

**THE PERCEPTIONS OF TOUCH-BOUNDARIES IN THE
THAI WORKPLACE: A STUDY OF
MAHIDOL UNIVERSITY**



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ABSTRACT

Weak sexual harassment policy at post-secondary institutions within Thailand has triggered interest in the topic of sexual harassment in the university workplace. Past research on sexual harassment rarely makes touch the central focus. This study was designed to learn more about touch, more specifically, about women's touch-boundaries within the sexual harassment frame through a mixed study of quantitative and qualitative methods using a Thai female sample population working as support staff at Mahidol University Salaya campus. Findings from the survey, calculated through central tendency, suggest Thai female employees react negatively toward touch in the workplace and share a united perception on parameters of touch, that is, giving males consent to touch is important, what body zones are accessible for appropriate touch, from whom do women reject unsolicited touch in the workplace, on frequency, duration and intention of unsolicited touch, and on the wrong of unsolicited touch according to body zone. The second aim of this study was to examine through respondent-identified control mechanisms, whether Thai female employees at Mahidol University can protect their touch-boundary. This study also suggests protection is a shifting feature and is conditional.

KEY WORDS: SEXUAL HARASSMENT / TOUCH-BOUNDARY / PERCEPTION

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