swimming pools           | 2.65          | Medium risk      |
| Bus stations                    | 2.70          | Medium risk      |
| Working areas                   | 2.75          | Medium risk      |
| Family                          | 2.50          | Low risk         |

(Source: The research results in 2023)

The statistical results in Table 2 indicate that areas with the risk of sexual harassment can be categorized into two groups: those with low risk and those with moderate risk. The low-risk group, with average scores ranging from 2.17 to 2.56, includes locations such as inside classrooms, schoolyards, canteens, markets/supermarkets/shopping areas, and at home. The high-risk group, with average scores ranging from 2.65 to 3.40, includes locations such as public restrooms, parks, amusement areas, public beaches, bus stops, train stations, and workplaces.

These research findings are consistent with some other studies on the same topic. According to the study, "Education for Sexual Harassment Prevention for Elementary School Students using Life Skills Approach" by Bui Thi Loan conducted in 2021, most students believe that only deserted and poorly lit streets have the highest risk of sexual harassment, "while locations such as public transportation like buses, show that areas with high foot traffic such as markets, schools, canteens...Desolate places, dimly lit streets, or lack of street lights provide opportunities for wrongdoers."

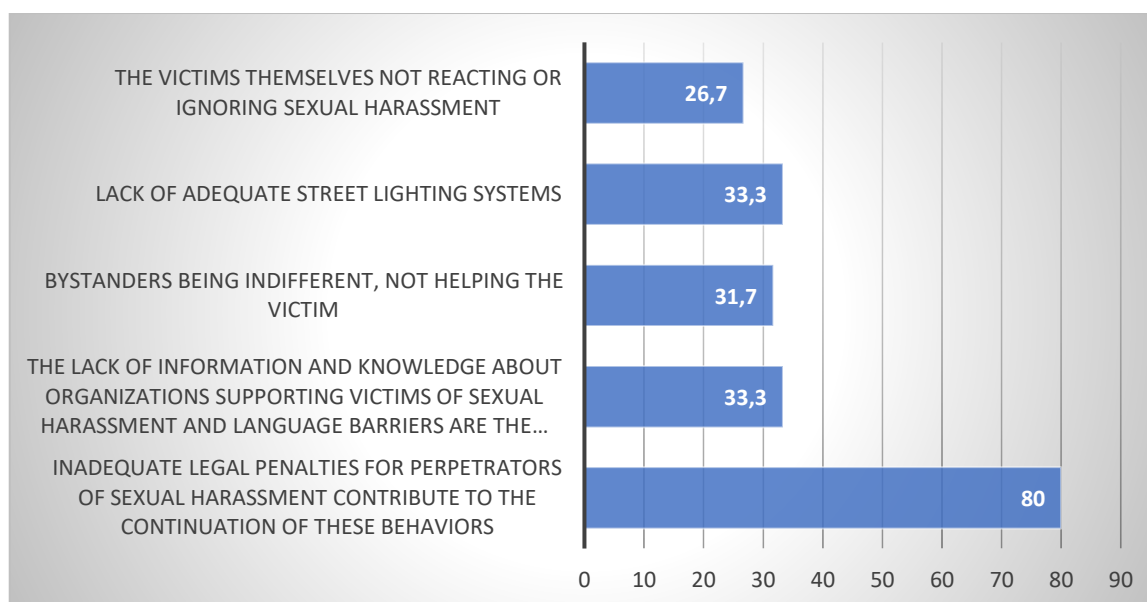
Thus, it can be seen that sexual harassment can occur in any location, including places considered safe or low risk such as schools, homes, and shopping areas, which can potentially be high-risk locations.

**The current status of awareness about the causes of sexual harassment against the deaf**

By examining Chart 6, we can categorize the causes into two groups: subjective causes and objective causes. Subjective causes include language barriers and victims not reacting or ignoring, while objective causes include bystanders being indifferent and not helping the victim; inadequate legal penalties; and lack of adequate street lighting systems.

In the subjective causes group, 33.3% of the deaf individuals believe that the lack of information and knowledge about organizations supporting victims of sexual harassment and language barriers are the reasons leading to sexual harassment. The lowest proportion is attributed to the victims themselves not reacting or ignoring sexual harassment, accounting for only 26.7%.

In the objective causes group, the majority (80%) of deaf individuals believe that inadequate legal penalties for perpetrators of sexual harassment contribute to the continuation of these behaviors. In addition, 31.7% of deaf individuals believe that bystanders' indifference and failure to help the victims will lead to the persistence of sexual harassment. The reason related to infrastructure (lighting systems) shares the same percentage with the reason of bystanders' indifference and failure to help the victims, at 31.7%.



**Figure 6.** Awareness of The Causes of Sexual Harassment Towards Deaf Individual

(Source: The research results in 2023)

In the objective causes group, the majority (80%) of deaf individuals believe that inadequate legal penalties for perpetrators of sexual harassment contribute to the continuation of these behaviors. In addition, 31.7% of deaf individuals believe that bystanders' indifference and failure to help the victims will lead to the persistence of sexual harassment. The reason related to infrastructure (lighting systems) shares the same percentage with the reason of bystanders' indifference and failure to help the victims, at 31.7%.

**Table 3.** Solutions to Enhance the Awareness of The Deaf About Sexual Harassment

| Solutions  | Percentage (%) |
|--|----------------|
| Organizing training sessions for deaf individuals  | 88,8           |
| Providing interpreters at agencies supporting deaf individuals   | 78,3           |
| Families of deaf individuals need to pay attention to, and educate their children about gender issues in general and sexual harassment in particular | 46,7           |
| Implementing specialized sex education programs for deaf individual  | 43,3           |
| Enhancing the skills of teachers/support staff in working with deaf individual   | 38,3           |

(Source: The research results in 2023)

Through Table 3, it can be seen that the majority of deaf individuals (88.3%) believe that there is a need for additional training sessions on the topic of sexual harassment. Furthermore, there is a need for interpreters at agencies supporting deaf individuals (78.3%); families of deaf individuals need to pay attention to and educate their children about gender issues in general and sexual harassment in particular (46.7%); there should be specialized sex education programs for deaf individuals (43.3%); and an improvement in the skills of working with deaf individuals for teachers/support personnel (38.3%). Deep interview results show that "We need to participate in training sessions and increase awareness of sexual harassment more."; "Sign language interpreters are essential in activities for the deaf. If interpreters do well, we will understand better. Currently, there are few competent interpreters in the Vinh Long area, so we encounter many obstacles in accessing information".

### Conclusion and Recommendations

Deaf individuals in Vinh Long city have certain understandings but not entirely accurate ones about sexual abuse. Regarding the awareness of sexual abuse behaviors, the majority of deaf individuals believe that behaviors involving physical contact constitute sexual abuse. The subjects of



the study have good awareness of the timing of sexual abuse occurrences. Most deaf individuals believe that the perpetrators of sexual abuse are acquaintances; other potential perpetrators such as teachers, pedophiles have medium risk. However, deaf individuals do not have complete awareness of the locations where sexual abuse occurs. Mostly, deaf individuals believe that deserted roads and poorly lit streets are places where sexual abuse is likely to occur. In addition, deaf individuals believe that lack of attention and education from their families and educational materials about sexual abuse that are not suitable for the characteristics of deaf people are the main causes of sexual abuse.

Regarding the reactions of deaf individuals when encountering some situations of sexual abuse: When exposed to genitalia, most deaf individuals panic, feel confused, or seek help. When deliberately touched, deaf individuals know how to speak up and seek assistance.

Factors influencing the awareness of sexual abuse among deaf individuals include biological, educational, environmental, and emotional factors. Deaf individuals believe that factors related to education and the environment have a higher impact than biological and emotional factors. Factors such as inadequate education from families about sexual abuse and media products that do not meet the needs and characteristics of deaf people which are mostly chosen by deaf individuals have a high impact on awareness of sexual abuse.

### ***Recommendation for policy***

Firstly, encourage support for employees across various sectors to enhance their skills in working with the deaf and learning sign language. According to Article 27, Chapter IV of the Vietnamese Law on Persons with Disabilities 2010, deaf individuals are entitled to learn sign language. Furthermore, educators, educational administrators involved in the education of persons with disabilities, and support staff for the education of persons with disabilities should receive training and updates on expertise, professional skills, and skills to meet the educational needs of persons with disabilities. It is evident that deaf individuals have the right to use sign language. In addition, teachers and professionals in the education sector need knowledge and skills to support the deaf, including the use of sign language.

Secondly, establish policies aimed at training skills for working with disabled individuals in general, and the deaf in particular, for grassroots-level staff. In order to improve the quality of support services for disabled individuals in general, and the deaf in particular, the Ministry of Health issued Decision No. 6858/QĐ-BYT on November 18, 2016, which includes criterion A2.5 on ensuring full access for disabled individuals to departments, rooms, and medical services in hospitals, according to the quality standards of Vietnamese hospitals version 2.0. Some hospitals in Ho Chi Minh City proactively send staff, including doctors, to participate in training sessions on supporting the deaf in hospitals. However, apart from the education and healthcare sectors, the deaf still encounter many barriers in accessing other social services such as employment, administrative procedures, and reporting to the police in case of danger. According to Mr. Duy, from the Legal Assistance Center of Vinh Long province, the center has dealt with some cases involving the deaf. Whenever working with these individuals, the center staff feel perplexed because they don't know sign language and lack the skills to work with them. In Vinh Long, it's very difficult to find interpreters. The center has to coordinate with the police to invite interpreters from Dong Thap or Ho Chi Minh City. This prolongs the working time and creates many obstacles in the assistance process. Therefore, equipping grassroots-level staff with knowledge and skills is extremely necessary.

Thirdly, enhance the quality of education for the deaf. In order for the deaf to have more opportunities to access education and raise awareness, the government should establish a model of schools teaching using sign language at all levels: primary, secondary, and high school, to equip deaf students with basic knowledge like hearing (across all major cities and provinces, especially in economically disadvantaged regions). In addition, it's essential to develop teaching methods suitable for the deaf, such as using images, videos, focusing on teaching grammar in Vietnamese and sign language, so that the deaf don't encounter difficulties in reading and understanding texts. Develop and organize gender education programs suitable for the deaf, thereby raising awareness about gender issues in general and sexual abuse in particular.

### ***Enhancing the Quality of Activities of the Vinh Long Deaf Club***

During activity sessions covering various topics, including those related to sexual abuse, the duration of activities should be allocated appropriately according to the participants' learning capacity. Deaf individuals, due to language barriers, find it challenging to understand abstract words, especially scientific terminology. Therefore, when working with this group, explaining the meaning of words takes much more time compared to other verbal communicators. Hence, when designing activities, attention should be paid to allocating time appropriately to match the content and knowledge transmission. In

addition, for topics with many new vocabulary words, more time should be allocated for sign language learning activities and sentence writing practice.

When organizing activities with deaf individuals, attention should be given to creating suitable activity spaces, including:

- Seating arrangement: Deaf individuals communicate through sign language. To fully express the meaning of signs, they use hand gestures, facial expressions, and body language. When arranging seating positions, seats should be spaced farther apart than usual to ensure that communication does not cause interference with neighboring individuals. Furthermore, this arrangement helps group members to observe the hand gestures, facial expressions, and body language of the person next to them.

- Equipment:

- Because deaf individuals think in images, visual presentation equipment is necessary. When organizing activities, the room should be equipped with a TV or projector and a supporting screen.
- In addition, the room should have good lighting to facilitate easy observation and communication in sign language for deaf individuals.

The previous activity content of the Vinh Long Deaf Club was transferred from the Southern Deaf Advocacy Committee. The club management has not conducted a needs assessment among its members to develop practical content that meets the actual needs of the members. Most of the activity content has not been adjusted to match the participants' level. Therefore, the activity content of the club needs to be reviewed and selected with guidance and advice from professionals and experienced individuals in the field of education for deaf individuals. Deaf members wish for activity content to be presented vividly with many images and illustrative videos. Therefore, designers need to be proficient in using basic software such as PowerPoint, Word, etc. However, due to low educational levels and slow reading abilities, few deaf individuals can do this. Therefore, deaf individuals need to enhance their computer and software skills to effectively serve the club's activities, thereby increasing awareness of sexual abuse prevention among club members.

### **Acknowledgement.**

The author extends its sincerest gratitude to Mr. Ismail for giving his valuable time to run through, review, and provide comments on the earlier versions of this article. Without his support and encouragement, finishing this article would not be possible.

### **Author Brief Bio**

**Nguyen Thi Thu Trang** is a professor at Trade Union University. She earned Master degree in Informatic Technology in 2013. Besides working as a professor, she also works as a consultant for some non-government organization, such as Australian People for Health, Education and Development Approach (APHEDA). During the years, she has been dedicated her research capacity through her publicity, includes: An Analysis of mainstreaming education method for children with disabilities in VietNam – ASEAN Social work Journal, 2020; Essential problems in sustainable development of ethnic minority in Vietnam – Social Work & Society International Online Journal, 2020 (<https://ejournals.bib.uni-wuppertal.de/index.php/sws/article/view/623>); Education and Communication in Planning Child Protection Program in Vietnam – ASEAN Social work Journal, 2021.

### **References**

- Action to the Community Development Institute (ACDC) and UNDEF (2018). Research Report on the Situation of Sexual Violence against Women and Girls with Disabilities in Hanoi and Da Nang. Hanoi
- ACDC and UNDEF (2021). Document on Prevention of Sexual Violence against Women and Girls with Disabilities. Hanoi
- Bui Thi Loan. (2021). Education for Primary School Students on Preventing Sexual Abuse through Life Skills Approach. Hanoi Pedagogical University
- Bui Thi Xuan Mai. (2012). Introduction to Social Work. Labor and Social Affairs Publishing House.
- Coordination Board for Activities Supporting Persons with Disabilities in Vietnam (2010). 2010 Report on Activities Supporting Persons with Disabilities in Vietnam. Hanoi
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).
- Goldstein, M. F., Eckhardt, E. A., Joyner-Creamer, P., Berry, R., Paradise, H., & Cleland, C. M. (2010). What do deaf high school students know about HIV?. *AIDS education and prevention*, 22(6), 523-537.

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Nd. Retrieved January 6, 2022.
- Le Minh Hang (2013). "Inclusive Education - A Gateway for Disabled Children in Vietnam." Swarthmore College.
- Le Thi Lam, Tran Dai Phuoc (2015). Group Social Work with Deaf People Responding to Sexual Harassment Issues in Public Places in Da Nang City. University of Pedagogy - University of Da Nang.
- Le Thi Lam (2020). Group Social Work with Female Students in Sexual Harassment Prevention. Academy of Social Sciences.
- National Assembly. (2015). Civil Code No. 91/2015/QH13. Issued on November 24, 2015.
- National Assembly. (2015). Penal Code No. 10/2015/QH15. Issued on November 27, 2015.
- National Assembly. (2007). Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control No. 02/2007/QH12. Issued on November 21, 2007.
- National Assembly. (2011). Law on Prevention and Combat of Human Trafficking No. 66/2011/QH12. Issued on March 29, 2011.
- National Assembly. (2016). Law on Children No. 102/2016/QH13. Issued on April 5, 2016.
- Nguyen Thi Hoang Yen. (2007). Introduction to Education for Deaf Children. National University Publishing House.
- Nguyen Ngoc Chinh (Editor-in-chief), Ngo Thi Thanh Nhung, Tran Bich Thuy (2008). Education for Deaf Students in Special Education Institutions in Da Nang City: Current Situation and Solutions. Education Publishing House.
- Nurul Eka Hidayati, Nugroho, F. ., & Sali Rahadi Asih. (2022). Methodological and Ethical Considerations in Research Involving Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse : A Reflection. *Asean Social Work Journal*, 10(1), 47–58. <https://doi.org/10.58671/aswj.v10i1.14>
- Phan Trong Ngo (Editor-in-chief), Duong Dieu Hoa, Nguyen Lan Anh. (2001). Psychology of Intelligence. Hanoi National University Publishing House.
- Pollard Jr, R. Q., Dean, R. K., O'Hearn, A., & Haynes, S. L. (2009). Adapting health education material for deaf audiences. *Rehabilitation psychology*, 54(2), 232.
- Sabitha, M. (2008). Sexual harassment awareness training at workplace: Can it effect administrators' perception. *JOAAG*, 3(2).
- Sales, M. V. T., Uclaray, A., Baldoza, R. D., Niño-franco, J., Dycoco, C., Añonuevo, T., & Pereyra, M. . (2023). Factors Affecting the Prevalence of Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children in Camarines Sur, Bicol Region, Philippines. *Asean Social Work Journal*, 11(2). <https://doi.org/10.58671/aswj.v11i02.37>
- Taylor, L. R., Gaskin-Laniyan, N., National Institute of Justice (NIJ), US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, & United States of America. (2007). Study reveals unique issues faced by deaf victims of sexual assault. *National Institute of Justice Journal*, 257, 24-26.
- Tran Thi Thiep (Editor-in-chief), Bui Thi Anh Phuong, Nguyen Thi Cam Huong, Vuong Hong Tam. (2016). National University Publishing House.
- Truong Thi, L. (2022). Occupational accidents related to gender in the village of La Xuyen wood handicraft . *Asean Social Work Journal*, 10(2), 14–23. <https://doi.org/10.58671/aswj.v10i2.24>
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) 1948.
- Vinh Long Department of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs. (2021). Report on the Implementation Results of Policies for Persons with Disabilities. Vinh Long