

Awareness Of Ra 11313 (Safe Spaces Act) To Political Science Students

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Abstract: Gender-based sexual harassment in public spaces remains a critical issue in the Philippines, leading to the enactment of Republic Act 11313, also known as the Safe Spaces Act, in 2019. This study aims to assess the level of awareness of this law among Political Science students at J.H. Cerilles State College. Given their potential roles in governance and policy-making, understanding their knowledge of the law is essential. Using a descriptive quantitative research design, the study surveyed 60 Political Science students across different year levels to evaluate their awareness of gender-based harassment forms such as catcalling, wolf-whistling, and stalking. Statistical analyses, including independent t-tests and ANOVA, were conducted to determine significant differences in awareness based on sex and year level. Findings indicate a generally high awareness of R.A. 11313 among respondents, with an overall mean awareness score of 3.62 (categorized as "Very High"). However, a significant difference was found among students of different year levels, suggesting that awareness increases as students' progress through their academic program. Conversely, no significant difference was found between male and female respondents. These findings emphasize the importance of integrating gender sensitivity discussions into academic curricula, ensuring that future policymakers and public servants are well-informed about gender-based harassment laws. The study highlights the need for continued awareness campaigns and policy education initiatives to enhance understanding and effective implementation of the Safe Spaces Act.

Keywords—*Safe Spaces Act, Public Policy, gender-based harassment, political science students, awareness, catcalling, wolf-whistling, stalking, policy education, gender sensitivity*

1. INTRODUCTION

Gender-based sexual harassment in public spaces remains a pressing issue in the Philippines, prompting the enactment of Republic Act 11313, also known as the Safe Spaces Act, in 2019. This law aims to protect individuals from various forms of gender-based harassment, such as catcalling, wolf-whistling, and stalking, ensuring safe and respectful spaces for all (Official Gazette, 2019). Despite the legal provisions, awareness and enforcement of this law remain inconsistent, raising concerns about its effectiveness among different groups, including students in higher education institutions. In particular, political science students, who are expected to have a deep understanding of laws and policies, should be well-informed about the Safe Spaces Act, given their potential roles in governance, lawmaking, and advocacy. However, the extent of their awareness remains largely unexplored, highlighting a gap that this study aims to address.

Several studies have examined gender-based harassment and policy awareness in various contexts. For instance, Carballo Piñeiro & Kitada (2020) emphasized the importance of legal awareness in reducing sexual harassment incidents in public spaces. Additionally, Sharma & Kumari (2024) found that higher education institutions play a crucial role in shaping students' understanding of social policies, including gender-related laws. However, recent research has primarily focused on general student populations, with limited emphasis on political science students who are directly involved in studying governance and law. Furthermore, while studies have explored attitudes toward gender-based harassment (Bando et al, 2024), few have specifically measured the level of awareness of R.A. 11313 among college students, particularly in public institutions such as J.H. Cerilles State College.

This gap in the literature underscores the need for targeted research on political science students' awareness of the Safe Spaces Act. While existing studies have contributed valuable insights, they have not fully addressed the extent to which political science students—who are expected to be knowledgeable about legal frameworks—understand and internalize the provisions of R.A. 11313. Moreover, studies on policy awareness often focus on urban universities, overlooking the perspectives of students in state colleges in rural areas, where information dissemination and policy implementation may differ.

The primary audience of this study includes policymakers, educators, and students, particularly those in political science programs. Understanding their level of awareness is crucial for determining whether future policymakers and public servants are equipped with the knowledge necessary to uphold gender rights and implement protective policies. If awareness is found to be lacking, this study could serve as a foundation for curriculum enhancements, awareness campaigns, and policy improvements within higher education institutions.

The purpose of this study is to assess the level of awareness of R.A. 11313 among political science students at J.H. Cerilles State College. Specifically, it aims to determine whether students possess adequate knowledge of the law's provisions and to identify potential gaps in understanding. The findings will contribute to ongoing discussions about policy education in higher education and provide recommendations for strengthening awareness initiatives on gender-based harassment laws. By filling the gap in existing research, this study seeks to support the effective implementation of the Safe Spaces Act within academic institutions and beyond.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Gender-based sexual harassment in public spaces remains a pressing issue in the Philippines, prompting the enactment of the research framework presented in the diagram focuses on assessing the awareness of Political Science students at J.H. Cerilles State College regarding R.A. 11313, also known as the "Safe Spaces Act." The framework is divided into three key components: Input, Process, and Output.

In the input section, the study considers the profile of students, specifically their sex and year level, as variables. It aims to determine their level of awareness regarding gender-based sexual harassment in public spaces, including specific behaviors such as catcalling, wolf-whistling, and stalking. Additionally, the research seeks to analyze whether there is a significant difference in responses when grouped according to profile and whether the level of awareness among political science students varies significantly.

The process section outlines the research methodology, beginning with the formulation of instruments such as surveys or checklists. These instruments undergo validation and reliability testing to ensure accuracy. The study then proceeds with data collection through the distribution of questionnaires, followed by the analysis and interpretation of the gathered data. This structured approach ensures that the findings are reliable and meaningful.

The output of the research consists of recommendations aimed at enhancing students' awareness of R.A. 11313. By identifying gaps in understanding and evaluating differences in awareness levels among students, the study can provide insights that contribute to better education and policy-making. The broken line connecting the input, process and output and feedback describes a continuous process. This research is particularly relevant to Political Science students, as they are future law enforcers who must be well-informed about laws related to public safety and gender-based harassment. Through this study, educational institutions can develop more effective awareness programs, fostering a safer and more informed student community.

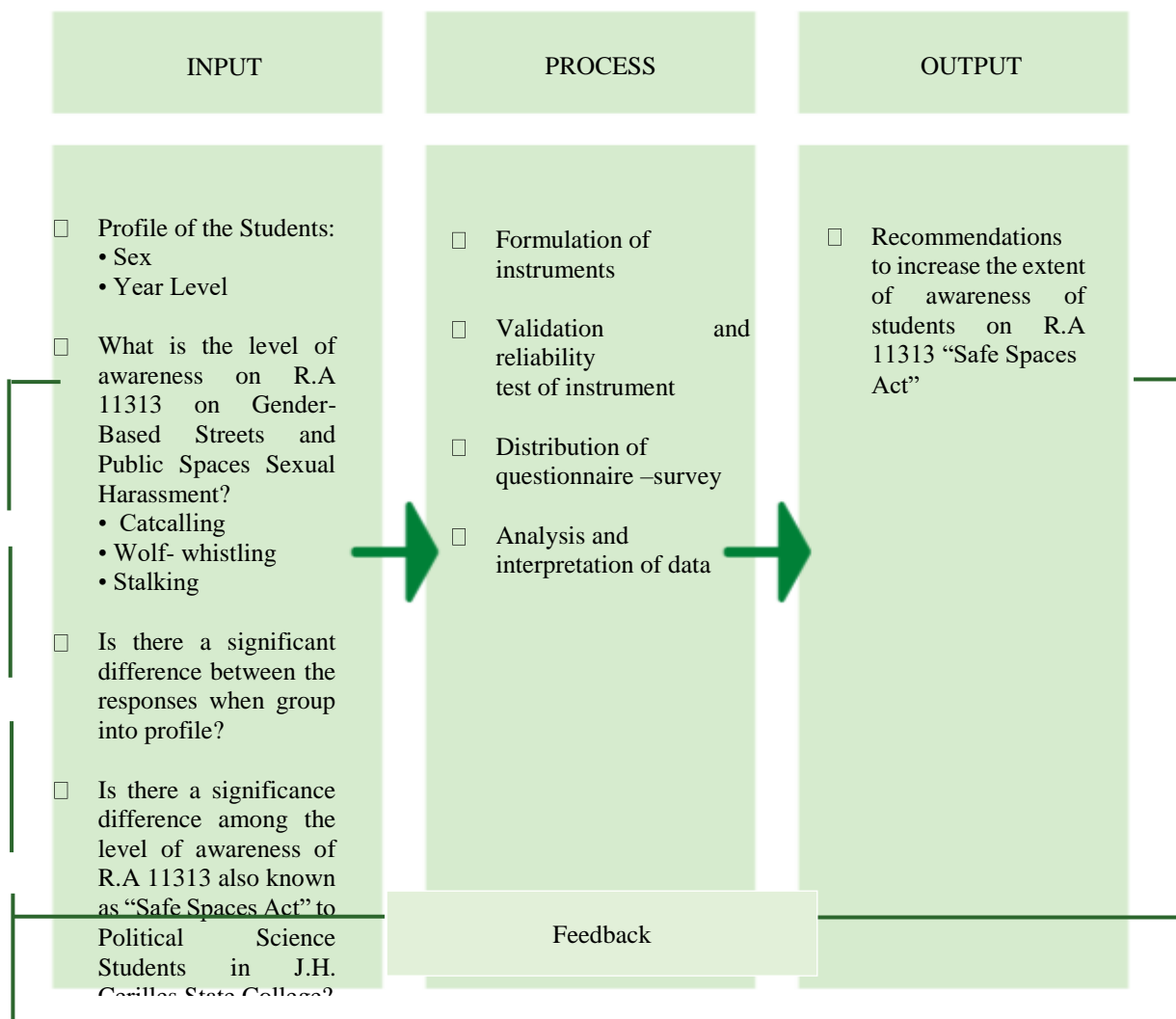


Figure 1. Diagram of the Study

Statement of the Problem

This study wants to determine the Level of Awareness of RA 11313 (Safe Spaces Act) to Political Science Students.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of;
 - 1.1 Sex; and
 - 1.2 Year level?
2. What is the level of awareness on R.A 11313 on Gender-Based Streets and Public Spaces Sexual Harassment in terms of;
 - 2.1 Catcalling
 - 2.2 Wolf- whistling
 - 2.3 Stalking
3. Is there a significant difference in the level of awareness on RA 11313 to the aforementioned aspects when grouped according to their profile?
4. What recommendations can be made and offered to enhance and increase the awareness of the Political Science students on the RA 11313?

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Sexual harassment remains a pervasive issue in various social settings, necessitating legal frameworks and institutional policies to ensure safe and inclusive environments. In the Philippines, Republic Act 11313, or the Safe Spaces Act, was enacted to address gender-based harassment in public and online spaces. Understanding the awareness and impact of this law among students, particularly those studying political science, is crucial as they are future policymakers and advocates. This review of related literature explores key studies on sexual harassment, safe spaces, digital harassment, and the role of educational institutions in fostering awareness and protection, providing a comprehensive foundation for analyzing the effectiveness of RA 11313.

Understanding Sexual Harassment and the Need for Safe Spaces

Sexual harassment is a deeply entrenched issue that affects individuals across different social settings, particularly women and marginalized groups. The recognition of this problem has led to increased academic discourse on its psychological, social, and legal implications. Benya and Roming (2018) examine the prevalence of sexual harassment among women and emphasize the necessity of legal frameworks to combat this pervasive issue. Their study highlights the psychological and emotional toll harassment takes on individuals, reinforcing the argument for protective policies such as the Safe Spaces Act (RA 11313) in the Philippines.

In understanding the psychology behind sexual harassment, Burn (2018) explores the cognitive and behavioral patterns that contribute to the normalization of such actions. The study argues that cultural and societal norms play a significant role in either deterring or perpetuating harassment, making awareness campaigns and educational interventions essential. Similarly, Kahsay et al. (2020) present a systematic review of sexual harassment against female nurses, emphasizing that harassment is not confined to any particular sector but is a widespread issue that requires structural and policy-driven responses.

The concept of safe spaces has emerged as a response to harassment and discrimination, particularly in academic institutions and workplaces. Coleman (2016) highlights the challenges and benefits of fostering safe spaces for the LGBT community, particularly in historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). This study sheds light on the broader discourse of inclusivity and acceptance, illustrating how institutional efforts can contribute to a safer environment for marginalized groups. Evangelista et al. (2016) further explore the navigation of religious and sexual identities among Filipino LGBT individuals, showing that the presence of supportive communities plays a crucial role in mitigating the effects of discrimination and harassment. These studies collectively underscore the necessity of legislative measures, such as the Safe Spaces Act, to ensure safer environments for all individuals.

The Safe Spaces Act (RA 11313) and Its Implications

In response to growing concerns over harassment and discrimination, the Philippine government enacted RA 11313, also known as the Safe Spaces Act, to protect individuals from gender-based harassment in public and online spaces. This law addresses issues such as catcalling, stalking, and online sexual harassment, which were previously not sufficiently covered by existing legal frameworks. Gabriel (2017) provides an in-depth analysis of sexual harassment in Philippine learning institutions, emphasizing the need for comprehensive policies like RA 11313 to protect students from various forms of harassment.

A more recent study by Gonzales (2023) assesses the Safe Spaces Act, highlighting both its strengths and its limitations. The study identifies key loopholes in the implementation of the law, such as inadequate enforcement mechanisms and a lack of widespread awareness, particularly among students and young professionals. These findings align with previous discussions on the normalization of catcalling and street harassment. Di Gennaro and Ritschel (2019) explore the blurred lines between catcalling and

compliments, arguing that societal perceptions often downplay the severity of street harassment. Similarly, Margolis (2020) asserts that catcalling should not be dismissed as a normal or acceptable social behavior, calling for stronger legal and cultural measures to combat it.

The importance of awareness among students is further emphasized by Ramadhan (2021), who examines catcalling awareness among university students. The study reveals that while some students recognize the harmful effects of catcalling, many still perceive it as a minor issue rather than a form of harassment. These findings indicate the need for stronger educational initiatives to reinforce the objectives of RA 11313 and ensure that young individuals understand their rights under the law.

Digital Harassment and the Role of Media in Awareness Campaigns

With the rise of digital platforms, harassment has expanded beyond physical spaces into online environments. The increasing digitization of social interactions has led to new forms of harassment, particularly targeting women and marginalized groups. Tandoc et al. (2021) examine the experiences of women journalists in the Philippines who have faced online harassment, highlighting the intersection of gender-based violence and digital technology. Their findings suggest that while social media provides a platform for advocacy and information dissemination, it also exposes individuals to heightened risks of harassment and cyberbullying.

To address the challenges of online harassment, digital awareness campaigns have been developed to educate and protect individuals. Bolatete et al. (2022) introduce CHARLIE, a digital campaign and reporting system specifically designed to address online sexual harassment in the Philippines. The study highlights the importance of technology-driven interventions in complementing legislative measures such as RA 11313. Digital platforms can serve as tools for both advocacy and accountability, helping victims report incidents and access support systems more efficiently.

Safe Spaces in Educational Institutions and Workplace Environments

Educational institutions play a pivotal role in shaping societal attitudes toward harassment and safe spaces. Studies have shown that universities and colleges serve as microcosms of society, reflecting the broader challenges faced by marginalized groups. Campen (2021) explores how LGBT+ college students navigate safe spaces on campuses, emphasizing the importance of institutional support in fostering inclusive environments. The study reveals that while some universities actively promote safe spaces, others lack concrete policies or enforcement mechanisms, leaving students vulnerable to discrimination and harassment.

Mehendale and Raha (2020) analyze public narratives on safe spaces in schools, focusing on the policy actions taken to ensure student safety. Their findings suggest that while many educational institutions acknowledge the need for safe spaces, implementation remains inconsistent due to varying interpretations of what constitutes a safe environment. Salazar (2023) highlights the efforts of Latino counselor educators in advocating for social justice in counselor education, reinforcing the role of educators in promoting awareness and inclusivity.

Gender, Sexuality, and Public Policy in the Philippines

The intersection of gender, sexuality, and public policy plays a crucial role in the implementation and effectiveness of RA 11313. Biton (2020) examines best practices in advancing sexual and reproductive rights in the Philippines, identifying key policy gaps that hinder progress in gender-based advocacy. Gregorio (2023) provides a unique perspective by exploring the experiences of young trans women engaged in online sex work. The study reveals how systemic vulnerabilities expose transgender individuals to heightened risks of harassment and exploitation, underscoring the need for more inclusive policies.

Sarza (2021) applies an intersectional feminist approach to public policy in the Philippines, discussing the relationship between gender, mobility, and public safety. The study argues that while legal frameworks such as RA 11313 exist, societal attitudes and institutional limitations continue to hinder their full implementation. These findings emphasize the need for a more intersectional approach to policy-making that considers the diverse experiences of individuals affected by harassment and discrimination.

Broader Social and Political Perspectives on Safe Spaces

Beyond the Philippine context, global perspectives provide valuable insights into the broader discourse on safe spaces and harassment. Oni and Akinsola (2018) examine student victimization in South African universities, revealing parallels in harassment experiences across different cultural and geographical settings. Their study highlights the importance of legal and institutional measures in ensuring student safety in educational environments.

Karami et al. (2021) conduct a systematic literature review on sexual harassment research using text mining, demonstrating the increasing academic interest in this field. Their findings suggest that while research on harassment has expanded, there is still a need for localized studies that address specific cultural and legal contexts. Florez et al. (2022) discuss the concept of safe spaces in the medical field, particularly in oncology, where diversity and inclusion efforts have gained traction in recent years.

Finally, Lasco et al. (2023) explore the cultural dimensions of safety and risk amid the COVID-19 pandemic, introducing the Filipino concepts of "loob" (inside) and "labas" (outside) to analyze how individuals perceive safety in different spatial contexts. This study adds depth to the discussion on safe spaces, demonstrating that perceptions of safety are not only legal and institutional concerns but also deeply rooted in cultural and social frameworks.

The literature reviewed highlights the significance of RA 11313 in addressing sexual harassment and promoting safe spaces in academic, professional, and public environments. However, studies suggest that challenges remain in terms of enforcement, public awareness, and institutional support. The increasing role of digital platforms in both perpetuating and combating harassment further underscores the need for updated policies and technological interventions. Moving forward, a more comprehensive and intersectional approach to policy-making and advocacy is necessary to ensure that all individuals, regardless of gender or background, have access to safe and inclusive spaces.

3. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employs a descriptive quantitative research design to assess students' awareness of the law and its provisions. This design is appropriate because it allows for a systematic and objective measurement of the level of awareness among students without manipulating any variables. The descriptive approach is chosen to provide a clear and detailed account of the current awareness level, while the quantitative method ensures that data can be analyzed statistically for accuracy and reliability. To collect data, the study utilizes survey questionnaires containing structured, close-ended questions, such as Likert scale items and multiple-choice questions. These are designed to gauge students' familiarity with RA 11313, their understanding of its provisions, and their perception of its implementation. The survey method is justified as it enables the collection of data from a larger sample efficiently, ensuring a broad and representative understanding of awareness levels.

Research Environment

This study was conducted at J.H. Cerilles State College in Mati San Miguel Zamboanga del Sur. The J.H. Cerilles State College (JHCSC) is a premier higher education institution in Mati, San Miguel, Zamboanga del Sur, committed to providing quality education in various fields, including political science. As a state college, J.H. Cerilles State College plays a vital role in shaping future leaders, policymakers, and advocates who will contribute to societal development. The institution is known for its dedication to academic excellence, research, and community engagement, making it an ideal setting for studies related to law, governance, and social awareness. This study was conducted at J.H. Cerilles State College because it provides a convenient and accessible research environment where Political Science students serve as ideal respondents. As future public servants and policymakers, their awareness of RA 11313 (Safe Spaces Act) is crucial in assessing their understanding of legal frameworks that promote safe and inclusive spaces. Additionally, conducting the study within the institution ensures a targeted and relevant sample, as the findings may help inform educational initiatives and policy discussions within the college community.

Research Respondents

The respondents of the study are the political science students of J.H. Cerilles State College, who officially enrolled from the academic year 2024 to 2025. The respondents are composed of 20 each year level and a total of sixty (60) will participate in this study. Which twenty (20) respondents for 4th year, twenty (20) respondents of 3rd year, twenty (20) respondents of 2nd year. All the target sample sizes of the respondents were survey through the survey questionnaire.

The selection of respondents for this study follows specific criteria to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the findings. First, the respondents must be officially enrolled Political Science students at J.H. Cerilles State College for the academic year 2024–2025, ensuring that only active students are included. Second, the study targets students from 2nd year, 3rd year, and 4th year, with an equal distribution of 20 respondents per year level, providing a balanced representation across different academic standings. Third, participation in the study is voluntary, meaning that only students who willingly agree to answer the survey questionnaire will be included, ensuring more honest and thoughtful responses.

Additionally, respondents must be readily available to complete the survey within the given time frame and have access to the questionnaire, whether through an online platform or printed copies. Lastly, to maintain the objectivity of the study, students who have undergone formal training, seminars, or advocacy programs specifically about RA 11313 may be excluded, as their prior knowledge could influence the results and skew the overall assessment of awareness levels. By adhering to these criteria, the study ensures that the data collected is representative, unbiased, and reliable in evaluating the awareness of RA 11313 among Political Science students.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents a comprehensive analysis of the data gathered on the awareness and perceptions of Republic Act 11313, also known as the Safe Spaces Act, among respondents. The discussion focuses on the different forms of gender-based street and public space sexual harassment, specifically catcalling, wolf whistling, and stalking. Additionally, the chapter explores significant differences in awareness levels based on sex and year level, drawing on statistical tests to determine patterns in understanding these issues.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1

Descriptive Level of Respondents in terms of Sex (n=60)

Sex	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
F	30	50.0 %	50.0 %
M	30	50.0 %	100.0 %

The findings illustrated in Table 1 showcase a balanced distribution of sex among the respondents, with an equal representation of both females and males at 50%. This diversity underlines the significance of the study, as both perspectives can provide insights crucial for understanding how this demographic perceives and experiences sexual harassment. By including equal numbers of both sexes, the research is positioned to explore potential differences in perceptions of harassment based on gender, which previous research has indicated may influence individuals' experiences and reactions to such situations.

Table 2

Descriptive Level of Respondents in terms of Year Level (n=60)

Year Level	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
2nd Year	20	33.3 %	33.3 %
3rd Year	20	33.3 %	66.7 %
4th Year	20	33.3 %	100.0 %

As displayed in Table 2, there is also a uniform representation across year levels, with each group comprising 33.3% of the total respondents. This equal distribution is significant for the study as it allows for an analysis not biased toward a particular year level. The equal participation across these levels enhances the research's robustness by ensuring comprehensive data representing different stages in the students' academic journeys (Rogers, 2014). It also raises the opportunity for insights regarding how awareness and perceptions of harassment change as students' progress through their education.

Awareness of Gender-Based Sexual Harassment

Understanding sexual harassment, particularly in public spaces, is crucial in fostering a safer and more gender-sensitive society. The following sections present the respondents' awareness of various forms of harassment.

Awareness of Catcalling

Table 3

Descriptive Level of awareness on R.A 11313 on Gender-Based Streets and Public Spaces Sexual Harassment in terms of Catcalling (n=60)

STATEMENT	M	SD	QD
1. Are you aware that catcalling is a form of street harassment?	3.64	0.45	VH
2. Do you know that catcalling can be considered a form of gender-based violence?	3.66	0.48	VH
3. How aware are you that catcalling is a form of sexual harassment?	3.62	0.49	VH
4. Do you know that catcalling can make people feel uncomfortable or unsafe?	3.60	0.49	VH
5. Are you aware that catcalling can negatively impact a person's sense of safety?	3.63	0.49	VH

OVERALL	3.65	0.48	VH
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Note: M = mean, SD = Standard deviation, QD = Qualitative description: 1.00 – 1.74 = Very Low (VL), 1.75 – 2.49 = Low (L), 2.50 – 3.24 = High (H), 3.25 – 4.00 = Very High (VH)

In Table 3, the awareness of catcalling as a form of street harassment is high across the board. Respondents demonstrated very high awareness ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 0.45$), indicating a strong understanding that catcalling is a form of gender-based violence. The mean scores on statements related to its effects, such as making people uncomfortable or unsafe, further corroborate the respondents' awareness. This aligns with findings in existing literature, such as Margolis (2020), who stresses the importance of recognizing catcalling as a violation of human rights and public safety. The very high mean score (3.65 overall) for catcalling suggests that the respondents are well-informed about this form of harassment, which reflects successful public campaigns and educational efforts.

The high awareness score in Table 3 suggests that campaigns addressing catcalling have had a significant impact. However, there may still be room to further emphasize the nuances of this behavior, particularly in terms of its psychological and emotional effects on victims. Future initiatives could focus on strengthening the connection between awareness and actionable behaviors to help combat catcalling effectively.

Awareness of Wolf Whistling

Table 4

Descriptive Level of awareness on R.A 11313 on Gender-Based Streets and Public Spaces Sexual Harassment in terms of Wolf-whistling (n=60)

STATEMENT	M	SD	QD
1. Are you aware that wolf whistling is considered a form of street harassment?	3.52	0.50	VH
2. Do you know that wolf whistling can make people feel uncomfortable or unsafe?	3.62	0.49	VH
3. Are you aware that wolf whistling is a common issue in many public spaces?	3.63	0.49	VH
4. Are you aware that wolf whistling can impact someone's mental health or well-being?	3.53	0.50	VH
5. Do you aware that some individuals view wolf whistling as a form of gender-based discrimination?	3.67	0.48	VH
OVERALL	3.59	0.49	VH

Note: M = mean, SD = Standard deviation, QD = Qualitative description: 1.00 – 1.74 = Very Low (VL), 1.75 – 2.49 = Low (L), 2.50 – 3.24 = High (H), 3.25 – 4.00 = Very High (VH)

Similarly, in Table 4, the awareness of wolf-whistling as a form of street harassment is also very high ($M = 3.59$, $SD = 0.49$). Respondents were especially aware that wolf-whistling can make people feel unsafe and negatively impact mental health. Studies such as Di Gennaro and Ritschel (2019) have explored the fine line between seemingly benign behaviors like compliments and more harmful acts like wolf-whistling, underlining the need for public awareness about the psychological and emotional toll of these actions. The high awareness scores across all statements indicate that the message surrounding wolf-whistling has been well received by this group of respondents.

The high levels of awareness observed in Table 4 suggest that respondents are well-versed in understanding wolf-whistling as a form of harassment. However, awareness should be coupled with behavior change strategies, especially since such harassment is often normalized in public spaces. Targeting bystander intervention and teaching individuals how to respond in these situations could be effective next steps in addressing wolf-whistling.

Awareness of Stalking

Table 5

Descriptive Level of awareness on R.A 11313 on Gender-Based Streets and Public Spaces Sexual Harassment in terms of Stalking (n=60)

STATEMENT	M	SD	QD
1. Are you familiar with the term "stalking"?	3.55	0.50	VH
2. Are you aware that stalking can happen both online and offline?	3.63	0.49	VH
3. Are you aware that stalking can have serious emotional, psychological, and physical effects on victims?	3.63	0.49	VH

4. Are you aware that stalking involves repeated, unwanted attention or harassment by one person toward another?.

	3.70	0.46	VH
OVERALL	3.65	0.48	VH

Note: *M* = mean, *SD* = Standard deviation, *QD* = Qualitative description: 1.00 – 1.74 = Very Low (VL), 1.75 – 2.49 = Low (L), 2.50 – 3.24 = High (H), 3.25 – 4.00 = Very High (VH)

In Table 5, the overall awareness of stalking as part of gender-based harassment also scores very highly ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 0.48$). Respondents showed a clear understanding of stalking's serious consequences, including emotional, psychological, and physical effects. The familiarity with both online and offline stalking is particularly relevant given the increasing prevalence of digital harassment. This understanding is in line with Burn's (2018) psychological analysis of sexual harassment, which highlights that victims of stalking often experience significant emotional distress.

The high awareness of stalking in Table 5 reflects a critical understanding of the potential dangers posed by both physical and online harassment. Given that stalking can have severe consequences for mental health and safety, it would be beneficial to include more targeted education on the various forms of stalking (e.g., cyberstalking, physical stalking) and the legal avenues available for victims, as suggested by previous research (Gabriel, 2017).

Summary of Awareness Levels

Table 6

Summary of Awareness on R.A. 11313 Regarding Gender-Based Sexual Harassment (n=60)

TYPE OF HARASSMENT	M	SD	QD
Catcalling	3.65	0.48	VH
Wolf Whistling	3.59	0.49	VH
Stalking	3.63	0.48	VH
Overall Awareness	3.62	0.48	VH

Note: *M* = mean, *SD* = Standard deviation, *QD* = Qualitative description: 1.00 – 1.74 = Very Low (VL), 1.75 – 2.49 = Low (L), 2.50 – 3.24 = High (H), 3.25 – 4.00 = Very High (VH)

Table 6 summarizes the overall awareness of different forms of harassment, all of which received very high awareness ratings, indicating a comprehensive understanding of R.A. 11313 (Philippine Safe Spaces Act) and its implications on gender-based harassment. This suggests that the public campaigns and educational initiatives related to gender-based harassment are succeeding in raising awareness. The very high overall awareness score of 3.62 is in line with findings from previous studies that suggest increased awareness among younger generations about these issues (Klein & Martin, 2021).

The high overall awareness in Table 6 indicates the effectiveness of public awareness campaigns about gender-based sexual harassment. However, sustained efforts are necessary to keep these issues in the public consciousness and to move beyond awareness to action. Interventions that not only raise awareness but also provide practical tools for intervention and support could help translate knowledge into meaningful change.

Significant Differences in Awareness Based on Demographic Variables

Difference in Awareness Based on Sex

Table 7

Testing the Difference on Gender-Based Streets and Public Spaces Sexual Harassment when group according to Sex using Independent Samples T-Test (n=60)

	Statistic	df	p
Gender-Based Streets and Public Spaces Sexual Harassment	Student's t	58	0.591

Note. $H_a: \mu_F \neq \mu_M$

Table 7 shows that there is no significant difference in awareness between male and female respondents ($p = 0.591$), suggesting that both genders have similar levels of awareness regarding gender-based harassment in public spaces. This finding is noteworthy as it challenges the expectation that women may be more aware of harassment issues, given their personal experiences. It also implies that educational campaigns about gender-based harassment are reaching both genders equally, which supports the findings of Kahsay et al. (2020) that awareness efforts can effectively target all groups.

The lack of significant differences in awareness based on sex (as shown in Table 7) suggests that gender-focused campaigns are working well to engage all groups. However, it is still essential to explore the reasons behind these findings further, particularly to understand how men and women process or experience harassment differently. Tailoring interventions that foster empathy and understanding between genders could enhance the effectiveness of awareness campaigns.

Difference in Awareness Based on Year Level

Table 8

Testing the Difference on Gender-Based Streets and Public Spaces Sexual Harassment when group according to Year Level using One-Way ANOVA (Welch's) ($n=60$)

	F	df1	df2	p
Gender-Based Streets and Public Spaces Sexual Harassment	23.5	2	36.4	< .001

Note. $P\text{-value} < .05$

Table 8 reveals a significant difference in awareness based on year level ($F = 23.5$, $p < .001$), indicating that students' awareness of gender-based harassment increases with their year level. The Tukey Post-Hoc test (Table 9) shows that 4th-year students have significantly higher awareness than both 2nd and 3rd-year students. This trend may reflect the accumulation of knowledge and exposure to relevant topics through their academic progression. A similar trend was observed in studies like those of Gonzales (2023), which suggest that as students' progress in their academic careers, their exposure to and understanding of issues such as gender-based violence become more pronounced.

The significant differences in awareness based on year level (Table 8) suggest that students in later years are more informed, likely due to accumulated exposure to relevant content over time. This presents an opportunity for universities to ensure that gender-based harassment education begins early and continues through all years. Targeted interventions for 2nd and 3rd-year students could help address knowledge gaps, ensuring that all students are equally prepared to identify, prevent, and act against gender-based harassment.

Table 9

Tukey Post-Hoc Test – Gender-Based Streets and Public Spaces Sexual Harassment

		2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year
2nd Year	Mean difference	—	-0.107	-0.266
	p-value	—	0.045*	<0.00*
3rd Year	Mean difference	—	—	-0.159
	p-value	—	—	0.002*
4th Year	Mean difference	—	—	—
	p-value	—	—	—

*Note. * $p < .05$*

This post-hoc test further shows that 4th-year students have significantly higher awareness compared to both 2nd-year and 3rd-year students, indicating that awareness grows with academic experience. The statistical significance ($p < 0.05$) suggests that there is a tangible difference in the level of understanding regarding gender-based harassment across year levels, reinforcing the findings in Table 8.

The findings from the tables suggest that awareness of gender-based sexual harassment is high across different forms of harassment (catcalling, wolf-whistling, stalking) and among different demographic groups (sex and year level). The study reveals that campaigns have been effective in raising awareness, but there is potential to increase the depth of knowledge and action ability, particularly among first-year and second-year students. By incorporating targeted interventions and ensuring that all students, regardless of year level or sex, are equipped with the knowledge and tools to prevent harassment, educational institutions can continue to progress in addressing gender-based sexual harassment effectively.

Recommendations to Enhance Awareness of RA 11313 Among Political Science Students

Based on the findings, several recommendations can be made to enhance and sustain the awareness of Political Science students regarding Republic Act 11313 (Safe Spaces Act) and gender-based sexual harassment. First, integrating discussions on RA 11313 into the Political Science curriculum can be highly beneficial. Since awareness appears to increase with academic progression, as indicated in Tables 8 and 9, early exposure to these topics in foundational courses such as Political Law, Human Rights, or Social Justice can bridge the awareness gap among lower-year students. Additionally, conducting regular seminars and workshops led by legal experts, gender advocates, and policymakers can further deepen students' understanding. These sessions should include interactive discussions on real-life case studies and enforcement mechanisms to move beyond theoretical awareness.

Moreover, bystander intervention training should be promoted to empower students to take action when witnessing gender-based harassment in public spaces. Awareness alone is insufficient; students must be equipped with the knowledge and skills to intervene appropriately and support victims. Alongside these initiatives, digital campaigns and educational materials such as infographics, videos, and online quizzes can be utilized to reinforce learning. Creating a university-based digital platform or chatbot dedicated to RA 11313 can provide students with an accessible and engaging way to learn about their rights and reporting mechanisms.

Encouraging student-led initiatives and advocacy programs can also play a crucial role in increasing awareness. Political Science organizations can organize forums, debates, and public discussions, fostering a more active engagement with the law. Extending these initiatives to community outreach programs can create a ripple effect, ensuring that awareness spreads beyond the university setting. Furthermore, universities should institutionalize clear anti-harassment policies and reporting mechanisms to ensure that students are not only aware of RA 11313 but also know how to report violations effectively. Conducting mock case studies on harassment scenarios and how the law is enforced can further strengthen students' understanding of its practical applications.

Lastly, fostering collaborations with local government units and legal experts can provide Political Science students with real-world insights into gender-based harassment laws. Internship opportunities with human rights organizations, women's advocacy groups, and legal institutions can give students practical exposure to the enforcement of RA 11313. While the study indicates a very high level of awareness among respondents, particularly among upper-year students, these recommendations aim to transform awareness into proactive advocacy. By implementing these measures, Political Science students can not only increase their understanding of gender-based harassment laws but also become active agents in promoting safer public spaces in their communities.

5. CONCLUSION

This study addressed the gap in literature regarding the awareness of Republic Act 11313 (Safe Spaces Act) among political science students, particularly those studying at J.H. Cerilles State College. While previous research has explored general student populations' understanding of gender-based harassment laws, limited attention has been given to political science students, who are expected to have a deeper grasp of legal frameworks due to their academic background.

The findings revealed a very high awareness of the different forms of gender-based harassment—catcalling, wolf-whistling, and stalking—suggesting that information on RA 11313 has reached students effectively. However, the study also found that awareness levels varied significantly by year level, with fourth-year students demonstrating higher awareness than second- and third-year students. This reinforces the idea that academic exposure plays a critical role in shaping students' understanding of laws and policies, supporting the need for earlier and more structured integration of RA 11313 discussions into the curriculum.

By bridging the research gap, this study provides empirical evidence that while political science students show strong awareness of the Safe Spaces Act, there remains a need for continuous education and proactive engagement in policy discussions. The results highlight the importance of higher education institutions in shaping future policymakers' understanding of gender-based harassment laws. In response, the study recommends curriculum enhancements, awareness campaigns, and practical engagement initiatives to ensure that students not only know the law but also actively advocate for its enforcement.

Despite its contributions, the study acknowledges its limitations, including a small sample size and a focus on one institution, which may limit generalizability. Future research should explore a broader range of institutions, including urban and rural universities, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of RA 11313 awareness. Moreover, further studies could examine how awareness translates into action, determining whether students apply their knowledge in real-world scenarios.

Ultimately, this study underscores the critical role of education in fostering legal awareness and policy advocacy. By ensuring that political science students—the country's future leaders, lawmakers, and advocates—are well-versed in gender-based harassment laws, academic institutions can contribute to the effective implementation and enforcement of RA 11313, promoting safer and more inclusive public spaces.

6. REFERENCES

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