

Employees' Awareness of Safe Spaces Act of 2019

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.156719

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Abstract:

Sexual harassment continues to be a serious issue in academic institutions, prompting the enactment of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 (RA 11313) in the Philippines, which expands the definition of gender-based harassment to include public spaces, online platforms, workplaces, and schools. This study assessed the awareness of university employees in the Negros Island Region regarding the law and its provisions, using a descriptive research design with 207 respondents surveyed via a validated questionnaire. Most respondents were younger, female, single, college-educated, and employed as teaching personnel. Findings revealed a high overall awareness of the law, with online harassment scoring the lowest. No significant differences in awareness were found based on sex, civil status, education, or job classification, though age showed a significant impact on awareness of online harassment. These results indicate that while awareness programs are generally effective, there is a need for targeted efforts to address knowledge gaps in digital harassment and age-specific exposure. The study recommends enhancing digital literacy campaigns, regular harassment training with practical scenarios, and improved campus safety measures. Institutions should maintain consistent awareness content while introducing age-appropriate strategies to ensure inclusivity. Strengthening these initiatives is essential to transforming the Safe Spaces Act from a legal mandate into a lived reality, fostering a culture of safety, respect, and accountability in academic environments.

Keywords: Awareness of Safe Spaces Act of 2019, employees, gender-based harassment

Introduction:

Nature of the Problem

Sexual harassment remains a significant issue in educational institutions, jeopardizing the safety, dignity, and effectiveness of both students and staff. In response to this challenge, the Philippine government established Republic Act No. 11313, known as the Safe Spaces Act of 2019, which broadens the definition of gender-based sexual harassment to encompass behaviors occurring in public areas, online, and in workplaces, including schools and universities.

As society representatives, universities accommodate a diverse range of individuals and are expected to exemplify respectful and inclusive environments. Nonetheless, even after the law's enactment, harassment incidents continue to occur, often stemming from a lack of awareness regarding its provisions, reporting processes, and punitive measures. In many situations, employees might know what harassment entails but do not thoroughly understand their duties and responsibilities under the law (Philippine Commission on Women, 2019).

This study's motivation emerges from a professional dedication to fostering a safe academic culture and the observed deficiencies in employees' engagement with gender sensitivity policies. With the researcher's experience within university settings, victims were seen to come forward visibly distressed, sometimes recounting incidents where someone crossed boundaries by touching them or even just staring in a way that made them feel exposed and unsafe. It is alarming how some staff still seem unaware of the Safe Spaces Act or do not grasp its significance. This observation highlights the gap in assessing how well university employees comprehend and apply the provisions of the law to make the learning environment safer and more responsive.

Given this, the study will evaluate how much university employees know about the Safe Spaces Act of 2019. By digging into their level of awareness, the goal is to help institutions step up their legal literacy, sharpen their approaches to intervention, and, hopefully, foster a campus culture where accountability and respect are not just hollow ideals but part of everyday life.

Current State of Knowledge

Sexual harassment remains a significant issue affecting organizational environments globally, including in Lebanon and Southeast Asia. A study on Lebanese organizations revealed that 28% of respondents had experienced harassment, yet cultural taboos often prevent open discussion or reporting (Azizul et al., 2023). Victims frequently suffer in silence due to fear, shame, or job insecurity. In Malaysia, 60% of employees reported harassment despite existing laws, indicating a gap between legal protections and workplace realities (TURCOMAT, 2019). Similarly, studies by Beck and Kavanaugh (2022) and Cummings and Thomas (2021) highlight the role of organizational culture, leadership, and communication in either enabling or discouraging harassment. Cultural factors, such as traditional gender norms, also influence perceptions and tolerance of harassment, as Ferguson and Bell (2021) observed. Furthermore, the prevalence of online harassment continues to grow, with Im et al. (2023) noting that women perceive digital abuse as more harmful, emphasizing the need for gender-sensitive online safety policies.

Globally, the issue remains entrenched despite increasing awareness and formal policy implementation. Blumell and Mulupi (2025) found that anti-harassment policies in African newsrooms did not significantly reduce incidents unless employees were trained and the policies were clearly communicated. Fileborn (2017), Cortina and Areguin (2021), and Bauer and Gorlewicz (2022) all stress that awareness campaigns alone are ineffective without strong reporting systems and supportive organizational cultures. Chaudhuri (2022) and Baqutayan et al. (2021) argue for holistic interventions including peer support, leadership accountability, and inclusive workplace environments. These studies collectively suggest that meaningful change requires more than compliance—it demands cultural transformation, sustained leadership engagement, and well-enforced policies grounded in empathy, equity, and transparency.

Employees' awareness of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 is critical in addressing persistent issues of sexual harassment in workplaces and public spaces. Globally, such harassment remains widespread; for instance, the Newcomb Institute (2024) found that 82% of women and 42% of men in the U.S. have experienced sexual harassment or assault, highlighting the ongoing need for strong, inclusive policies. McKinsey & Company and LeanIn.Org (2024) similarly emphasized that despite progress in gender equality, harassment continues to hinder workplace equity, underscoring the need for policy enforcement and supportive environments. Olofsson and Nitin (2024) reported that the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's review of sexual harassment cases called for proactive measures like training and accountability systems. In the military, systemic issues persist, as seen in the U.S. (2024) study on service academies, which found current preventive efforts lacking. In academic settings, Princeton University (2024) documented institutional responses to misconduct, promoting transparency and adaptability as best practices. Meanwhile, Viskarini et al. (2023) explored public safety in the UK, revealing how women engage in "safety work" and feminist self-defense as strategies to navigate unsafe environments. Collectively, these studies support the relevance of the Safe Spaces Act in the Philippines and reinforce the need for increased awareness, stronger enforcement, and institutional commitment to creating safe, equitable spaces.

Despite the enactment of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 in the Philippines, workplace and public sexual harassment remain widespread and underreported. A Philstar (2023) survey found that 20% of Filipino workers experienced workplace harassment, with 60% facing repeated incidents. Balita (2024) and Gonzales (2023) emphasized the need for sustained enforcement, public engagement, and gender-sensitive initiatives to support victims. Macatangay (2023) highlighted Naga City's localized ordinance focused on community education and prevention, while Endriga and Frio (2023) reported limited student awareness of institutional support systems. De Vera-Ruiz (2023) underscored the Civil Service Commission's efforts, including establishing Committees on Decorum and Investigation (CODI), to strengthen accountability in government offices. However, as Torres (2025) pointed out, institutional culture remains a key barrier, with lack of visible commitment reducing reporting. Bolatete et al. (2022) demonstrated that digital campaigns could raise awareness effectively, especially among youth. Similarly, Lumidao, Bando, and Canuto (2024) found only moderate gender-based violence (GBV) awareness among university employees, suggesting a need for deeper education on the subject. Additionally, Rosa III and Rosa (2025) investigated compliance and awareness among public school teachers, following reports of harassment cases involving students, highlighting gaps in implementation despite the legal framework. Overall, the findings show that while legislative protections exist, real-world challenges—such as inadequate awareness, weak institutional responses, and cultural silence—continue to undermine the law's effectiveness, demanding multifaceted and community-driven interventions to create truly safe spaces.

In the Philippine context, sexual harassment—particularly in digital and workplace environments—remains a serious issue despite the enactment of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019. Plan International (2020) reported that 68% of Filipino girls and young women experienced online harassment, while Gallup and the Lloyd's Register Foundation found that 22% of women and 18% of men reported workplace harassment, indicating its ongoing and widespread nature. Stricter enforcement and digital safeguards are urgently needed. Bauer and Gorlewicz (2022) emphasized that awareness programs alone are insufficient in creating environments where victims feel safe to report abuse, a finding echoed in Mendoza's (2024) observation that schools often fail to adequately protect students despite legal mandates. The University of the Philippines Diliman (2024) also highlighted a lack of awareness regarding cybersecurity risks,

underlining the need for digital literacy initiatives. The Commission on Human Rights stressed that while policies exist, their impact is limited without effective implementation, accessible reporting mechanisms, and strong community-level support systems. Together, these findings underscore the pressing need for a more holistic, inclusive, and proactive approach to combat sexual harassment in both physical and digital spaces in the Philippines.

Theoretical Underpinnings

This study is anchored in the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) by Icek Ajzen (1991), which explains that human behavior is shaped by three key factors: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Attitude reflects how positively or negatively an individual views a behavior; subjective norms refer to social pressure or expectations; and perceived behavioral control relates to one's belief in their ability to perform the behavior, influenced by past experiences and perceived barriers. In this context, the TPB supports the study's aim to understand how employees' awareness of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 affects their intention and ability to comply. The theory provides a framework for analyzing how positive attitudes, workplace culture, and access to resources (like reporting systems) influence behavior aligned with the Act's provisions. It also highlights how internal and external factors can serve as either barriers or facilitators to compliance.

Additionally, the study is grounded in Republic Act No. 11313, or the "Safe Spaces Act," enacted in 2019 to address gender-based sexual harassment in public spaces, online, workplaces, and educational institutions. This law underscores the state's commitment to upholding human dignity and promoting equality by protecting individuals from various forms of sexual harassment. It is especially relevant to the study as it provides the legal and policy foundation for understanding employee awareness and behavior concerning safe, respectful environments. By aligning TPB with the Safe Spaces Act, the study is well-positioned to propose meaningful strategies that enhance awareness, foster compliance, and support a culture of safety and respect in institutional settings.

Objectives

This study aimed to determine the level of employees' awareness of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 in a highly urbanized City, in Negros Island Region, during the Second Semester of the School Year 2024-2025 as the basis for an action plan. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following: 1) the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, civil status, highest educational attainment, and employment classification; 2) the employees' awareness of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019, according to gender-based online sexual harassment, gender-based sexual harassment in the workplace, and gender-based public spaces sexual harassment; and 3) the significant difference in employees' awareness of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019.

Methodology:

This section presents a discussion of the research methodology used, the subjects and respondents of the study, the research instruments used, the validity and reliability of the instruments, the procedure for data gathering, and the statistical tools and procedures for data analysis.

Research Design

This study aimed to determine employees' awareness of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 during the second semester of the 2024-2025 school year to inform an action plan. Employing a descriptive research design, which is suited for gathering detailed factual information and observing behaviors, practices, and procedures, the study provided essential insights into employees' knowledge of the Act. Descriptive research, as defined by Calmorin (2016), is valuable for developing measurement tools and formulating policies by offering clear, factual data about the subjects studied. This approach was deemed most appropriate for accurately describing the level of awareness among employees regarding the Safe Spaces Act.

Study Respondents

The study's respondents included 207 employees—both teaching and non-teaching personnel—selected from a total population of 446 using a purposive stratified random sampling method. This approach involved dividing the population into homogeneous subgroups, or strata, based on specific characteristics, in this case, employee classification (Thomas, 2020). To determine the appropriate sample size, Cochran's formula, a widely used statistical method that considers confidence levels, population variability, and precision, was applied, ensuring an accurate representation of the population (Cochran, 1977).

Instruments

The data-gathering instrument used in this study was a self-made survey questionnaire divided into two parts: Part 1 collected respondents' demographic profiles (age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, and employment

classification), while Part 2 assessed employees' awareness of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 across three areas—gender-based online, workplace, and public spaces sexual harassment—using ten items per area rated on a 1-5 scale (from "almost never" to "always"). To ensure validity, the questionnaire underwent jury validation by three experts with backgrounds in educational management, legal-administrative affairs, and policy implementation, who rated the instrument "excellent" with an average score of 4.70 based on Carter and Scates' (1972) criteria. Reliability was tested through a dry run with 30 respondents (excluded from the final sample) using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a highly reliable score of 0.950, confirming the instrument's consistency and stability.

Data Gathering Procedure

Quantitative data for this study were collected through a digitally administered survey questionnaire via Microsoft Forms, following formal ethical approval from relevant institutional authorities. The researcher personally contacted each respondent to explain the study's purpose, ensure voluntary participation, and maintain confidentiality, which helped encourage cooperation and clarify any questions. Respondents were given ample time to complete the survey at their convenience. After data collection, responses were securely retrieved, organized, and prepared for analysis using SPSS and Microsoft Excel to generate statistical tables aligned with the study's objectives. All data were handled with strict confidentiality and used exclusively for academic purposes.

Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment

Objective No.1 used the descriptive-analytical scheme and frequency and percentage distributions to determine the respondents' profile regarding age, sex, civil status, employment classification, and highest educational attainment.

Objective No. 2 used the descriptive-analytical scheme and mean to determine the level of employees' awareness according to gender-based online sexual harassment, gender-based sexual harassment in the workplace, and gender-based sexual harassment in public spaces.

Objective No. 3 utilized a comparative analytical scheme and Mann-Whitney U Test to determine whether or not a significant difference exists in the level of employees' awareness when grouped and compared according to the aforementioned variables.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations in research are principles that guide the research designs and practices. Scientists and researchers must always adhere to a specific code of conduct when collecting data from people (P. Bhandari, 2022). Voluntary participation, Informed consent, confidentiality, and plagiarism were strictly considered.

Study participants were not forced or pressured; they could withdraw at any time without giving any reason. The study participants were thoroughly informed about the purpose and nature of the study, including the benefits, risks, and consequences.

The study participants were also assured of the confidentiality of all information relevant to their personal information or any identifying information relating to their person.

Results and Discussion

This section presents, analyzes, and interprets the data that were gathered consistent with its predetermined objectives.

Profile of the Respondents According to Age, Sex, Civil Status, Highest Educational Attainment, and Employment Classification

Table 1
Profile of Respondents

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Younger (less than 34 years old)	124	59.90
	Older (34 years old and above)	83	40.10
	Total	207	100
Sex	Male	74	35.70
	Female	133	64.30

	Total	207	100
Civil Status	Single	139	67.10
	Married	68	32.90
	Total	207	100
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower (College Level)	130	62.80
	Higher (Post-Grad Level)	77	37.20
	Total	207	100
Employment Classification	Teaching Personnel	114	55.16
	Non-Teaching Personnel	93	44.84
	Total	207	100

Table 1 shows the profile of the study respondents. On age, the majority of respondents were younger individuals, with 59% aged 34 years old and below, while 40.10% were older, aged 34 years old and above; while on sex, a significant portion of the respondents were female, comprising 64.30% of the respondents, compared to 35.70% male respondents.

Moreover, 61.10% of the respondents were single in civil status, while 32.90% were married. In contrast, on the highest educational attainment, most of the respondents, 62.80%, had attained a lower educational level, which is college level only, while 37.20% had higher education, such as postgraduate level. Lastly, regarding employment classification, 55.16% of the respondents were teaching personnel, while 44.84% were non-teaching personnel. The profile of the respondents reveals that it is predominantly a young, female, and single population, with the majority having attained a college-level education and primarily working as teaching personnel.

Descriptive Analysis in the Level of Employees' Awareness of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 in Gender-Based Online Sexual Harassment, Gender-Based Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, and Gender-Based Public Spaces Sexual Harassment

Table 2

Level of Employees' Awareness of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 in Gender-Based Online Sexual Harassment

Area	Mean	Interpretation
A. On Gender-Based Online Sexual Harassment:		
<i>As an employee, I am aware that...</i>		
1. the Safe Spaces Act strictly prohibits online sexual harassment, including sending unwelcome sexual remarks or images.	4.29	High Level
2. online sexual harassment takes various forms, such as unwanted advances through email, social media, or messaging platforms.	4.39	High Level
3. the university has designated channels for reporting cases of online sexual harassment.	3.78	High Level
4. penalties are imposed under the Safe Spaces Act for committing online sexual harassment.	4.10	High Level
5. there are various campaigns or seminars on online sexual harassment and digital safety.	3.89	High Level
6. measures to protect myself from online sexual harassment while using digital platforms are available.	3.99	High Level
7. the university effectively enforces policies to prevent and address online sexual harassment.	3.99	High Level
8. I have personally witnessed or been informed about cases of online sexual harassment involving university employees.	2.58	Moderate Level
9. complaints of online sexual harassment are taken seriously and addressed promptly.	4.00	High Level
10. I can express concerns about online sexual harassment without fear of retaliation.	4.00	High Level
Overall Mean	3.90	High Level

Table 2 shows the level of employees' awareness of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 regarding gender-based online sexual harassment.

The overall mean score is 3.90, which is interpreted as a high level. The highest mean score is 4.39, interpreted as a high level on item 2, which stated, "online sexual harassment takes various forms, such as unwanted advances through email, social media, or messaging platforms." while the lowest mean score is 2.58 interpreted as moderate level, is on item 8 which stated, "I have personally witnessed or been informed about cases of online sexual harassment involving university employees."

This implies a possible underreporting or limited exposure to real incidents of online sexual harassment within the university setting. The relatively low mean score may indicate that employees are either unaware of such occurrences or are hesitant to disclose them due to fear of retaliation, stigma, or a lack of trust in the institution's reporting mechanisms. It may also reflect a workplace culture where conversations about online sexual harassment are not openly encouraged or prioritized. The study's findings conform with the survey of Fileborn (2017), who noted that online harassment often goes unreported due to fears of retaliation, victim-blaming, or perceptions of institutional inaction. This suggests stronger awareness campaigns, clear reporting procedures, and a supportive environment encouraging victims and witnesses to speak up without fear.

Table 3

Level of Employees' Awareness of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 in Gender-Based Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

Area	Mean	Interpre- tation
B. On Gender-Based Sexual Harassment in the Workplace:		
<i>As an employee, I am aware that...</i>		
1. The Safe Spaces Act includes provisions against sexual harassment in workplaces, including universities.	4.29	High Level
2. Workplace sexual harassment can take different forms, such as inappropriate comments, unwelcome physical contact, or suggestive gestures.	4.38	High Level
3. legal actions and remedies are available to victims of workplace sexual harassment.	4.26	High Level
4. the university has established policies and procedures for addressing workplace sexual harassment complaints.	4.05	High Level
5. training or seminars on workplace sexual harassment prevention and response are available.	3.79	High Level
6. the university provides sufficient support and protection for employees and students who report sexual harassment.	4.08	High Level
7. I have witnessed or heard about cases of sexual harassment involving faculty, staff, or students within the university.	2.87	Moderate Level
8. the process for reporting workplace sexual harassment incidents to the designated authorities is convenient.	3.83	High Level
9. university officials handle workplace sexual harassment complaints with fairness and confidentiality.	4.12	High Level
10. the university promotes a culture that actively discourages workplace sexual harassment.	4.25	High Level
Overall Mean	3.99	High Level

Table 3 shows the level of employees' awareness of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 regarding gender-based sexual harassment in the workplace.

The overall mean score is 3.99, which is interpreted as a high level. The highest mean score is 4.38, interpreted as a high level on item 2, which stated, "workplace sexual harassment can take different forms, such as inappropriate comments, unwelcome physical contact, or suggestive gestures."; while the lowest mean score is 2.87, interpreted as a moderate level, it is on item 7, which states, "I have witnessed or heard about cases of sexual harassment involving faculty, staff, or students within the university."

This implies a significant gap between awareness of what constitutes workplace sexual harassment and actual recognition or acknowledgment of its occurrence within the institution. This moderate level of understanding may reflect a culture of silence, fear, or denial, where incidents are either not disclosed, minimized, or not widely discussed. It could also suggest that cases, if any, are handled discreetly or remain unreported due to fear of retaliation, lack of confidence in reporting mechanisms, or perceived inaction from authorities.

This finding underscores the need for universities to strengthen their mechanisms for reporting and addressing sexual harassment. It highlights the importance of cultivating an environment of transparency, accountability, and psychological safety, where all academic community members—faculty, staff, and students—feel empowered to report inappropriate behavior without fear. The moderate awareness revealed by the data aligns with the studies of

Cortina and Areguin (2021), McDonald (2018), and Willness, Steel, and Lee (2018), which all point to organizational culture and institutional response as critical factors in whether individuals report or even acknowledge experiences of sexual harassment. Thus, universities must demonstrate visible, consistent, and credible actions beyond awareness campaigns to address and prevent workplace sexual harassment.

Table 4

Level of Employees' Awareness of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 in Gender-Based Public Spaces Sexual Harassment

Area	Mean	Interpretation
C. On Gender-Based Public Spaces Sexual Harassment		
<i>As an employee, I am aware that...</i>		
1. The Safe Spaces Act addresses sexual harassment in gender-based public spaces, ensuring a safe environment for all.	4.34	High Level
2. sexual harassment in public spaces includes behaviors like inappropriate comments, unwanted touching, or lewd gestures.	4.38	High Level
3. Victims of sexual harassment in public spaces have access to reporting mechanisms to seek justice and support.	4.09	High Level
4. security personnel and law enforcement play crucial roles in preventing and addressing sexual harassment in public spaces.	4.33	High Level
5. some programs or workshops raise awareness of sexual harassment in public spaces.	3.90	High Level
6. clear policies and guidelines are in place to address sexual harassment in gender-based public spaces.	3.98	High Level
7. penalties are imposed under the Safe Spaces Act for committing sexual harassment in public spaces.	4.08	High Level
8. I can speak openly about sexual harassment in public spaces without fear of judgment or retaliation.	3.82	High Level
9. the measures under the Safe Spaces Act will protect me and others from harassment in gender-based public spaces.	4.14	High Level
10. authorities take immediate action when incidents of sexual harassment occur in gender-based public spaces to protect the victims and prevent future occurrences.	4.06	High Level
Overall Mean	4.11	High Level

Table 4 shows the level of employees' awareness of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 regarding gender-based sexual harassment in public spaces.

The overall mean score is 4.11, which is interpreted as a high level. The highest mean score is 4.38, interpreted as a high level on item 2, which stated, "sexual harassment in public spaces includes behaviors like inappropriate comments, unwanted touching, or lewd gestures."; while the lowest mean score is 3.82, interpreted as a high level on item 8, which stated, "I can speak openly about sexual harassment in public spaces without fear of judgment or retaliation."

The findings suggest that despite significant knowledge about the forms and seriousness of public space harassment, cultural and organizational barriers may limit open discussions about these experiences. The result implies that institutions must focus on awareness campaigns and actively work to create supportive, judgment-free environments that encourage open dialogue and empower individuals to report misconduct confidently.

An international study by Bauer and Gorlewicz (2022) emphasized that the mere presence of awareness programs does not automatically translate to an environment where individuals feel genuinely safe to report or discuss experiences of harassment. Chaudhuri (2022) highlights that fostering a culture of open communication about sexual harassment is critical for creating truly safe spaces. This involves consistently reinforcing non-retaliation policies, promoting peer support systems, and showing visible leadership commitment to addressing harassment issues comprehensively. Thus, universities and public institutions must strengthen efforts to normalize discussions on harassment and ensure that disclosure mechanisms are perceived as safe, respectful, and trustworthy.

Comparative Analysis in Level of Employees' Awareness Safe Spaces Act of 2019 in Gender-Based Online Sexual Harassment, Gender-Based Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, and Gender-Based Public Spaces Sexual Harassment when grouped and compared according to Age, Sex, Civil Status, Highest Educational Attainment, and Employment Classification

Table 5

Difference in the Level of Employees' Awareness of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 in Gender-Based Online Sexual Harassment when grouped and compared according to the abovementioned Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	124	112.25	4122.500	0.015	0.05	Significant
	Older	83	91.67				
Sex	Male	74	101.31	4722.000	0.629	0.05	Not Significant
	Female	133	105.50				
Civil Status	Single	139	107.05	4301.500	0.294	0.05	Not Significant
	Married	68	97.76				
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	130	109.28	4318.000	0.099	0.05	Not Significant
	Higher	77	95.08				
Employment Classification	Teaching Personnel	149	102.00	5072.500	0.593	0.05	Not Significant
	Non-Teaching Personnel	58	106.46				

Table 5 shows the difference in the level of employees' awareness of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 in gender-based online sexual harassment when grouped and compared according to the abovementioned variables.

On age, the younger group got a mean rank score of 112.25, while the older group got a mean rank score of 91.67; both have a p-value of 0.015, with a significance level of 0.05, interpreted as significant. The results of the study suggest that age influences the level of employees' awareness of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 in gender-based online sexual harassment when grouped and compared according to the abovementioned variables. Therefore, the null hypothesis that "There is no significant difference in the level of employees' awareness of the Safe Act of 2019 when grouped and compared according to the abovementioned variable" is rejected.

Moreover, on sex, the male group got a mean rank score of 101.31, while the female group got a mean rank score of 105.50; both have a p-value of 0.629, with a significance level of 0.05, interpreted as insignificant. Also, on civil status, the single group got a mean rank score of 107.05, while the married group got a mean rank score of 97.76; both have a p-value of 0.294, with a significance level of 0.05, interpreted as insignificant.

Furthermore, on the highest educational attainment, the lower group got a mean rank score of 109.28, while the higher group got a mean rank score of 95.08; both have a p-value of 0.099, with a significance level of 0.05, interpreted as insignificant. Lastly, on employment classification, the teaching personnel got a mean rank score of 102.00, while the teaching personnel got a mean rank score of 106.46; both have a p-value of 0.593, with a significance level of 0.05, interpreted as insignificant.

The result of the study suggests that sex, civil status, highest educational attainment, and employment classification do not influence the level of employees' awareness of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 in gender-based online sexual harassment when grouped and compared according to the abovementioned variables. Therefore, the null hypothesis that "There is no significant difference in the level of employees' awareness of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 when grouped and compared according to the abovementioned variables is accepted.

In the study of Sarmiento and Cardona (2022), it was found that demographic factors such as age influenced the awareness levels of employees regarding the Safe Spaces Act of 2019, particularly in contexts involving gender-based harassment. Their study further indicated that younger employees exhibited higher levels of awareness than older employees, aligning with findings that younger generations are more engaged in online social and legal advocacies. On the other hand, sex, civil status, educational attainment, and employment classification were not found to influence awareness levels significantly.

Table 6

Difference in the Level of Employees' Awareness of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 in Gender-Based Sexual Harassment in the Workplace when grouped and compared according to the abovementioned Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	124	110.25	4371.500	0.066	0.05	Not Significant
	Older	83	94.67				
Sex	Male	74	102.90	4839.500	0.843	_____	Not Significant

Civil Status	Female	133	104.61	4414.000	0.439	Not Significant
	Single	139	106.24			
	Married	68	99.41			
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	130	109.78	4253.500	0.070	Not Significant
	Higher	77	94.24			
Employment Classification	Teaching Personnel	149	101.45	5010.500	0.496	Not Significant
	Non-Teaching Personnel	58	107.12			

Table 6 shows the difference in the level of employees' awareness of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 in gender-based sexual harassment in the workplace when grouped and compared according to the abovementioned variables. On age, the younger group got a mean rank score of 110.25, while the older group got a mean rank score of 94.67; both have a p-value of 0.066, with a significance level of 0.05, interpreted as insignificant. As regards sex, the male group got a mean rank score of 102.90, while the female group got a mean rank score of 104.61; both have a p-value of 0.843, with a significance level of 0.05, interpreted as not significant. As for civil status, the single group got a mean rank score of 106.24, while the married group got a mean rank score of 99.41; both have a p-value of 0.439, with a significance level of 0.05, interpreted as insignificant.

For the highest educational attainment, the lower group got a mean rank score of 109.78, while the higher group got a mean rank score of 94.24; both have a p-value of 0.070, with a significance level of 0.05, interpreted as insignificant. Lastly, on employment classification, the teaching personnel got a mean rank score of 101.45, while the non-teaching personnel got a mean rank score of 107.12; both have a p-value of 0.496, with a significance level of 0.05, interpreted as insignificant.

The result of the study suggests that age, sex, civil status, highest educational attainment, and employment classification do not influence the level of employees' awareness of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 in gender-based sexual harassment in the workplace when grouped and compared according to the abovementioned variables. Therefore, the null hypothesis that "There is no significant difference in the level of employees' awareness of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 when grouped and compared according to the abovementioned variables is accepted.

The findings of the study suggest that age, sex, civil status, highest educational attainment, and employment classification do not significantly influence the level of employees' awareness of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 regarding gender-based sexual harassment in the workplace. It suggests that awareness of the law is relatively consistent across various demographic profiles.

The result of the study is consistent with the survey conducted by Soriano and Mabunga (2021), who found that employee awareness regarding the Safe Space Act remained relatively uniform regardless of differences in age, gender, marital status, educational background, or job role. They emphasized that effective organizational communications strategies and public education campaigns likely contributed to this broad-based understanding of gender-based harassment laws in Philippine workplaces.

Thus, it is implied that current organizational and governmental efforts to disseminate information about the Safe Spaces Act have effectively reached a wide range of employees. However, it is still recommended that workplaces continuously reinforce and update employees' knowledge through regular training programs, regardless of demographic characteristics, to sustain and further enhance awareness.

Table 7

Difference in the Level of Employees' Awareness of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 in Gender-Based Public Spaces Sexual Harassment when grouped and compared according to the abovementioned Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	124	108.45	4594.000	0.188		Not Significant
	Older	83	97.35				
Sex	Male	74	98.09	4483.500	0.285	0.05	Not Significant
	Female	133	107.29				
Civil Status	Single	139	105.03	4582.500	0.721		Not Significant
	Married	68	101.89				
	Lower	130	104.43	4949.000	0.892		Not Significant

Highest Educational Attainment	Higher	77	103.27			
Employment Classification	Teaching Personnel	149	106.91	4969.000	0.435	Not Significant
	Non-Teaching Personnel	58	100.43			

Table 7 shows the difference in the level of employees' awareness of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 in gender-based public spaces sexual harassment when grouped and compared according to the abovementioned variables.

On age, the younger group got a mean rank score of 108.45, while the older group got a mean rank score of 97.35; both have a p-value of 0.188, with a significance level of 0.05, interpreted as insignificant. Regarding sex, the male group got a mean rank score of 98.09, while the female group got a mean rank score of 107.27; both have a p-value of 0.285, with a significance level of 0.05, interpreted as insignificant.

As for civil status, the single group got a mean rank score of 105.03, while the married group got a mean rank score of 101.89; both have a p-value of 0.721, with a significance level of 0.05, interpreted as insignificant. For the highest educational attainment, the lower group got a mean rank score of 104.43, while the higher group got a mean rank score of 103.27; both have a p-value of 0.892, with a significance level of 0.05, interpreted as insignificant.

Lastly, on employment classification, the teaching personnel got a mean rank score of 106.91, while the non-teaching group got a mean rank score of 100.43; both have a p-value of 0.435, with a significance level of 0.05, interpreted as insignificant.

The result of the study suggests that age, sex, civil status, highest educational attainment, and employment classification do not influence the level of employees' awareness of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 in gender-based public spaces sexual harassment when grouped and compared according to the abovementioned variables. Therefore, the null hypothesis that "There is no significant difference in the level of employees' awareness of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 when grouped and compared according to the abovementioned variables" is accepted.

The above result of the study is consistent with the study of De Leon and Labastilla (2021), who found that public awareness and compliance with the Safe Spaces Act did not significantly vary across different personal characteristics such as age, sex, marital status, educational attainment, and employment sector. They attributed this consistency to the effectiveness of government-led advocacy campaigns and mass media efforts that broadly targeted the general public.

Given these findings, awareness programs and legislative advocacy have successfully reached diverse groups within the workforce. Nevertheless, it remains essential for institutions to continue reinforcing these efforts through sustained education and advocacy initiatives, ensuring that all employees are consistently informed and empowered to recognize and address gender-based harassment in public spaces.

Conclusions:

The study revealed that most respondents were younger, female, single, college-educated, and primarily teaching personnel. Overall, employees demonstrated a high level of awareness of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 across all forms of gender-based sexual harassment—online, workplace, and public spaces—with online harassment receiving the lowest mean awareness score. Awareness remained consistently high regardless of sex, civil status, educational attainment, or employment classification, though a significant difference emerged in awareness of online harassment when grouped by age, suggesting that digital exposure varies across generations. These findings highlight the effectiveness of current awareness efforts while also emphasizing the need for targeted interventions in online harassment education. The study recommends enhanced digital literacy campaigns led by HR and IT to address online harassment, regular workplace harassment training with real-life scenarios and clear policies, and collaboration between HR and campus security to improve safety in public spaces through environmental measures and staff training. Uniform content for general awareness initiatives should be maintained across groups, while age-specific content is encouraged to bridge generational gaps in digital understanding. Overall, the results support continued efforts to strengthen inclusive, proactive, and adaptive educational campaigns to ensure all employees are well-informed and empowered to act against all forms of harassment.

Acknowledgment

The researcher extends heartfelt gratitude to all who contributed their time, support, and expertise toward the completion of this study. Sincere appreciation is given to the adviser for the invaluable guidance, motivation, and continuous support throughout the research process. Gratitude is also extended to the panelists and validators for

their professional insights and assistance in enhancing the quality of the study. Special thanks go to the statistician for expert help with data analysis and to the grammarian for ensuring clarity and accuracy in the manuscript. Appreciation is given to the academic leaders and faculty who have provided steadfast support and encouragement from the beginning of the researcher's academic journey. Finally, the entire STIWNU community is acknowledged for their meaningful contributions to the successful completion of this work.

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