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# AWARENESS AND VIOLATION OF BROWN LAWS AMONG CRIMINOLOGY STUDENTS IN CABANATUAN CITY

**Cindy DC. Cariaga, Jan Vincent S. Carmen, Wendy SP. Nicolas, Marivic B. Posadas**
*Faculty, College of Criminology, Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology*

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## ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this study was to assess the level of awareness among first year criminology students in Nueva Ecija regarding brown laws, identify instances of non-compliance, understand the underlying reasons and motivations for violation and develop an action plan grounded in the research findings. The participants in this study were the 1st year students of selected Criminology institutions in Cabanatuan City namely: Manuel V. Gallego Foundation (MVGFC), Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology (NEUST); PHINMA- Araullo University (Main Campus); and Wesleyan University-Philippines (WU-P). The study concludes that Criminology students are generally aware of various Brown Laws, including RA 9275, RA 9003, RA 8749, and RA 6969. However, despite this awareness, there is a notable tendency for some students to commit environmental violations, particularly under RA 6969, which has the lowest level of awareness and is linked to frequent violations such as storing hazardous wastes and knowingly using prohibited chemical substances. The primary reasons for these violations include the laws' lack of popularity, insufficient media dissemination, lenient enforcement, and a shortage of dedicated enforcement personnel. These factors create an environment where environmental laws, despite being known, are often disregarded. Hence, it is recommended to enhance education and awareness, improve media campaigns and strengthen enforcement to secure compliance and deter potential violators.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Awareness, Violations, Reasons, Brown Laws, Criminology Students*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The study of crime, its causes, and societal reactions to criminal activity are the cornerstones of the science of criminology. In this regard, it is crucial for anyone pursuing a bachelor's degree in criminology to have a thorough understanding of the legal principles and ethical issues that support the criminal justice system. Being knowledgeable of the "Brown Laws," which are a collection of statutes and rules governing the behavior of law enforcement officials and criminal justice professionals, is an essential component of this understanding. These rules are crucial in ensuring that people are treated fairly and justly within the criminal justice system because they establish expectations for behavior and responsibility among those in charge of upholding law and order.

The Philippines' Nueva Ecija region provides a distinctive and fascinating setting for examining Brown Law understanding and potential infractions among BS Criminology students. A thorough knowledge of Brown Laws is essential for prospective criminologists who will work in law enforcement, corrections, or similar professions, as the Philippines' criminal justice system has undergone various changes and revisions in recent years. It is crucial to determine how well-informed BS Criminology students are about these regulations and to find out if this information affects how they see ethical conduct in the criminal justice system.

Every Filipino has a right to a sustainable and healthy environment. However, there is a commensurate responsibility to uphold that right. This study aims to provide light on the readiness of aspiring criminologists to traverse the intricacies of their future professions by investigating the level of their knowledge and understanding of these laws, as well as their attitudes toward ethical conduct within the criminal justice system. Additionally, it will investigate the perceived reasons for violating such laws among Criminology students.

The results of this study will assist in the creation of targeted interventions and curriculum improvements by identifying potential knowledge and ethical understanding gaps, better preparing upcoming criminologists with the skills and principles required for a fair and just criminal justice system. The ultimate objective of this research is to reinforce the fundamental principles that support the fairness, accountability, and respect for the rule of law of the criminal justice system in Cabanatuan City as well as nationwide.

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## II. METHODOLOGY

The participants of this study were the 1st year students of selected Criminology institutions in Cabanatuan City namely: Manuel V. Gallego Foundation (MVGFC), Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology (NEUST); PHINMA-Araullo University (Main Campus); and Wesleyan University-Philippines (WU-P). A questionnaire-checklist was designed using Google forms platform. Part I of the questionnaire-checklist was the level of awareness on brown laws, Part II was the assessment on the extent of the commission of environmental crimes and Part III was the perceived reasons of violating brown laws.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

**Table 1. Level of Awareness of the 1st Year Criminology Students on Brown Laws**

| Brown Laws | WM | Verbal Interpretation |
|---|---|---|
| RA 6969 otherwise known as Toxic Substances and Hazardous Wastes Control Act of 1990 | 2.98 | Aware |
| RA 9275 otherwise known as the Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004 | 3.11 | Aware |
| RA 8749 otherwise known as the Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999 | 3.01 | Aware |
| RA 9003 otherwise known as Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2002 | 3.11 | Aware |
| **Total** | **3.05** | **Aware** |

Table 1 presents the level of awareness of the 1st year criminology students on brown laws obtained an overall weighted mean of 3.05 which was verbally interpreted as "aware". The highest weighted mean of 3.11 are: RA 9275 "Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004" and RA 9003 "Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2002" followed by: RA 8749 "Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999" with a weighted mean of 3.01 while the lowest weighted mean of 2.98 was RA 6969 "Toxic Substances and Hazardous Wastes Control Act of 1990" with the verbal interpretation of aware.

The findings are consistent with the study of Singh (2015) which concluded that the undergraduate students possessed a good average level of environmental awareness.

**Table 2. Assessment on the Extent of Commission of Environmental Crimes**

| Environmental Crimes under Brown Laws | WM | Verbal Interpretation |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Cause, aid, facilitate directly or indirectly, in the storage, importation, or bringing into Philippine territory, including its maritime economic zones, even in transit, either by means of land, air or sea transportation or otherwise keeping in storage any amount of hazardous wastes in any part of the Philippines. | 2.86 | Sometimes |
| 2. Knowingly use a chemical substance or mixture which is imported, manufactured, processed or distributed in violation of RA 6969 or its implementing rules and regulations. | 2.80 | Sometimes |
| 3. Discharging, depositing, or causing to be deposited material of any kind directly or indirectly into the water bodies along the margins of any surface water, where the same shall be liable to be washed into the surface water either by tide action, or by storm, floods, or otherwise, which could cause water pollution or impede natural flow of water in the water body. | 2.73 | Sometimes |
| 4. Unauthorized transport or dumping into sea waters of sewage sludge or solid waste. | 2.64 | Sometimes |
| 5. Transport, dumping or discharge of prohibited chemicals, substances or pollutants. | 2.64 | Sometimes |
| 6. Littering, throwing, and dumping of waste matters in public places. | 2.73 | Sometimes |
| 7. Open burning of solid waste | 2.75 | Sometimes |
| 8. Causing or permitting collection of non-segregated or unsorted solid waste. | 2.74 | Sometimes |
| 9. Open dumping, and burying of biodegradable and non-biodegradable materials in flood-prone areas. | 2.70 | Sometimes |
| 10. Unauthorized removal of recyclable material intended for collection by authorized persons. | 2.74 | Sometimes |
| **Total** | **2.73** | **Sometimes** |

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Table 2 presents the assessment on the extent of commission of environmental crimes. It can be noted that the indicator relating to environmental crimes under brown laws that obtained the highest weighted mean of 2.86 with the verbal interpretation of "sometimes" is: Cause, aid, facilitate directly or indirectly, in the storage, importation, or bringing into Philippine territory, including its maritime economic zones, even in transit, either by means of land, air or sea transportation or otherwise keeping in storage any amount of hazardous wastes in any part of the Philippines followed by: Knowingly use a chemical substance or mixture which is imported, manufactured, processed or distributed in violation of RA 6969 or its implementing rules and regulations; and Open burning of solid waste with a weighted mean of 2.80 and 2.75 respectively with a verbal interpretation of sometimes.

This result indicates that despite their awareness of the laws, they still violate its provisions. The study supports the findings of Sivamoorthy, Nalini, and Kumar (2013) that college students have a high awareness level but a moderate practice level.

**Table 3. Perceived Reasons of Violating Brown Laws**

| Brown Laws | WM | Verbal Interpretation |
|---|---|---|
| Leniency (failure of the government to strictly and consistently enforce the law. | 2.93 | Significant Reason |
| Unpopular Law (students are unaware of the existing law) | 3.0 | Significant Reason |
| Lack of Personnel (There is no sufficient law enforcer who will enforce the law) | 2.93 | Significant Reason |
| Lack of Media Campaign (The brown law is not well-disseminated in all media outlet) | 2.94 | Significant Reason |
| **Total** | **2.95** | **Significant Reason** |

It can be elicited from Table 3 that the perceived reasons of violating brown laws which obtained the highest weighted mean of 3.0 with the verbal interpretation of "'significant reason" is: Unpopular Law followed by: Lack of Media Campaign with a weighted mean of 2.94. Article 3 of the Philippine Civil Code highlights the principle "Ignorance of the law excuses no one from compliance therewith". Thus, it is essential that students should know the different environmental laws. This further implies the need to conduct activities and other programs to further educate our learners on different environmental laws. Further, it was revealed in the study that the respondents perceived Leniency and Lack of Personnel as significant reasons for violating brown laws with a mean of 2.93. Justice Oswaldo D. Agcaoili (2011) noted that while there are laws in place to define and punish environmental offenses, enforcement is hindered by the leniency of the agencies responsible for implementation. Hence, this implies that though students are aware of the laws, they still violate it because they believe that nothing will happen to them because of the failure of the government to strictly and consistently enforce the law.

## IV. CONCLUSION

As can be concluded from the study, Criminology students were generally aware of the various Brown Laws discussed, including RA 9275, RA 9003, RA 8749, and RA 6969, but despite this awareness, there is a notable tendency for some students to commit environmental violations, particularly under RA 6969, which has the lowest level of awareness and is linked to the highest incidences of violations such as storing hazardous wastes and knowingly using prohibited chemical substances.

Moreover, the perceived reasons for violating Brown Laws include their lack of popularity and insufficient dissemination through media campaigns, resulting in low public awareness and engagement. Additionally, leniency in the enforcement of these laws reduces their deterrent effect, as violators do not face significant consequences. The shortage of personnel dedicated to enforcing environmental regulations further aggravate the problem, allowing violations to occur with little oversight or accountability. These factors collectively contribute to a climate where environmental laws, despite being known, are frequently disregarded.

## V. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended to enhance education and awareness by providing detailed information about the specific fines and penalties associated with each violation, thereby emphasizing the serious consequences of non-compliance. Improving media campaigns is also essential; utilizing various platforms, including official Facebook pages and other social media channels, can effectively disseminate information about Brown Laws and engage a wider audience. Furthermore, strengthening enforcement by implementing strict monitoring and ensuring rigorous enforcement of these laws is necessary to secure compliance and deter potential violators.

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