

## **ONLINE TRAINING PROJECT FOR THE PREVENTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT UNIVERSITIES**

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**Abstract-** “Sexual Harassment” is an act, which violates individual autonomy based on personal choices of life, right of development and protection of personality, and human dignity that aims to protect human values. This type of act, which emerges in various forms, is defined as a kind of violence. Koç University is against sexual harassment, in all areas of teaching, research, and administration.

Consequently, being aware of our societal roles and responsibilities as Koc University, we are aiming to guide our society by carrying out a project on Sexual Harassment, which is a matter with many aspects such as social and psychological. Sexual Harassment incidents, which we are following up with sadness on the media, is an important social issue not only in Turkey but also around the world. As we consider preventing Sexual Harassment incidents a mission for us, we aim to contribute to the achievement of Gender Equality in Society with this project.

With the online training project for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment, and by focusing on the problems of our society, creating solutions, and sharing solution suggestions in various platforms, we have pioneered the embracing of this awareness both within our university and with other institutions.

**Keywords:** Sexual Harassment, Online training, Social issue, University

### **INTRODUCTION**

Beginning our studies with building an Institutional Ethics Mechanism, and with the addition of our university’s watchfulness of the matter and holistic perspective, have achieved many first steps and provided guidance for other universities.

After having built the Institutional Ethics Mechanism, instead of initially preparing policy documents or manifestos; with the mentality of raising awareness, making conscious, and prevention of sexual harassment; we have prepared the Sexual Harassment Prevention Regulation, which is a first in Turkey, and shared it with our all partakers.

Following the Regulation, “online training project for the prevention of sexual harassment” has been prepared to raise awareness and attention significantly, in order to prevent facing such situations. This study’s most important dimension that creates a difference, is the fact that the training upon this very sensitive subject has been prepared in a way that it is rich, understandable by anyone and it is the first of its kind in Turkey.

In the online training project, sexual harassment issue has been treated with all of its legal aspects. In addition, some false beliefs that are deemed true by the society have been foregrounded so as to forestall false learning. A plain language has been used, while being enriched with case studies. Discussing the psychological aspect, in all messages it has been stressed that one is not without help.

In the online training project featuring all sensitive points of sexual harassment, we have also provided various information on; to how to act when coming by, witnessing, and being the victim of such an incident; our responsibilities on the matter; the extent of the process of complaint; the way an investigation is carried out with respect to its duration and administration; significant points and principles in a process of investigation. The existence of a mechanism, which protects human dignity, utmost confidentiality, mutual respect and trust, is illustrated by providing such extensive information.

*The study continues as follows. Difficulties that are experienced while working on the matter are treated in the second part. In the third part, results of the evaluation of the online training project are given. In the fourth part, sample screens from the online training project are featured. Lastly, in the results part, the importance of the matter is restated and spreading of such projects is stressed.*

## SECOND PART

Foremost of the major difficulties, encountered while preparing online training project for the prevention of sexual harassment, are diversity, effectively managing uncertain situations, and the need to create holistic solutions in areas with very limited present studies or with no other examples.

If we had to list the essential distinctions in managing diversities and differences;

**Partaker Diversity:** Academic and administrative staff, students, interns/trainees, exchange students, subcontractors, visitors, and guests.

**Cultural Diversity:** A wide cultural diversity formed by employees and exchange students from 36 different countries, and students from 69 different countries.

Furthermore, preparation process of the project was made more difficult, because of the fact that as practices have been very limited in Turkey, there is no source that could be deemed a reference on sexual harassment.

Sensitivity of the matter, false beliefs that are deemed true, legal regulations' uncertainty on some areas, differences in perception and interpretation resulting from cultural variety, make it more difficult for the studies done on the subject of Sexual Harassment Prevention to become actualized.

It has become a significant difficulty to define a comprehensive mechanism, because of previously mentioned difficulties and other ones such as, magnitude of diversity, and differences between ‘Labor Law’ and ‘YÖK Legislations’, to which partakers are subjected.

Especially, it can be shown as another difficulty to convey the training content without distorting its legal meaning and by using a plain language that can easily be understood by anyone.

### THIRD PART

An evaluation survey has been prepared for the online training project; and trainees were asked to take this survey.

Questions of the survey are given in Table 1. Additionally, focus group evaluations that are created by comments on this evaluation survey are presented in Table 2.

**TABLE 1. Questions of the Survey**

Area	Question
Quality of Training	It was prepared to adequately cover essential concepts information about the subject.
Quality of Training	It was purposeful to divide subjects into parts, transition and flow between different parts were easy.
Quality of Training	Used language, expressions and texts were clear and apprehensible.
Suitability of Material	It was easy to use the e-training interface, and to progress within the training.
Suitability of Material	It was visually designed in accordance with the purpose (photographs, use of colors, etc.).
Suitability of Material	Interactions, which make learning more easy were given sufficient space (consolidating examples, and questions)
Participation in Learning Process	Training’s duration was sufficient.
Participation in Learning Process	I have become conscious of the subject with the knowledge that I have acquired during training.
Contribution to Work and Social Life	It was a training agreeable with my development needs.
Contribution to Work and Social Life	What I have learned from this training will positively contribute to my working life and social life.
General	What other subjects would you prefer that the training treated, or what subjects can be added for the next training?
General	The most important part that remains in my memory is:
General	From now on, I would like to have other trainings on different subjects.
General	Overall, it was a successful training.

**TABLE 2. Focus Group Evaluation Notes**

<b>FOCUS GROUP EVALUATION NOTES</b>		
<b>KOC UNIVERSITY FOCUS GROUP</b>	<b>OPINIONS ON THE TRAINING</b>	<b>MOST CLEARLY REMEMBERED PAR OF THE TRAINING</b>
KOC UNIVERSITY FOCUS GROUP	Definitions are highly illustrative. Video samples were very enlightening. The parts where examples of what cross the mind of a victim of harassment were very good.	The fact that insistent proposals can also account for sexual harassment.
KOC UNIVERSITY FOCUS GROUP	It is a very well prepared, informing, enlightening, plain, clear and apprehensible training.	The fact that persistently repeated proposals can also be defined as sexual harassment.
KOC UNIVERSITY FOCUS GROUP	It was a consciousness raising and non-boring training, which was enriched with visuals.	The difference between sexual harassment and sexual assault; and how a process functions in our university.
KOC UNIVERSITY FOCUS GROUP	It was very good both with respect to its presentation and with respect to content; and I want to say that it is the result of a diligent effort.	Plain and clear description of incidents such as, harassment and assault.
KOC UNIVERSITY FOCUS GROUP	Subjects are handled thoroughly.	Important points that a victim of sexual harassment should know.
KOC UNIVERSITY FOCUS GROUP	It was definitely a successful training.	Respecting others and ourselves for the sake of human dignity.
KOC UNIVERSITY FOCUS GROUP	In terms of content, it was very satisfactory.	Offices, to which we can appeal in our university and beyond.
KOC UNIVERSITY FOCUS GROUP	It was definitely a successful training.	The difference between sexual harassment and sexual assault.

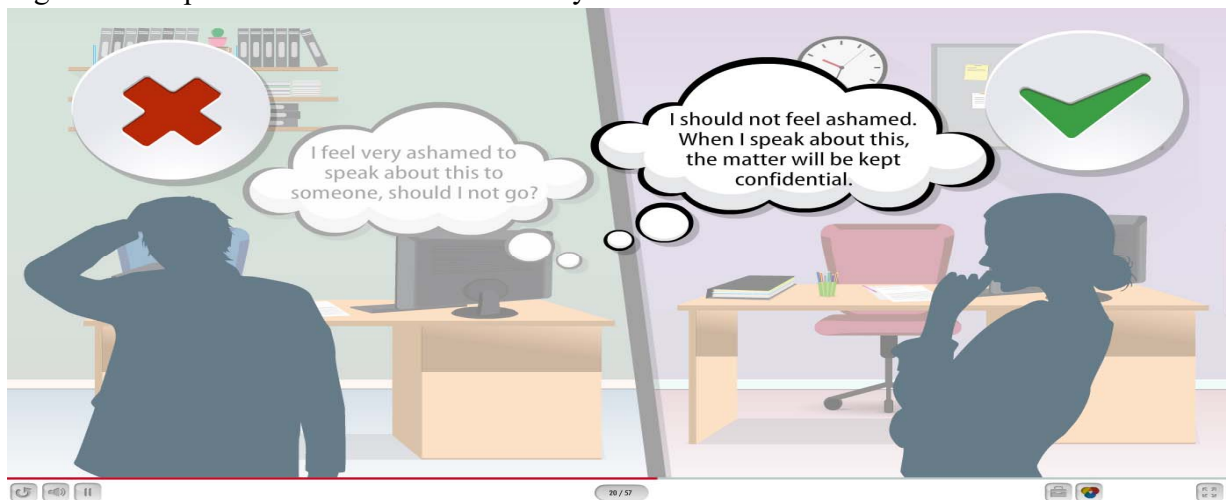
**FOURTH PART**

Training has some screens in order to provide more efficiency on adopting basic concepts in Sexual Harassment issues.

Figure 1: Sample Screen about Prevent Sexual Harassment



Figure 2: Sample Screen about Confidentiality



**CONCLUSION**

Our university attaches high importance to the mission of raising awareness and making consciousness of sexual harassment, and to prevent sexual harassment, which is an important issue that affects our working environment.

We consider it to be a crucial step to spread this consciousness, which we are creating in our university, to society for its benefit. That is why, as we were preparing the online training project, we paid attention to including information that can be used in both working life and social life.

All members of our university, from students to academics, receive training of guiding nature, which will raise awareness of sexual harassment, and which will inform people about sexual harassment. Since our university produces many graduates every year, this practice contributes to the development and welfare of society; making it a crucial project.

We wish that this training on prevention of sexual harassment at universities and all other environments, becomes a pioneer and an example to all universities.

### **FACULTY MEMBERS WHO CONTRIBUTED THIS PROJECT**

This project is prepared with the contributions of the Dean of our Law School, Professor Bertil Emrah Oder and Assistant Professor Murat Önok

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