



Level Of Awareness Of The Dpwh Tarlac 2nd District Engineering Office Employees In The Implementation Of The Safe Spaces Act Of 2019

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Abstract: The study evaluated the level of awareness of the DPWH Tarlac 2nd District Engineering Office employees in the implementation of the Safe Space Act of 2019 in terms of: gender-based sexual harassment in streets and public places, gender-based online sexual harassment and gender-based sexual harassment in the workplace using quantitative descriptive research design. Based on the data gathered and evaluated by the researcher the following findings were drawn from the study. First, the employees of DPWH Tarlac 2nd DEO exhibited awareness on provision of Safe Spaces Act of 2019 having a grand mean of 4.11 with an adjectival equivalent of “aware” signifies that the respondents are generally aware of the gender-based sexual harassment on streets and public spaces. Secondly, the survey reflects that the respondents are moderately aware on the provisions of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 relating to gender-based online sexual harassment with its grand mean of 4.09, classified as “aware”. Lastly, the study evaluated that the employees of DPWH Tarlac 2nd DEO are aware on the provisions of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 particularly on clauses and provision for the gender-based sexual harassment in workplaces which are all indicated on Article IV, Section 16 to Section 20 with its accumulated grand mean of 3.83 which translates into “aware” in its adjectival rating. In line with this, recommendations such as: initiation of partnership with the implementing bodies to structuralized programs and projects that will enhance the level of awareness on the implementation of Safe Spaces Act of 2019; integrating yearly orientations and seminars for Sexual Harassment Awareness as part of their Learning and Development Plan Programs of DPWH; establishment District Committee on Decorum and Investigation on Sexual Harassment Cases; and formulating policies tailored-fit for the Agency that will enhance its sexual harassment in line with the implementing rules and regulations of RA 11313 or the Safe Spaces Act and the CSC Memorandum Circular No. 11 Series of 2021 with the subject on Revised Administrative Disciplinary Rules on Sexual Harassment Cases were drawn.

Key words: *Gender-based sexual harassment, Safe Spaces Act of 2019*

I. INTRODUCTION

It is very difficult to find a space where people can feel safe and secure. Even in schools, workplaces, streets, public places and in their own homes, some people do not really feel safe and at ease at all. Some are physically not comfortable due to threats and uneasiness that they feel. Others do not feel safe with their own identity due to the fear of not being accepted and more and more people are already experiencing harassment and abuse every single day. Harassment is in every corner of the world and in 2016 and 2017, there are about two in five women and about one in four men in the United States of the America had had experience sexual violence and harassment such as stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime. This has resulted in different kinds of effects such as physical injuries, post-traumatic stress disorders and fear for their own safety.

The dictionary would define insulting, abusing or harming a person on a regular basis, whether it is verbal, sexual or physical is classified as a form of harassment already. This act is cruel and implicates traumas that could have lasting effects both on the psychological and physical health of the victims. The perpetrators of this kind of torment also develop psychological complexities that could have a lasting effect on their mentality

as well. As the world progresses with its development and advancement, different kinds of harassment have increasingly become more evident leading to making little to almost no existence of safe space in the world. Streets, homes, classrooms, comfort rooms and even amusement centers are becoming venues for harassment to the point that it is slowly being normalized. Women are known to be the primary victims of harassment and violence but as time goes by, harassment has been evident in different genders. Men, youth, and other sexual minorities are increasingly becoming victims of different kinds of harassment. Harassment also is becoming more evident in different settings and places. Gone are the times where harassment is discreet, even in broad daylight, harassment is increasing becoming more evident.

Over the years, sexual harassment was tabooed as this kind of experience gave extreme shame not only on the perpetrators but to the victims themselves. This is due to cultural and social norms of the country that ingrained a mindset that being a victim of such acts puts an end to a better and brighter future. This cultural and social belief kept victims mum as they fear a dim future ahead of them. As a conservative country that honors dignity, family image and reputation, being involved in such cases puts shame and embarrassment to a family name and reputation. Filipinos value purity especially for women being involve or being a victim of sexual harassment brings great damage to a familial image and reputation. This resulted in keeping such cases buried deeply and one of the oldest methods in Filipino Culture to silence victims and situations of sexual harassment is to marry the victim to its perpetrator as a settlement of the sexual violence act that they did. But as liberation and innovation arise, the issue of sexual harassment has been increasingly being brought to the global social domain. Liberation and increased sense of equality had led to different kinds of movements and protests that had given the strength and urge for victims of sexual harassment, be it men or women, to come forward and speak of their truth.

Defined as a behavior associated with making inappropriate and unwelcomed physical advances, sexual remarks and abused of authority in workplace and social situations, this long-standing societal problem never seemed to be solved no matter how much the world innovates. For the longest time, sexual harassment was loosely defined only with explicit or implicit sexual overtones primarily with inappropriate promises of rewards in exchanged of sexual favors. Touches of arms, persistent name callings, repeated unwanted messages and many more were seen as normal and not necessarily a kind of violence or harassment. Even if such acts give a level of discomfort to receivers, it was not painted as a kind of crime. But now, it has been given a more elaborate definition as a type of discrimination and a complex social concern that can implicate psychological effects for both the victims of the harassment and the perpetrators themselves.

The United Nation Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) described gender-based violence (GBV) as a type of discrimination that disproportionately affects women which includes acts of sexual, physical and mental harm as well as threats of such acts, coercion and other kinds of deprivations of liberty. In Vietnam, it found out that 58% of the woman population experienced a type of violence, either physical, sexual or emotional violence during their lifetime which led a more in-dept investigation of the United Nations with regards to the domestic and gender-based violence in the country which prompt its government to made advances in creating legislations and other laws and policies which can be a solution to prevent GBV which focused primarily on domestic violence, human trafficking and workplace sexual harassments. They also developed policies and strategies to support such laws. The programs, interventions, policies, laws and commitment of the Government of Vietnam in addressing GBV expanded their understanding of complexities of GBV in the country of Vietnam (Duvvury & Scriver, 2014).

In 2017, sexual harassment issues were put into spotlight in the Entertainment world of Hollywood in United States of America as film producer Harvey Weinstein was accused of sexual misconduct by over eighty women and was named as the “Weinstein Effect”(Ó’móchain, 2018). Weinstein effect gave the urge for women to come forward with their sexual misconduct allegations and stories against prominent figures in different areas of society. This also reignited the #MeToo movement and awareness campaign against sexual harassment, sexual abuse and rape culture by Social Activist Tarana Burke, which promotes women empowerment among sexually abused women. Sexual harassment in workplaces is a very persistent problem across many companies and organizations in USA. Each year, cases are reaching thousands that are being filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) which results in millions in monetary compensation for the victims of sexual harassment and violence (Cesario, 2020).

Street harassment is not only common in the North America, in recent studies, it was reported that street harassment happens in the streets of India, Morocco and even in public transportation in Australia and many other more. Based on a survey on street harassment done by Cornell’s international, more than 16,000 women from different cities, majority had experienced street harassment during their puberty. There are over 50% of women reported in 22 countries had experienced being groped or been fondled in public and there are about 71% of women that had been stalked as well. These problems have led to gender segregation in public

transportations systems in countries such as India, Brazil, Mexico, Egypt, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Japan and Germany (Baptist & Coburn, 2019). While in Cambodia, the level of understanding of GBV and different kinds of harassment, especially in workplace remains a challenge. Social norms and victim blaming are root causes for low rates of reporting gender-based violence cases. The survivors are experiencing discrimination when they disclose their identities as survivors. One of the problems in Cambodia is the lack of space for workers and unions to have dialogues regarding gender-based violence and other related cases and there are not enough public awareness discussions and materials available for workers and for the general community. The inadequate prevention and response mechanism gave low trust by survivors leading to normalization of different forms of GBV and harassment (Care Cambodia, 2024).

In the Philippine context, harassment and abuse is not a new concept, it has been present even way back during Spanish colonialization. Due to numerous regimes that the country had experienced, harassment and abuse has been present on the Philippine society. All the conflicts had the Philippines with colonizers had historical reports of abuse in terms of power, mental, physical, sexual and domestic harassment that had been ingrained in the culture of Filipinos. But in modern times, harassment is still prevalent in the country. A study done in Tondo, Manila in 2020 gave light on how women perceived and experienced gender-based violence, particularly about sexual violence implicated to women. There were different kinds and forms of sexual violence experienced by Filipino women identified which includes sexual attacks perpetrated by their husbands, older males and employers. Others are sex trafficking of adults, child sexual abuse, street harassment, child cyber-sex trafficking and child sex exploitation. While the victims described their families as the center of their identity and one of the main sources of social support, it is also one of the main avenues where they experience sexual violence. One of the main reasons identified why this is the case is that Filipinos do value family, loyalty and its preservation leading to repressing sexual violence within the family walls (Lenna & Regina, 2020). In Cebu, women who experienced domestic violence have learned to survive by utilizing their inner strength of endurance which helped them adapt in difficult situations and find meaning and purpose during an abusive relationship. Victims interviewed in a study revealed that there are reasons why they stay in such abusive environment. First was the need to protect their children. Another was the incapability to provide themselves with shelter and financial support. Lastly, was the emotional attachment primarily to their husbands or life partners who were intermittently kind and erratically violent then promising that it would never happen again (Jardin & Jaluague, 2022). In the venue of workplace, a study by Araneta (2022) gave an insight of the realities of the victims of harassment at their workplaces. It revealed that survivors of unwanted sexual behaviors which consists of inappropriate romantic or sexual activities felt uncomfortable on being an receiving end of such acts. With all experiences. Shared, it became apparent that the effects can be very damaging to one's mental health. It manifested different kinds of symptoms from physical ailments and psychosomatic incidents.

As such cases, in 2019, a law was enacted that gave provisions and clauses on different sexual harassments that could happen in different events, venues and situations such as in streets, public spaces, virtual or online, workplaces and spaces, educational institutions and training institutions. It provided protective measures and prescribed penalties and sanctions for such unlawful acts. This is the Republic Act No. 11313 which is also known as the Safe Spaces Act of 2019. The law gave a broader scope of the classifications of different sexual harassment acts vice the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995. The newly enacted law provided security, safety and equality to all genders in terms of sexual harassment in different events without the restrictions of the previous law for sexual harassment. The Bawal ang Bastos Law gave a more in-dept coverage of all forms of GBV, particularly acts committed in the mentioned situations and venues. Instituted as primary construction arm of the country, Department of Public Works, and Highways (DPWH) is considered as a male-dominated government agency consisting of male-majority engineering professionals. As one of its aims to be gender-inclusive in line with the National Government's agenda, DPWH – Central Office issued the Department Memorandum Circular (DMC) No. 72, on September 16, 2019, to inform and disseminate the Safe Space Act in all its Offices.

The researcher has been actively involved in District Public Affairs and Information Unit of a DPWH District Office serving as the Designated Public Affairs and Information Officer and in the Human Resource and Administrative Section as the Human Resource Management Officer II of the Human Resource Management Unit. This professional experience has provided valuable knowledge in information dissemination and human resource management which were both essential in spreading awareness of policies and directives being implemented within the workplace. Recognizing the importance of the safety and rights of its personnel, the researcher sought authority to conduct and do a study on the awareness of DPWH – Tarlac 2nd District Engineering Office (DEO) employees in terms of the implementation of the Safe Space Act of

2019. In addition, the researcher sought to identify the areas that needed to be enhanced and to be able to provide recommendations as part of the research.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study analyzed the level of awareness of the DPWH Tarlac 2nd District Engineering Office employees in the implementation of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 in terms of: Gender-Based Streets and Public Spaces Sexual Harassment; Gender-Based Online Sexual Harassment; and Gender-Based Sexual Harassment in the Workplace.

To firmly establish consistent and reliable evidence relevant to the study, the researcher evaluated whether the procedures they examined were used to measure the data to be gathered. The level of awareness of the DPWH – Tarlac 2nd DEO employees in the implementation of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 were measured by its researcher used quantitative descriptive research design. This design aimed to gather and obtain information to describe a certain situation, population, and phenomenon. This was used to determine patterns in characteristics, behaviors, and practices of a certain group to further understand as to why it results to a certain outcome.

The researcher used the convenience sampling method which were used in quantitative research for a more simple and convenient method of data collection. Due to the large population of DPWH – Tarlac 2nd DEO, the researcher used this method for a less complex method based on their accessibility.

The respondents of this study were comprised of different persons involved in the operation of the DPWH – Tarlac 2nd District Engineering office. With 230 total population, 100 employees voluntarily participated and gave their consent to be part of the study.

Lastly, the method of survey questionnaire, documentary analysis, and interview were used to ensure the sufficiency of data to obtain meaningful study results.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part presents all the result of analyzed information and data together with the corresponding discussions and interpretation of the data gathered relative to the employees' level of awareness in the implementation of Safe Space Act of 2019. The data gathered were shown in textual and tabular form with the support of statistical treatment for interpretation and analysis.

1. Demographic profile of the respondents

The following are the demographic profile of the research's respondents described in multiple categories such as gender, age, civil status, educational attainment, and occupation or position. This part discussed the profiles of its respondents who are employed at DPWH Tarlac 2nd District Engineering Office in terms of their gender, age, civil status, educational attainment and current position or occupation in the government agency.

1.1. Gender

Table 1 presents the percentage and ranking of male and female respondents of the study. The respondents of the research are one hundred employees of DPWH Tarlac 2nd District Engineering Office who consented to participate to the research. They consist of sixty-three (63) male and thirty-seven (37) female personnel. Further, male respondents consist of twenty (20) budgetary personnel or the permanent employees, four (4) coterminous BUILD, BUILD, BUILD, Program or the CTBBBP Engineers and thirty-nine (39) Contract of Service (COS) male employees. Meanwhile the female respondents consisted of eight (8) budgetary employee, two (2) coterminous BUILD, BUILD, BUILD, Program or the CTBBBP Engineers and twenty-seven (27) COS female personnel.

Table 1
Gender

Gender	f	%	R
Male	63	63%	1
Female	37	37%	2
Total	100	100%	

According to the Chief Administrative Officer V, who oversees the Human Resource Management and Development Unit, their October monthly statistics on the personnel currently employed at DPWH Tarlac 2nd District Engineering Office reported that 174 out of 230 employees involving all budgetary, CTBBBP and COS were male which equates to 75.65% of its total population and only 56 out of 230 personnel were female equating to only 24.35% of its total population. The budgetary or permanent population consisted of 71.93%

male employees and only 28.07% were female personnel. On the other hand, CTBBBBP engineers consisted of 66.67% male and only 33.33% were female engineers. The report also reflected a significant difference on the ratio of male and female employees on the COS personnel. With its total population of 164, 127 or 77.44% were male and only 22.56% were female.

It was observed that technical staff were dominated by male employees as well as the trades and crafts category. The technical staff employees were engineers, architects, engineering assistants, engineering aides, laboratory technicians while the trades and crafts category consisted of heavy equipment operators, drivers, construction, and maintenance capataz and laborers. On the other hand, female populace dominated work positions that are non-technical in nature such as administrative officers, administrative assistants, administrative aides which are generic position title for those who were assigned to tasks that involves in the Finance Section, Human Resource and Admirative section and all non-technical support in each technical section like Maintenance, Construction, Quality Assurance and Planning and design Section.

According to the study of Kelley & Bryan (2018), while gendered perceptions vary by socio-demographic categories, it was still perceived that typical engineers and engineering works to be more masculine. In Filipino culture, technical works like engineering and construction, it is perceived as a “man’s job” as it involves physical efforts. Filipinos’ values chivalry and such jobs like construction works, engineering, driving, machine operation and other jobs that involves physical strengths are socially perceived as men’s job. It also reflects on the domestic culture of Filipinos as lifting heavy things, house repairs and other works involving physical efforts were usually done by men of the household. On the other hand, women are leaning towards jobs that are perceived as less physically strenuous like administrative and clerical works, accounting and commerce and nurturing jobs like teaching, nursing and other professions that involves care. This also reflects on the domestic culture of Filipinos as nurturing jobs are typically done by the women of the household such as child and elderly care, cooking, cleaning and other more.

While socio-cultural standards do reflect in the statistics of employees in Tarlac 2nd, in an interview with one of the female respondents, while technical jobs like engineering are typically seen as a man job, pursuing such profession gave them a challenge and gives them a desire to break social boundaries to prove that women can also do such jobs. While there is still an evident difference on the population of female and male employees on the District Engineering Office especially in the technical positions, the respondent said that they have not experience discrimination on the opportunities present in the department.

1.2. Age

Table 2 shows the percentage and rank of the age bracket of all respondents of the research. It shows that majority of them which equates to 43% or 43 employees are from the age range of 30 to 29 years old whereas respondents aging from 20 to 29 years old came second with 32% or 32 respondents in total. Moreover, it is followed by eighteen respondents from the age bracket of 40 to 49 years old with a total percentage of 18% in third place. Fourth rank belong to those respondents from the retiring age of 60 to 65 years with 4% or 4 respondents in total. Lastly, ranking fifth belong to those respondents coming from the age bracket of 50 to 59 years old in 3% or 3 respondents. It should be noted that the maximum age in serving a government agency like DPWH is limited until the age of sixty-five.

Table 2
Age

Age	f	%	R
20 to 29 years old	32	32%	2
30 to 39 years old	43	43%	1
40 to 49 years old	18	18%	3
50 to 59 years old	3	3%	5
60 to 65 years old	4	4%	4
Total	100	100%	

Age can be a variable in the awareness in the implementation of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 also known as Safe Spaces Act of 2019 to the employees of DPWH Tarlac 2nd DEO or in the country in general. Younger people can be more flexible and receptive of social changes as modernization and technological advancement emerge in the society. Information disseminations are easier and younger people tend to have wider resource of information through social media, social relationships, and media aides. With open resource of information, younger people tend to develop and to capture liberal perspective with their rights, beliefs, and stand. While older people, especially in Filipino culture, do tend to stick on their beliefs and practices. As advocating for awareness for things that was once being silence in their time, older people are less receptive in social changes and advocacies compare for those who are younger. People from the younger age group are

observed to be “woke” or aware of and actively more attentive to important societal issues and concerns like gender discrimination, stereotypes, and injustices.

1.3. Civil Status

Upon the evaluation of the questionnaires, it was found out that the respondents belonged to two categories of marital status. Table 3 reveals the demographic profile of the male respondents in terms of their civil or marital status. Based on the result, majority of the respondents are single which are more than half of the participants of the study garnering 52% or 52 out of 100 respondents.

Table 3
Civil Status

Status	f	%	R
Single	52	52%	1
Married	48	48%	2
Total	100	100%	

Meanwhile, a thin line of variation where present as married individuals in the respondents were around 48% of the respondents who are legally married which equates to only 4% variation between the single and legally married individuals' participants. In an interview with a male respondent, it was revealed that on their perspective, men tend to be more ready to marry than women as there were not much change to happen to their lifestyle once they get married. Unlike with women, there are notable changes that can happen once they get married. First factor is the physical change brought by marriage and childbirth. A notion in the Filipino culture that marriage is the stepping stone of creating and building a family. Once marriage commence, it was expected that that childbearing will be the next step for married women. The women's physical and mental health would be subjected to series of change once this happens.

In China, staying unmarried and childless has been becoming a more common lifestyle choice for women. Chinese women, in the recent years, believes that they can still have a satisfying life without marriage and childbirth. There had been a decline in civil registry and there had been reports that average age for marriage and childbirth for Chinese women has been delayed by four years (Hu et al., 2024). A female respondent also noted that building a professional career can also be affected once marriage and childbearing happen. As it is expected that mothers will be the one to do childcare, one of the biggest sacrifices is to give up their jobs and careers.

1.4. Educational Attainment

Table 4 indicates that majority of the one hundred (one hundred) male and female respondents are compose of ninety-one (91) bachelor's degree holders equating to 91% of the respondents of the study and ranking first in the educational attainment. It is then followed by the four (4) have post graduate degrees holders, equivalent to 4 % and tying up with another four (4) high school graduates which both ranking second places holders. Lastly, ranking last is the lone respondent who holds a vocational education with one. % of the total number of respondents.

Table 4
Educational Attainment

Education	f	%	R
High school	4	4%	2.5
Vocational	1	1%	4
Bachelor	91	91%	1
Postgraduate	4	4%	2.5
Total	100		

As majority of the open positions in the budgetary positions and coterminous post requires qualifications like bachelor's degree, professional licenses, eligibilities, and trainings, employees, both male and female, are expected to hold at least a bachelor's degree to qualify to a certain position. As the engineer arm of the government, approximately 70% of the positions are engineering position and the minimum requirements to qualify is their professional license alone which leads to most of them not pursuing a post graduate education. While post graduate education can be an advantage in the evaluation of candidates for a vacant position, this usually gives bearing for those who are going after higher posts or the managerial and supervisory positions. With thirty-nine (39) engineering positions in the district office, there are only five (5) supervisory post, and the remaining thirty-four (34) engineering positions are of the same level which only

require their bachelor's degree and professional license as minimum qualification. This can be the reason post-graduate education are rarely pursued. The district offices of DPWH also require the service of COS employees as support for a more efficient operation of the agency. Most of the administrative and technical support of the district office are COS employees, with a total of 164 employees. The COS employees provide the technical and administrative support that the district office current needs. While there is no employee to employer relationship between the district office and the COS personnel, there are qualifications being complied when hiring them such as educational attainment.

1.5. Occupation/Position

The one hundred (one hundred) employees of DPWH Tarlac 2nd DEO who participated as respondents of the study came from different professions and backgrounds. Table 5 shows the occupation or position of all the respondents of the research. The First in rank are the licensed Engineer with a total of 40% which also equates to forty (40) respondents.

Table 5
Occupation/Position

Education	f	%	R
Engineer	40	40%	1
Administrative Officer	3	3%	6.5
Accountant	2	2%	8.5
Engineering Assistant	12	12%	4
Engineering Aide	1	1%	10.5
Administrative Assistant	15	15%	3
Administrative Aide	17	17%	2
Laboratory Technicians	4	4%	5
IT Personnel	3	2%	6.5
Electrician	1	1%	10.5
Laborer	2	2%	8.5
Total	100	100%	

These engineers are responsible in the planning, implementing, supervising, and maintaining all the implemented infrastructure projects of the district office. Followed by the Administrative Aides with a total of seventeen (17) or 17% of the respondents. The administrative aides are hired to give aide and support in the clerical works need by the district office. While their job consists of administrative and clerical works, they can be also assigned in other technical section as support for all their non-technical needs. Third in rank are the Administrative Assistants which has a total fifteen respondents, which also equates 15% of the total respondents of the study. Their duties consist of preparation of documents and reports, as well as to give assistance to Administrative Officers and other supervisors. They do administrative and clerical works as well and other tasks as need by their immediate supervisors.

Fourth most numbered respondents are the Engineering Assistants with twelve (12) respondents. These 12% are responsible in assisting the engineers in their technical works. Their service is technical in nature and are inclined with engineering works as well. Further, fifth were the four (4) Laboratory Technicians which were 4% of the respondents. They are responsible in performing laboratory works that determines the quality of the materials used in the implemented projects. They assure that all materials used are in accordance with the department's standards. The sixth in rank are the Administrative Officer with a total number of three (3) or 3% of the respondents. They are the supervisory positions of the units under HRAS and Finance Section. They manage all administrative and non-technical requirement and support that they could give to all the technical sections of the district office.

Three (3) IT personnel were in tie the Administrative Officers in the sixth position which also has the equivalent of 6% of the respondents. They are responsible to all information technology works of the district office. They manage immediate repairs of internet connection, trouble shooting of software and application problems as well as maintaining IT equipment used by all personnel in the office. The two (2) Accountants and two (2) Laborers both placed eighth in the ranking with 2% each. The accountants are responsible to the financial and accounting works of all projects, contracts, expenses, and purchases. They also ensure that all costs and expenses are balanced and reflected on each project and all appropriations are spent accordingly. On the other hand, the laborers are the working hands in the maintenance of all road networks, infrastructure and even the office premises of the district office. Lastly, both the Engineering Aide and Electrician rank last with one (1) respondent respectively which equates to 1% of the respondents. The engineering aide's duty is

to give technical aide in the engineering works and the Electrician is responsible in maintaining the electrical works of the office premises as well as giving immediate aide to electrical problems in the office.

2. Level of Awareness on the Implementation of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019

This portion of the study evaluated and described the level of awareness of DPWH Tarlac 2nd DEO employees in the implementation of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 in terms of gender-based sexual harassment in streets and public spaces, online and in the workplace settings. The respondents rated each statement in the questionnaire based on their level of awareness.

Table 6 presents the awareness of the respondents with Republic Act No. 11313 also known as the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 or the *Bawal ang Bastos Law* of the Philippines. This part evaluated the knowledge of the respondents with the general provisions, its purpose, implementation, penalties, and history which gave light on what is the law all about and what are its objectives and goals as it is enacted in the country.

The initial provision of the first statement was the law protects people against harassment which then resulted to a mean score of 4.08 and adjectival rating of "Aware." This suggests that the respondents exhibits awareness and knowledge regarding the Safe Spaces Act and its initiative to value dignity of all persons and men and women's right for equality, their security and their safety both in private and on public spaces, on the streets, in virtual worlds or online, in workplaces settings as well as in educational and training institutions.

Table 6
Evaluation on the Awareness of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019

Statement	Mean	Adjectival Description
The Safe Spaces Act protects men and women against harassment.	4.08	Aware
Our Office implements the Safe Spaces Act.	3.71	Aware
There are penalties included in the Safe Spaces Act.	3.65	Aware
Our Office has a policy on Gender Based Sexual Harassment based on the IRR of the Safe Spaces Act	3.60	Aware
The Safe Spaces Act supports the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act.	3.70	Aware
I am familiar with the Safe Spaces Act	3.42	Neither Aware nor Not Aware
The Safe Spaces Act was signed during the Duterte Administration.	3.11	Neither Aware nor Not Aware
Our Office will be penalized if the Safe Spaces Act is not implemented.	3.36	Neither Aware nor Not Aware
Grand Mean	3.58	Aware

The awareness on Safe Space Function as protection to both men and women against harassment is crucial as it ensures that not only does this law protects the rights, dignity, and vulnerability of women but the rights, dignity, and vulnerability of men as well. According to Jimenez (2022), societal perceptions perpetuates the common assumption that women are the only victims of harassments and violences and men are the main perpetrators of such which leads to constraining the ability of men to take up the position of being the victims that hinders their right to seek help.

While the Anti-sexual Harassment Law of 1995 was for acts of unlawful sexual harassment and violence against people in employment, education and training environment, the social stigma persisted, and the law was used for cases protecting women. Societal standards also led too little to none reporting of sexual harassment in men due to the notion of lessening masculinity once men reported that they become victims of such harassments. But with changing time and social norms, many reforms and movements advocated for gender equality and gender rights. It is known that women had experienced various kinds of discrimination and stereotypes. This led to the development of specialized laws that aimed to protect woman's rights and to protect them against discrimination. But sexual harassment does happen to men and boys as well. Just like women, being sexually harassed or abused may have the same effects and reactions to men just like any women survivors.

In India, one out of thirty-eight males have experienced of completed or attempted rape during his lifetime and 75% of these cases concurred even before they turn 18 years old. About 20.4% of men in India were affected by sexual violence which led to calls of gender-neutral laws and eradication of gender-based laws in India (Bhardwaj & Shivnath Agrawal, 2022). This shows that both men and women need protection for sexual harassment and awareness on their rights is especially important.

Following with the statement in regards with the awareness of the employees in the implementation of the law on the office which received a mean rating of 3.71 with an adjectival equivalent of “Aware.” This level of awareness gives the impression that employees of DPWH Tarlac 2nd DEO have knowledge in terms of the general implementation of the law in the Office or Agency. This shows that employees of the district office have knowledge that the institution recognizes the law and are adhering and abiding the policies and implementing rules of the Republic Act.

According to the Administrative Officer of the district office, while there are no reported or existing complaints in record with regards to gender-based sexual harassment and/or violences from the employees, it is crucial for the office to implement such policies like the Safe Spaces Act. These policies give reassurance to all employees that their rights, no matter what gender, are valued and protected within the premises of the institution. The mean rating of 3.71 is almost borderline in the level of awareness. This gives impression that although majority of the respondents are aware of the law, there is still a considerable number of employees that might not be knowledgeable about the law’s implementation, especially in the workplace. This observation shows that there is still a need to improve the awareness on the Safe Spaces Act in DPWH Tarlac 2nd District Engineering Office.

The third statement focuses on the awareness of employees with the penalties provided in the Safe Spaces Act equated to a mean rating of 3.65 with an adjectival rating of “Aware.” This moderate level of awareness suggests that the employees are aware of sanctions and penalties of the law. Each article included RA 11313 also known as Safe Spaces Act of 2019 provided and specified different penalties with regards to all kinds of violation of the law in different venues or spaces. This enables an easy identification of the gravity of a violation done to victims of such acts and crimes. It also enables victims to easily describe, clarify and report the crimes and violations done to them. This also suggest that respondents are aware that if complaints are filed and proven to be true, there are certain penalties and sanctions as consequence for the action done against them. However, with the mean rating of 3.65, it signifies that many are still not very much versed to the law. This could mean that not all employees are aware of the gravity of the violations of this law and that they are not in tuned with the provisions stated in RA 11313. The lack of awareness of employees in the given provisions and clauses of the law may lead to victimization and lack of ability to speak up once they become a victim of such crimes. Further, the lack of awareness on the penalties might undermine the weight of the unwanted acts towards a person. Victims might think that feeling uncomfortable and unsafe with a single touch of a shoulder does not really violate any law and they should not speak about or complaint about it. Unawareness of the penalties might lead to invalidating and neglecting the discomfort of the victims of harassment and assault.

The fourth statement talked about the awareness of the respondents with the policy of the office on gender-based sexual harassment based on the implementing rules and regulation (IRR) of the Safe Spaces Act 2019 which received a mean rate of 3.6 equating to the adjectival rating of “Aware”. DPWH, as a government agency adheres to the policies implemented by the institution that provided separate set of policies, rules, and regulations while still adhering to the laws of the land namely, Civil Service Commission or the CSC. Through a memorandum published by CSC revising the administrative disciplinary rules implementing regulations on sexual harassment cases as through MC No. 21 series of 2021 as amendment to the sexual harassment provisions in the established 2017 Revised Rules on Administrative Cases in the Civil Service (RACCS), RA 11313 or the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 was duly incorporated to the policies being implemented by all government agencies. All government institution adapts and implements RACCS for all administrative complaints for all civil servants in the Philippines. This result exhibits that employees are aware on the sexual harassment policies of the government agencies which were adapted from the law. The mean score of 3.6 suggest that respondents are informed and aware of the policies implemented in the agency however, there is still a need to address a gap in terms of the awareness of the provisions and clauses of RA 11313 as it still reflected a borderline score. There might still be a need to inform and orient civil servants with regards to the implementation and incorporation of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 in RACCS. This could amplify the level of awareness of the workers of government institutions such as DPWH as there are specific provisions for the gender-based sexual harassment in a setting such as workplaces.

Following with the fifth statement discussed whether respondents are aware that the Safe Spaces Act nods and supports the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995 was given a mean rating of 3.70 with adjectival description of “Aware”. This shows that employees of DPWH Tarlac 2nd DEO are aware of the implementation of the Safe Spaces Act supplants the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995. This law is a law that declares sexual harassment as unlawful in the employment, in educational institutions and training environment. The Section 2 of the Act defines workplaces, educational or training-related sexual harassment as an act committed by an employers, an employees, a managers, a supervisors, an agents of employers, of

teachers, of instructors, of professors, coaches, trainers, or any other person who has authority, influence, moral ascendancy over other people in the settings of workplaces, educational institutions or training environment demanded, requested or required sexual favors from the others is accepted by the object of the Act. This law is delimited on the settings mentioned and are also delimited with the conditions such as level of authority or moral ascendancy. It was noted that there is a long gap with the implementation of RA 11313 with RA 7877 and Anti-Sexual Harassment Law had been there long enough for employees, whether private or public, to be aware of it. The similarities and the improvement of provisions of RA 11313 are very evident which might lead to a certain awareness of employees in terms of RA 11313's support to the anti-sexual harassment law. However, even with this result, exhibited by the respondents, it is important to note that there is still a need to address the gap on the general knowledge of the employees with RA 11313. The newly enacted law was written and enacted as law to give more inclusive, well-defined provisions for the people's rights, responsibilities and liabilities of the victims, perpetrators, employers, institution and general public in terms of sexual harassment crimes and violation which are not limited in employment, education or training environment but in different settings as well namely, the streets, public places, and online world.

The sixth statement discussed the familiarity and awareness of the employees with the provisions of Safe Spaces Act of 2019 and it was given a mean rating of 3.42 with an adjectival equivalent to "neither aware nor not aware". This neutral rating gives impression there is awareness with regards to the law, however, there might still be factors or shortcomings in terms of dissemination of information in amplifying the awareness of the public and its citizens with Safe Space Act of 2019. One of the potential problems observed on the study is there is a lack of information dissemination of the law as suggested by the neutral rating. According to an interview with the one of the respondents, there had been a sense of familiarity with the law as there was a seminar and orientation of RA 11313 in the office as part of the celebration of Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) Awareness. However as said activity was limited and intended for the female population of the office, the male employees did not have the chance to participate on the said event. The information was only disseminated and transmitted through secondhand information. This indicates that there is still a need to reorient employees, more so to the male population, regarding Safe Spaces Act of 2019 to further understand its provisions and clauses. This might also help raise awareness among the male population, that they are also entitled to exercise their rights using the law as it is formulated to be gender inclusive. The awareness on Safe Spaces Act of 2019 is crucial in ensuring that employees and even the public are equipped with the knowledge of their rights, responsibilities, and liabilities in the case of encountering or initiating sexual harassment. The awareness on this law also gives assurance that employees and the public are well informed of the possible consequences and penalties for such acts and crimes.

The seventh statement gauges the awareness of the employees that Safe Space Act of 2019 was established as law during the Duterte Administration. It was given a mean rating of 3.11, classifying as "neither aware nor not aware." As rated with a neutral score, it reflects that employees might have some knowledge regarding the timeline of the enactment of the law, however, it also indicates that there had been limitation on the information dissemination of such details. As observed, there was a lack of media, social, print and online, presence of the said Act. While the enactment of a gender-neutral law that aims to equally protect the rights of men and women in terms of sexual harassment became a testament that the government is aiming for a more inclusive law, there is still a significant number of respondents or employees who are not aware of the history of the law. It is also noted that there were no programs that introduced the new law which might have cause the uncertainty in the awareness of the law being implemented during the Duterte Administration.

The final statement is in regards with the awareness of employees on the penalization of the institution if it is not implemented. This was given a mean rating of 3.36, with an adjectival meaning of "neither aware nor not aware." This gave the impression that the general population might not be aware of such clause of the law. It also reflects that there is still room for improvement for the information dissemination of such detail of laws. This uncertainty further solidifies the need of orientation of the law, not only with employees of government agencies, but with the public as well. This could result to a better level of awareness of every provision of the law which will lead to the proper utilization of the law in different settings. The awareness in the implementation of the enacted Republic Act will be beneficial especially for those who need protection from all kinds of GBV and all its forms.

Overall, all respondents of this research exhibit awareness on the general and basic provisions and clauses of RA 11313 or Safe Spaces Act of 2019. The result gave of grand mean of 3.58, classified as "aware" on its adjectival description which expresses that the respondents are aware of the policy that aims to value the dignity of every human of any gender identity in the Philippines and to guarantee full respect for human rights of all people. Further, this also signifies that employees of DPWH Tarlac 2nd DEO recognizes the vision,

objectives and goals of the law that both men and women must have and should be able to exercise equality, to feel a sense of security, and be secured not only in private, but on the streets, in public places, in online platforms, workplace settings, and educational institutions and training institutions. However, this also show that there is still a need to heighten the awareness in the implementation of the function as there is still a considerable number that reflects a lack of awareness of the law. Acts of sexual harassment have high chances to be put to halt and not only serve as an instrument to dissuade sexual harassers in committing the crimes (Gonzales & Gonzales, 2023), as sexual harassment could only create dangerous and hostile environment. Awareness on policies regarding sexual harassment in different contexts and situations is crucial as it can potentially pose a significant threat to mental and psychological health of a person. It was revealed that sexual harassments can potentially cause severe psychological impact across various settings such as venues including workplaces, education institutions, intimate relationships and in streets and other public place with negative consequences like fear, anxiety, shame, and confidence erosion (Sharma et al., 2024). Awareness on legal frameworks for sexual harassment may lead into fostering a culture of giving respect, equality and inclusivity that can enhance survivors and victim's well-being and create a supportive environment for all.

2.1. Awareness of the Safe Space Act along with Gender-Based Streets and Public Spaces

Sexual harassment in public spaces has received considerable attention in both developing and developed countries. Sexual harassment on streets is defined as an improper and unlawful behavior that has sexual dimensions and intonations that happens in public streets, parks, marketplaces, transportation, and other public spaces are kind of GBV in streets and public spaces (Ceccato & Nalla, 2020). These acts happen day to day in public spaces and is directed mostly to women walking in the streets, and even just using public spaces. These types of sexual harassment are sometimes passed as part of the norms of street culture even though it imposes harm and discomfort for receivers.

Table 7 presents the awareness of the employees of DPWH Tarlac 2nd DEO on Safe Spaces Act of 2019 along with streets and public spaces sexual harassment which also pertains to clauses, particularly on Article 1, through Section 4 to Section 10 of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019.

Table 7

Evaluation on Awareness of the Safe Space Act along with Gender-Based Streets and Public Spaces Sexual Harassment

Statement	Mean	Adjectival Description
Examples of inappropriate behavior including catcalling, wolf-whistling, unwanted invitations, and the use of misogynistic, transphobic, homophobic, and sexist slurs	4.18	Aware
Persistent telling of sexual jokes, use of sexual names; and stalking	4.13	Aware
Any advances, whether verbal or physical, that are unwanted and have threatened one's sense of personal space and physical safety. This may include cursing, leering and intrusive gazing, and taunting	4.10	Aware
Continuously making uninvited comments or gestures about someone's appearance	3.98	Aware
Continuously and persistently asking for personal information	3.98	Aware
Making explicit sexual comments and suggestions	4.08	Aware
Public masturbation or flashing of private parts, groping, making offensive body gestures at someone, and other similar lewd sexual actions	4.33	Aware
Grand Mean	4.11	Aware

The first statement, tackling the examples of inappropriate behaviors including acts of catcalling, wolf-whistling in streets and public places, of unwanted and persistent invitations, and the usage of misogynistic remarks, transphobic slurs, of homophobic words, and of sexist retorts. These acts were once been socially tolerated and deemed almost normal, especially in the streets. Some perpetrators of these acts gaslights the receivers by saying they such acts are compliments to their appearance and appeal that they possess. However, in the recent years, misogyny, transphobia, homophobia, and sexist acts are becoming increasingly blatantly frowned upon. Misogyny is a form of hatred, prejudice and contempt against women or girls. Many cultures around the world values masculinity as a more dominant and important variable in their society. To this day,

misogyny has been replaced by words such as patriarchy, oppression, sexism, and gender-based violence (Walker, 2024).

The unwarranted hate for the women population had led to many gender-based crimes that left physical and psychological burdens to its victims. Transphobia and homophobia shares similarities but has a very notable difference as well. Homophobia is a culturally orchestrated fear of or prejudice against homosexuality that can lead to bullying and violence against gay individuals while transphobia is defined as a form of rejection of transexual or transgender identity as the refusal to accept that it real and is valid. Both are acts of hatred towards a “non-biological” identity created by society. Even with a more acceptable and inclusive society, sexism are very much present nowadays. Sexism is a discrimination and prejudice against people, particularly women and sexist slurs are gendered words meant to insult or disparage remarks or innuendo specifically towards one gender.

This type of prejudices resulted to different inappropriate behaviors including catcalling, wolf-whistling, unwanted invitations directed towards anyone, especially in the streets. Being shouted at or receiving comments that are sexual in nature, also known as being catcalled, wolf-whistling, unwanted invitations are very much present in the streets. At some point experiencing these acts were being normalized and ignore to avoid provocation of a more severe crime. The respondents of the study to this state and gave a mean rating of 4.18 equating to the adjectival description of “Aware.” This gives impression that employees as the respondents of the study, are aware of the various kinds of sexual harassment committed on streets and public spaces. Moreover, this data presents that they are aware of different harassments, violations and crimes committed on men, women, and LGBT community.

The awareness demonstrated on the different behaviors classified as gender-based sexual harassment is crucial as it is important to identify such acts as crimes. According to Arndt (2018), 87% of American women have experienced being harassed by a male stranger between ages 18 to 64 years old and over 50% has experienced extreme form of harassment that included being touched, being grabbed, being rubbed, been brushed or been followed on streets and public places. Moreover, 25% of men with a higher percentage of LGBT-identified men have experienced being harassed on streets with homophobic or transphobic slurs. It is becoming a societal norm to be catcalled, to received unwarranted invitations, to be wolf-whistled and to be called different slurs on the streets and public spaces. It is important that these supposed to be “harmless” acts for perpetrators be cleared that it is a form of violation and crime and could cause adverse effects on the receivers or victims.

The second statement pertains to the persistent telling of sexual jokes, usage of sexual names and unwanted stalking. For other people, sexually intonated jokes and names are perceived to be harmless as it is meant to be humorous. Sexist humor are messages conveyed to other people through the usage of verbal or facial expressions and body languages masked as jokes and humor. These jokes had intentions to deceive, humiliate, insult, stereotyped and group other individuals based on their gender as subjects of the harassment. Sexist jokes and humor is humiliating which could result in harassment and demeaning of other people. In a simpler context, sexist language unequally represents people. It looks down in other members of sex groups being inferior in humanity and the others are superior to the others which equate to believing that other sex groups has fewer rights than the members. Sexist language exudes stereotypes about people which tend to be harmful for both but more for women (Aprianti & Ginting, 2022).

This phenomenon does not only affect women but men as well. Perpetrators might intend to strengthen their closeness with the victims by messages or comments, but there is still tendency that they are unaware or does not care about the feelings of the victims. Persistent telling of sexual jokes and sexual name can create an uncomfortable feeling and environment. These unwanted acts tend to have psychological effects on the receivers. Meanwhile, stalking is defined as a pattern of repeated actions such as unwanted attention, incessant contacts, continuous harassments, and any other actions directed to a specific person that could result into feeling of fear, unsafe and followed. While stalking is more frowned upon, all these acts cause mental and psychological effects such as traumas and anxiety which can affect one’s daily life. Garnering a mean rating of 4.13, classifying as “Aware” on its adjectival description, the statement presents that respondents are aware that persistent telling of sexual jokes towards a person, usage of sexual names and unwanted and persistent stalking are forms of sexual harassment in streets and public spaces punishable by law under the provisions of RA 11313 also known as the Safe Spaces Act of 2019. This exhibits the ability to distinguish and classify harmless jokes into discomforting statements thrown at them on streets and other public spaces. However, a clear definition and classification of the street sexual harassment acts might still be a need for further understanding of the law is amongst the participants and the public. A few female respondents said that catcalling and wolf-whistling are prevalent in the streets, and it is present anytime of the day. They reported such acts can create fears, unsafetiness and anxieties while walking on the street especially when they were

alone or when there is no men accompanying them. Even if they are accompanied, there is still a feeling of fear as it might create trouble between the perpetrators and their companion.

The third statement which were about any verbal abuses or physical advances which were unwanted are threatening one person's sense of personal space and physical safety including cursing, leering, intrusive gazing, and taunting projected a mean rating of 4.10 with an "Aware" adjectival equivalent. Cursing, also known as swearing or cussing is an act that involves offensive words for the purpose of expressing anger, strong emotions, as well as disrespect or negativity. In social context it is considered as impolite and inappropriate and in some religious groups, cursing is deemed to be a sin. A person spurring out curse words might not intend to mean harm or do it for the purpose of expressing oneself, but it can be easily misinterpreted by its receivers or victims. In another context, Los Angeles, California Law recognizes leering and intrusive gazing as a form of sexual harassment. While not all stares are meant to be sexual, some people do intend it to be one. Leering is a sly, lascivious look or glance that suggest malicious intent or sexual interest in a persistent and unwelcome manner which constitutes as a form of harassment. Even with no physical contact, this act can still impose as a threat to someone's sense of personal space and their well-being's physical safety.

Furthermore, result shows that respondents are aware that threat to invasion of personal space, whether through verbal or physical approach, can now be classified as a kind of sexual harassment occurring on streets and public spaces. This kind of awareness is crucial in ensuring that all forms of discomfort by feeling that their personal space is being invaded and unsafe can be a grounds in violating the Safe Spaces Act for all kinds of genders. Being aware and knowledgeable regarding this matter could lead to more people exercising their rights and will lessen the dismissal or categorizing such acts as insignificant. Although no physical contact might be present in such acts, being aware of the provisions and clauses of the law pertaining to such crimes could lessen or even halt the undermining of feeling discomfort brought by this persistent unwanted act.

The fourth statement discussed the continuous making uninvited comments or gestures about someone's appearance received a mean rating of 3.98, classifying as "aware" in the adjectival description. This gives impression that the respondents are aware that persistent commenting or making gesture towards a person's appearance especially when uninvited or unwarranted is a type of sexual harassment happening on streets and public spaces. It is crucial that the public are aware of such acts that can be socially categorized as "normal." Continuous making uninvited comments or gestures about someone's appearance are considered now as a form of sexual harassment. Although sometimes, these acts do not have sexual undertones or intensions, it is still a form of sexual harassment being recognized in RA 11313. As observed in the Filipino culture, uninvited comments, or gestures about someone's appearance are acts often done my older people.

While these acts are often made and passed as "observations" from the elderly, it tends to create discomfort to the receivers and has lasting effects of erosion of confidence. Receivers and victims, especially if received from older people cannot resist or speak up about it as "talking back" to elders are frown-up and is a sign of disrespect to elders in the Filipino Culture. They are kept mum and uninvited comments or gestures about someone's appearance are forced to be part of a cultural norm in the Philippines. This act led to escalation of this function as a form of joke and deemed as not a kind of harassment towards other people. Safe Spaces Act of 2019 gave specific and clear identities on acts that has been classified as a sexual harassment which are quite different to the types of sexual harassment identified by the society and law before the implementation of RA 11313 in 2019. Awareness on the provisions and clauses of the law in terms of sex street and public spaces sexual harassment may encourage the voices of the victims and survivors of such criminal acts to exercise their right and utilize the enacted law to eradicate uninvited comments or gestures about someone's appearance.

The fifth statement garnered a mean score of 3.98 with an adjectival rating of "Aware" pertains to the awareness of respondents of continuously and persistently asking of personal and confidential information as form of sexual harassment that could occur on streets and public spaces. Anybody, regardless of their age, status, and gender have the right to keep their personal information private. One of the laws of the land aims to protect fundamental and essential human right of privacy is the Republic Act No. 10173 also known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012. It aims to gives protection for individuals whose information are used without consent or knowledge. However, Safe Spaces Act of 2019 aims to protect individuals who experience persistent harassment of asking for personal information. This gives impression that majority of the respondents are aware that persistent and continuous asking of personal and confidential information is a form of violation of their rights and is classified as sexual harassment on streets and public spaces. This suggests that the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 became an essential weapon for persons who are feeling violated in some form but cannot voice out as sexual harassment was defined strictly on the box of sexual acts and advances perpetrated by superiors in accordance with the Ab-Sexual Harassment Law of 1995. Moreover, Safe Spaces

Act gave more definitions and specified various kinds of violations that can be considered as a kind of gender-based sexual harassment could initiate and prompt the public to know and be aware of their rights.

The awareness on the statement of making explicit sexual comments and suggestions as a gender-based sexual harassment earned a mean rating of 4.08 with an adjectival equivalent of "Aware." Explicit sexual comments and suggestions are defined as the acts that use demeaning jokes, sexual slurs, explicit sexual graphics whether delivered verbally or in writing. These unwanted acts often create hostile, unsafe and uncomfortable environment for the receivers or victims. These inappropriate acts clearly intend to cause malicious intention or harm at some point. This suggest that respondents are aware that making explicit sexual comments and suggestions is classified as sexual harassment. Respondents have encountered some incidents, are aware and informed that any statement given or suggested to them that goes beyond their comfort zone is a form and type of sexual harassment or violence. Respondents are able identify and classify statements that are essentially harmless or harmful to state of mind, personal space and comfort.

Lastly, the awareness on public masturbation or displaying and flashing of private parts, of groping, of making offensive and malicious body gestures at someone, and other similarly lewd and unwarranted sexual offenses as forms of sexual harassment happening on streets and public places is given a mean rate of 4.33 which is classified as "aware" in the adjectival description. These are acts more commonly witnessed in public settings such as parks, transportations, and other common spaces.

In the Philippines, public masturbation or displaying and flashing of private parts are often done by mentally unstable individual cruising the streets and public places. While groping and making offensive body gestures are frequently being experienced in public transportation like jeepneys, trains and buses that are more likely to be overcrowded. One respondent stated that they witness public masturbation in a public utility vehicle. It was reported to cause panic, fear, and commotion among female passengers. This exhibits that witnessing such acts can negatively affect those who get to see those situations which only proves that being aware of the provisions and clauses of Safe Spaces Act of 2019 is crucial for such situations like this.

Moreover, the results indicated that the respondents has awareness on the lewd acts done in public as a form of violation of the law. This acts, typically experience in public transportation and both open space and closed-door public spaces, are often done by persons with mental disability on streets. But on cases that are done intentionally towards a particular person, respondents shown awareness that these acts are punishable and can be escalated to a legal complain through the law as particularly stated in Article I, Section 4, or the gender-based sexual harassment on streets and public spaces.

Overall, having a grand mean rating of 4.11 which has an adjectival equivalent of "aware" shows that majority of the respondents of the study are aware of the provisions stated in the section of gender-based sexual harassment on streets and public spaces. In 2018, it was established that there is no specific Philippine law on street harassment. Some laws can cover certain incidents of street harassment which are inadequate as it fails to consider street sexual harassment as a form of violence (Ancheta 2018). Some laws covers such acts, but some are only for when experienced by women in society. Specialized laws such as the Anti-Sexual Harassment Law and Anti-VAWC Act of 2004 were evaluated to place certain conditions and qualifications which were not found in the commission of street harassment.

This includes the necessity of a relationship between the offender and offended and the existence of a controlled environment. These were the gaps that the newly enacted law addressed specifically about streets and public spaces sexual harassments. The law gave a wider coverage and eliminated such limitations like genders, relationships, and different acts of uninvited or unwanted acts. The awareness of the employees of DPWH Tarlac 2nd DEO is crucial and essential not only for its women employees but with all genders as many positions are requiring employees to be exposed on public places for site inspections and project implementations. Employees are constantly exposed and deployed in streets and public places, and it is crucial that each employee are aware of their rights to the law, responsibilities as citizens and liabilities as a human in streets and public places especially in situations that might exposed them in sexual violence or harassments.

2.2. Awareness of the Safe Space Act along with Online Sexual Harassment

The rapid development of technology is indeed a double-edged sword that carries both positive and negative impacts on our lives. The unwanted sexual behavior can be defined as a form of sexual harassment and social media interactions with other people's behaviors can include online sexual harassment. One of the easiest ways for perpetrators to meet people and plunged them into sexual harassment and other crimes is through the internet. It can form through speech, writings, searches, symbols, and semantic movements (Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya, n.d.).

Table 8 presents the awareness of the employees of DPWH Tarlac 2nd DEO on Safe Spaces Act of 2019 along with gender-based online sexual harassment in or virtual world which also pertains to Article II, Section 12 to Section 14 of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019.

Starting with the first statement that were evaluated discussed threats, unwanted sexually intonated remarks, and discriminatory and offensive comments online, including misogyny, transphobia, homophobia, and sexism, whether posted publicly and openly or conveyed through direct and private messages, can have physical, psychological, mental, as well as emotional impacts was rated with 4.11 mean rating and classified as “aware” on the adjectival description.

This gives the impression that respondents are aware that gender-based sexual online harassment can potentially have adverse effects on the physical, psychological, mental, and emotional health of the offenders and offended. It is crucial that as people of this generation, all are users of interactive social technologies as means of communication not only on the personal level but on the professional level as well. While this advancement has significantly provided benefits, there had been drawback as well.

Table 8
Evaluation on Awareness of the Safe Space Act along with Gender-Based Online Sexual Harassment

Statement	Mean	Adjectival Description
Threats, like unwanted sexual remarks, and discriminatory comments online, that includes misogyny, transphobia, homophobia, and sexism, whether posted publicly or sent through direct, private messages, can have physical, psychological, and emotional impacts	4.11	Aware
Invading someone's privacy through cyberstalking and sending constant, unwanted messages	4.13	Aware
Filing of false abuse reports to online platforms to silence victims.	3.97	Aware
Posting or sharing media, such as photos, voice records, or videos with sexual content, without the victim's consent	4.14	Aware
Illegal recording and distributing any of the victim's photos, videos, or personal information online without permission	4.17	Aware
Impersonation of identities of victims online, or posting lies about victims to harm their reputation	4.04	Aware
Grand Mean	4.09	Aware

The dark side of web or internet is continuously expanding, and many are vulnerable and prone to many kinds of online harassment which can inflict significant emotional distress and, in other extreme cases, can inflict physical threat to safety as well (Vitak et al., 2017). Awareness on such cases can help mitigate negative effects such as emotional distress, psychological concerns, and even physical safety by being prepared and equipped with proper knowledge and knowing the avenues that could help resolved such problems. However, the moderate level of awareness suggest that there is still a need to improve and to further inform and orient the general masses regarding the provisions and clauses of Safe Spaces Act of 2019 to RA 11313 particularly in terms of online sexual harassment. Virtual offenses might not inflict physical harm, but it has the power to create a much more complicated effect on the mental and psychological health of the victims. As the online world was endless, it is essential that the public are aware of their rights, limitations, responsibilities, duties, and liabilities as every action has its corresponding consequence.

The second statement of invading someone's privacy through cyberstalking and sending constant, unwanted messages was rated with a mean rating of 4.13 with the equivalent adjectival rating of “aware.” Cyberstalking is an act of repeated use of technology such as electronic communication channels to harass and frighten someone. This crime is done through constant use of social media, email, instant messages, and even online forums to harass or stalk their victims. The response of the employees regarding this statement gives the impression that respondents are aware and can identify cyberstalking and constant unwanted messages as a kind of online sexual harassment. A study presented cyberstalking which demonstrated lack of universal understanding of what constitutes an act of such crime, leading too little to no recognition of such acts (Stevens et al., 2021).

The awareness on the Article II, Section 12 to Section 14 of the law on Safe Spaces Act of 2019 that is particularly on provisions on gender-based online sexual violations and harassments is essential in terms of defining and identifying such acts like cyberstalking and sending constant, unwanted messages. It also shows

significant consideration for all genders as the law ensures to promote equality on all types of genders. As observed, there are respondents that belonged to older age groups. This can constitute as being less inclined on the entailment or implications of the online world. This could cause less awareness or lack of understanding of the crimes or offenses that can be done in the cyber web.

The third statement in the awareness in filing false abuse reports in online and virtual platforms intending to silence victims was given a mean score of 3.97, which is classified with an adjectival rate of “aware.” The method of filing falsified abuse reports to online and virtual platforms are starting to become a norm of getting “justice” and “validation” from the masses that use social media and online platforms. In a way, abusers, enablers, and perpetrators of online sexual and other kinds of harassments use this method to silence and harm the reputation of their victims. The awareness of respondents on this kind of victimization reflects on the extent of knowledge and information that they have in terms of their rights and responsibilities as citizen of the Philippines in terms of abiding and exercising their rights. The emphasis on Safe Spaces Act of 2019 to include and cover all kinds and types of abuse speaks its commitment to its goal in proving equality for all genders and citizens of the country.

The following provision on the awareness on posting or sharing media, such as photos, voice records, or videos with sexually intonated content, without consent generated a mean rating of 4.14, equating to an adjectival value of “aware.” This signifies that respondents are aware of the importance of consent especially in posting information, photos, videos, and recordings of other people and is punishable by law if violated. Social media and online platforms made it more convenient and easier in terms of information dissemination, communication, commerce and for other purposes, one of the down sides is that it can easily spread information, photos, videos, and recordings rapidly. Consent is important as it is a warrant that all information posted are allowed and permission is given at free will. The Safe Space Act guards the right to refuse and allowing of posting of identities, photos and videos and protects victims of unauthorized posting of information online. It is crucial to be aware of such provisions of law as social media consent allows individuals to give their informed and voluntary consent to use their photos, videos, images, and information on different online and social media platforms. As spread of pictures, videos and information on the internet are faster and this information can double over in span of seconds. Its impost no limit in the spread and has the tendency not to be controlled no matter how much people want to. A single click could spread photos or videos to millions of people in less than a second. The awareness on such consequences can help protect one’s privacy and provides legal protection that can help prevent crimes such as ruining reputations, identity theft and many more.

The fifth statement on the awareness on illegally recording and distributing any of the pictures, videos, or personal and confidential information online without permission received a mean rating of 4.17 with an equivalent adjectival rate of “aware.” This gives impression that the law successfully disseminated its goal of informing the public in terms of various kinds and forms of online sexual violence and harassment as stated on Article II, Section 12 to Section 14. It is crucial and noted that Safe Spaces Act of 2019 has identified different forms and kinds of sexual violence and harassment especial in different online platforms which has no concrete and identified law that protects victims and those who are offended which such crimes or offenses. The consequences of forced faming, or the act of non-consensual recording and distribution of one’s images, voice, on social media and online platforms can lead to creation of deepfake content which is emerging issue that needed to be address (Bosher, 2023). The Safe Spaces Act of 2019 successfully gave coverage on such acts that can prevent crimes and violations of perpetrators who uses these illegal documents and information to their personal advantages without the consent of the victims.

Lastly, the final statement that discussed impersonation of identification of victims online and virtually as well as posting fabricated lies about their victims to harm their reputation gathered a mean rating of 4.04 which equates to the adjectival rate of “aware.” This statement gave an impression of being an act with the most intent to cause harm to its victims which means that the public must be aware of this type of crime. With the garnered mean score, it reflects that the respondents are well informed and aware of this kind of violation which indicates a level of success of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 to give awareness on the different crimes particularly on online sexual harassment. Posing as someone else or being a “poser” are become increasingly evident in social media. As creation of accounts do not have much tighter and stricter policy, it is easier for “posers” to steal identity of another person. Posing as other people are observed to delude, deceived and fraud other people. This method is widely present in Filipino communities in social medias to commit crimes like extortion of money, information, and the likes. Although the response of the employees resulted positively, there is still gapped to fill in terms of awareness on crimes and offenses like impersonation of identities of victims online or posting fabricated lies about victims to harm its victims’ reputation.

Overall, this part of the survey reflects that respondents of the research are moderately aware of the provisions and clauses of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 relating with online sexual harassment with its grand mean of 4.09, classified as “aware”. While social media has its advantage there are also big problems attached to it. The unlimited extent of access globally makes all attempts of regulation seemed futile. Truthfully, with all the existing information, the government is unable to limit and impose restrictions on its usage which equates to the potential of empowering social media or online platforms as a forerunner to major disasters and crimes that cannot be stopped (Hero & Astini, 2023). Online crimes can be done anywhere in the world where our government has no authority with, and technological advancement make it seemed almost impossible to track and trace perpetrators of such acts. The only key to regulate or control such crimes is to impose and implement policies such as Safe Spaces Act of 2019 to alleviate acts that disrupts one’s physical, mental, and emotional health like online sexual harassment.

2.3. Awareness of the Safe Spaces Act along with Gender-based Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

Sexual harassment happening in a workplace setting is a complicated concept that involves more than inappropriate comments and sexual advances. It can also be a consensual relationship but displays an imbalance of power (Hudson & Llp, 2018). This gender-based crime is also one of the most common, wide-spread and most frequent to be seen type of crime that involves GBV as power is easily exploited and abused by those who are in power to take advantage for personal and sexual gain. The Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995, which were the support and essential basis of Safe Spaces Act of 2019, is highly focused on workplace sexual violences and harassments, and of educational and training institutions where power, moral ascendancy and hierarchy can be used and abused for personal interests and gains.

Table 9 presents the awareness of the employees of DPWH Tarlac 2nd DEO on Safe Spaces Act of 2019 along with gender-based sexual harassment occurring or might occur in the workplace setting which also particularly pertains to Article IV, specifically on Section 16 to Section 20 of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019.

Table 9

Evaluation on Awareness of the Safe Space Act along with Gender-Based Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

Statement	Mean	Adjectival Description
Unwelcome, offensive conducts of a sexual or gender-related in nature, whether verbal, physical, or through technology, is prohibited	4.03	Aware
Any unwelcome sexual advances, whether verbal, physical, and/or through technology, that harm an individual's employment or education are prohibited	4.05	Aware
Unwelcome conduct that is pervasive and creates an intimidating, hostile, or humiliating environment is prohibited	3.98	Aware
Generating, sending, receiving, storing electronic data messages and processing of documents and includes the computer system and technology or any other similar devices or gadgets by or in which were it was recorded and stored and any procedure relating to recording or storing of electronic data messages as well as electronic documents are prohibited.	3.93	Aware
The office disseminates and posts in conspicuous places a copy of this act to all persons in the workplace	3.71	Aware
The office provides measures to prevent gender-based sexual harassment in the workplace setting; like conduct of anti-sexual harassment orientations and seminars	3.87	Aware
The office created independent internal mechanisms or committees on decorum and investigation to investigate and address complaints against gender-based sexual harassment in workplaces	3.68	Aware
The office provides and disseminates, in consultation with all personnel in the workplace, a code of conduct and workplace policies that reiterates the prohibition of gender-based sexual harassment	3.68	Aware
The office takes steps to describe its procedures with internal mechanisms created under Section 17 (c) of the Act	3.68	Aware

The office had set administrative penalties for violators of the Safe Space Act	3.69	Aware
Grand Mean	3.83	Aware

The first statement in awareness on GBV happening in workplace setting that are unwelcome, offensive, and unlawful conduct of a sexual or gender-related nature, whether verbal, physical, or through technology, is prohibited was given a mean rating of 4.07 and classified as “aware on the adjectival scale. This awareness displays that valuable information is essential to all employees as such exploitation or acts are common in workplaces but are silenced due to fear of having effects on their jobs. Such crimes are not only conducted through verbal or physical acts but can be using technologies such as text messages and electronic mailing systems. Awareness on these provisions and clause could equip employees that each statement and action towards them, whether it is verbal, physical or through technological interface holds a gravity and can be an evidence of gender-based sexual harassment happening in the workplace setting. Anti-harassment machineries like trainings, policies, penalties for policy violations typically focus on the most physically and sexually violent. While it is deemed necessary it is still insufficient. There are other factors that seemed not considered like culture and climate that are noted as one of the most potent predictors of sexual harassment (Cortina & Areguin, 2024). With this, potential problems like this can be address and taken into consideration when improving policies in workplaces and institutions.

Following with the statement on the awareness in any unwelcome sexual advances, whether it is verbal, physical, or through the use of technology, that could harms an person’s employment are prohibited which is rated with a mean score of 4.05 with an equivalent of “aware” on the adjectival description which implies that respondents are aware such offensive acts that can happen in their workplace are part of the Safe Spaces Act that can punished by law especially if it have or could have been potentially a detrimental effect on their employment, job opportunities and work performance. This is in support to the provisions and clauses of Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995 that underscores moral ascendancy which are used as an advantage to exploit and demand sexual favors from their victims. The power dynamics in workplaces plays a key role as personnel with high ranks signifies power in the workplace. In an economy were maintaining and getting stable job opportunities is not very frequent, perpetrators of sexual harassment in workplaces use their ranks and positions as a gateway to abuse their powers for personal gain and exploit sexual favors from those who are significantly lower than them.

This power play is used to take advantage of employees and promises of professional advancement are given in return. When advances are declined, this moral ascendancy is used to extort and prevent promotions, privileges and other benefits hindering professional growth and fueling psychological and mental concerns such as anxiety, fear, stress, and depression. With that, there is a need and demand to increase further the awareness of employees in terms of unwelcome sexual advances, whether it is verbal, physical, or through usage of technology, that could potentially harm an individual's employment or education as awareness on such harassments and knowing human rights is crucial as it deflects situations of sexual harassment happening in workplaces.

Moreover, the next statement pertains on unwelcome conducts that are pervasive and inappropriate and could create an intimidating, hostile, and humiliating environment is prohibited exhibited a level of awareness with the mean rating of 3.98 or “aware” on the adjectival description. This also gives out an impression that majority of the employees are aware that such sexual harassment crimes and violations happening in workplace setting can be committed between peers and can also be in cases if a superior officer by their subordinates. However, there is notable and evident decline with the awareness on this statement compared with the others which exhibits the potential need to more workplace orientations on the law, its clauses and provisions of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019. Unwelcome conducts that are pervasive and can potentially create an intimidating, hostile, and humiliating environment and can cause different implications not only on the workers, employees and personnel of an institution or company. There are possibly many psychological implications that could lead in creating of an intimidating, hostile, or humiliating environment for employees of a particular workplace. This could cause a lot of stress, anxiety, depression, fear, and loss of motivation to excel in their work. While this could affect the institution as performance of employees might be affected with a less conducive environment where they no longer feel safe and secure. While results shows that employees of Tarlac 2nd DEO are aware on this provision of the law, there might still be a need to amplify and increase the awareness of their employees in terms of their rights against sexual harassment happening in workplaces.

Furthermore, employees exhibited a level of awareness on the prohibition of generating data, sending, receiving, storing of information through electronic data messages and processing of documents including the computer system or other same-natured devices and gadgets by in which are illegally recorded or stored and

any procedure related to recording or storing of electronic data messages or electronic documents as it garnered a mean score of 3.93 which equates a “aware” adjectival score. This gives the impression that the employees are aware on acts that might not directly done towards a person, but it also involves retaining and processing information intent or use for other purposes. This provisions also reflects gravity on the violation of the Data Privacy Act of 2012. With technological as well as social media advancement where it is easier to communicate through social media and other messaging applications, and storing of data is a lot easier due to larger storage capacity of electronic devices, people develop the habits of getting screenshot of messages which are normally harmless. However, there are people who use and abuse this convenience to their advantage and use this a material for black mailing and exploitation. While the respondents shows moderate awareness on this statement and provision, it might still be necessary to orient employees of their rights as well as their responsibility in conducting actions such as illegal recording or storing of electronic data messages or electronic documents.

Following with the awareness on the office dissemination and posting on conspicuous places a copy furnish of this law to all personnel and employees in the workplace setting also gained a mean rating of 3.71, classifying as “aware” on the adjectival description. Employees are essentially aware that DPWH Tarlac 2nd DEO disseminated the information and the act through Department Memorandum Circular No. 72 series of 2019 dated September 16, 2019 which was received by the key officials of the department such as its undersecretaries, the assistant secretaries, the service directors, the bureau of directors, the regional directors, Heads of UPMOs as well as Districts Engineers whom also disseminated the Act in their respective offices. As observed, there are no policy created within the agency pursuant to Republic Act no. 11313 also known as the Safe Spaces Act of 2019. The bylaws are mostly in compliance to the Civil Service Commission policies being implemented in all government offices. While respondents are aware of this provision as it there might be a need to formulate policies or memorandums that caters to policies pertaining to the provision and implementing policies, rules, and regulations of the Safe space Act of 2019.

Employees are also aware that the office provides preventive measures against sexual harassment happening in workplace settings such as spearheading anti-sexual harassment seminars and orientations as it received a mean score of 3.87. The office had recognized the need for and importance of protecting the rights of the employees and exercising their rights to have such polices and laws to protect their well-being and dignity. The office’s designated Gender and Development Focal person and office management of the District Office ensure that seminars and orientations on sexual harassment, crimes and violences, violence against women and children are delivered to give awareness especially to women human resources in the office. The office, spearheaded by District Engineer and the designated Gender and Development Focal person organized a seminar on RA 11313 also known as Safe Spaces Act of 2019 and more essential orientation in catering the safety of its female population as part of their VAWC Awareness. However, what caused a lower rating on the awareness of the employees of DPWH Tarlac 2nd as the seminar was limited to female employees only. This might be addressed by conducting and organizing orientations and seminars for both men and women employees as all of them are entitled to exercise their rights against sexual harassment, more so on situations happening in the workplace setting.

The statement regarding the office the creation and establishment of independent internal mechanisms or committees on decorum and investigation that would investigate and address complaints of sexual harassment against their coworkers was evaluated with a mean score of 3.68, classified as “aware” on the adjectival score board gives an impression that majority of its employees are moderately aware of the internal mechanism that investigates and address complaints of gender-based sexual violence and harassment committed or accused within the premise of workplace. The people of authority in the workplace has the jury duty to prevent, deter or punish the unwarranted acts of gender-based sexual harassment in the workplace. DPWH has established a special order creating a Committee on Decorum and Investigation (CODI) of Sexual Harassment Cases, however it is only established in the central office. There was no special orders or memorandum that directs district offices to create a district-level committee that could focus on cases on the district offices. The lack of committee on district level might be the effect of lower rate of awareness in Tarlac 2nd DEO.

The employees also displays awareness on the duty of the office in providing and disseminating, in consultation with all personnel and employees in the workplace, a code of conduct or workplace policy manual that establishes the prohibition and consideration as crime of sexual harassment happening in the workplace setting. With the mean rate of 3.68 with adjectival description of “aware,” the Personnel officers includes rules on the sexual harassment being a major offense during orientations of newly hired employees. Moreover, this is to ensure and remind incoming employees are aware on the gravity of such crimes and its consequences once committed. In an interview with a respondent, it was noted that during their orientation after getting

hired, the Personnel Officer discussed all policies and office etiquette. However, the mean rating displays a borderline score which indicates a lower rate of awareness. This might be enhanced by conducting yearly reorientation of employees on policies, rules, and regulations of the office. With this, there is a potential that their awareness might rise, and the human resource can be updated on new policies and updates on the current policies.

It was also evaluated that employees are aware on the office taking steps to describe the procedures and mechanics of the internal mechanism works as stated and created under Section 17 (c) of the Act, receiving a mean rating of 3.68 with an equivalent adjectival description of “aware”. This indicates that employees are aware that the office values the integrity policies that protects the rights to its employees by ensuring that such violations will be considered, and that necessary actions and punishments can be given to those who will violate it. Which lead to the creation the CODI in the central office. The CODI are adequately represented by the management, personnel from the supervisory level, ordinary people employees and the union members as mandated by the Section 17 C of RA 11313 known to be the Safe Spaces Act of 2019. DPWH CODI should always be headed by a woman as Chairperson. However, with a borderline level of awareness, it indicates that not all employees are aware of the establishment of the CODI Committee. Establishment of District level committee might familiarize employees with the committee and its purpose to be served. This would not only raise awareness, but it will also provide a closer to home protection in case of sexual harassment and violation happened in the workplace.

Finally, awareness on statement that the office had set administrative penalties for violators of the Safe Space Act garnered a mean rating of 3.69 which also translates as “aware” on the adjectival description of the scores. Following the CSC MC No. 11 series of 2021 that pertains to the revised Administrative Disciplinary Rules on Sexual Harassment Cases, being an amendment to the Sexual Harassment Provision provided in the 2017 Revised Rules on Administrative Cases in the Civil Service, the agency is mandated to abide the implementing policies, rules and regulation of the amendment as part of the rules set for the administrative cases in the civil service and government offices. As a government institution and by the virtue of its mandate, CSC is the organizational body that regulates the employment in government and government-owned institutions and ensures that civil servants are fit and able to provide their utmost service for the government. It also oversee the process of hiring, promoting, separating, and terminating of personnel as well as the governing body that promotes the values in line to a better and efficient public service. Moreover, being a national government agency, the DPWH abides and adheres to the established law, policies, regulations, and laws provided by the CSC its issuances of policies, particularly it rules on the administrative disciplinary rules on cases and situations that involves all government employees. However, due to higher population of Contract of Service (COS) employees, there is a gap on the awareness on the set administrative penalties for violators as such laws are only being implemented and adhered by the permanent and budgetary employees. COS employees exercise no-employee-employer-relationship between the agency and their employment, and the Civil Service Commission policies are only applicable to budgetary employees and coterminous engineers alone.

Overall, table 9 shows that the employees of DPWH Tarlac 2nd Deo are aware on the provisions and clauses of Safe Spaces Act of 2019 particularly on clauses and provisions for the workplaces sexual harassment in which are all indicated on Article IV, Section 16 to Section 20 with its accumulated grand mean of 3.83 which translates into “aware” in its adjectival rating. Sexual harassment in workplace is a pandemic that occurs every day, everywhere. Work environment inappropriate behavior do not just make an unreliable and threatening workplace, it also discourages the employees capacity to convey the best of their potential. The employees of DPWH Tarlac 2nd are aware that such crimes and acts are not harmless. They are aware that these are threats to their general well-being, including their financial and social well-being. However, there are many concerns and problems encountered that might need immediate addressing to create more conducive, safe, and secure environment for the employees of DPWH Tarlac 2nd District Engineering Office.

2.4 Overall Evaluation on Awareness of the Safe Space Act

Table 10 exhibits the overall evaluation on the awareness on the implementation of Safe Space Act among employees of DPWH 2nd District Engineering Office.

Table 10
Overall Evaluation on Awareness of the Safe Spaces Act

Indicators	Grand Mean	Adjectival Description
Street and Public Space Sexual Harassment	4.11	Aware
Online Sexual Harassment	4.09	Aware
Sexual Harassment in the Workplace	3.83	Aware
Overall Grand Mean	4.01	Aware

According to the overall analysis, the respondents exhibit awareness on the general and basic provisions of RA 11313 also known as the Safe Spaces Act of 2019. Overall, having a grand total mean of 4.11 with an adjectival equivalent of “aware” signifies that the respondents of this study are generally and moderately aware of the sexual harassment happening in streets and public spaces. In 2018, it was established that there is no specific Philippine law on street harassment. There were laws that can cover certain experiences and incidents of street violence and harassments which are inadequate as it fails to consider street sexual harassment as a gender related form of violence (Ancheta 2018). There are laws that covers such acts, but only when experienced by women. Specialized laws such as Anti-Sexual Harassment Act and Anti-VAWC law were evaluated to place certain conditions and qualifications which were not found in the commission of street harassment. This includes the necessity of a relationship between the offender and offended and the existence of a controlled environment. These are the gaps that Safe Spaces Act addressed specifically particularly on street and public spaces sexual harassments. The law gave a wider coverage and eliminated such limitations like genders, relationships, and different acts of uninvited or unwanted acts. The awareness of the employees of DPWH Tarlac 2nd DEO is crucial and essential not only for its women employees but with all genders as many positions are requiring employees to be exposed on public places for site inspections and project implementations. Employees are constantly exposed and deployed in sites, streets and public places and it is crucial and essential that each employee are aware of their rights, responsibilities, and liabilities in terms of sexual harassment happening in streets and public places especially in situations that might exposed them in sexual violence or harassments. Even in their personal and private time, each person is constantly exposed to any kinds of harassment and violence especially in streets and public spaces. Few female respondents shared during an interview that acts of catcalling, wolf whistling and name calling are common occurrences especially in places that frequented and had high volume of people going. Although these acts can easily be ignored, there are still weariness and uncomfortable feeling whenever these situations happen. Some of the female employees shared that it create fear and anxiety as well as feeling of being unsafe even during simple walks and errand running in streets and public spaces especially when they are alone. This shows that raising awareness is important and crucial as it could give protection especially to those frequenting streets and public places.

Moreover, the survey reflects that the employees are moderately aware on the provisions of RA 11313 also known as Safe Spaces Act of 2019 relating to gender- based online sexual harassment with its grand mean of 4.09, classified as “aware”. While social media has its advantage there are also big problems attached to it. The unlimited extent of access globally makes all attempts of regulation seemed futile. Truthfully, with all the existing information, the government is unable to limit and impose restrictions on its usage which equates to the potential of empowering social media or online platforms as a forerunner to major disasters and crimes that cannot be stopped (Hero & Astini, 2023). Online crimes can be done anywhere in the world where our government has no authority with, and technological advancement make it seemed almost impossible to track and trace perpetrators of such acts. Some acts are too complex to be detected and traced and attempts of convicting criminals and harassers are almost impossible. Even spreading of information is impossible to remove as it can easily spread in a snap of a second. The only key to regulate or control such crimes is to impose and implement policies such as Safe Spaces Act of 2019 to alleviate acts that disrupts one’s physical, mental, and emotional health like online sexual harassment.

Lastly, the table shows that the employees of DPWH Tarlac 2nd DEO are aware of the provisions of the law particularly on clauses and provisions for sexual harassment and violence happening in workplaces which are all indicated on Article IV, Section 16 to Section 20 with its accumulated grand mean of 3.83 which translates into “aware” in its adjectival rating. Sexual harassment and violence in workplaces is a pandemic that occurs every day, everywhere. There might be times that employees do not report such cases, but it do

happen behind the desks and cubicles of workplaces. A female respondent reported an occurrence where they had felt that a co-worker offended them. She shared that a touch and squeeze of shoulder felt too uncomfortable, and she felt unsafe in the presence of the other person. Having this happen, the female worker felt anxiety every time they are in the presence of each other. This situation has not been reported as the employee thought that there are no grounds on such case and that the situation might not be intentional. However, as fear and anxiety has developed, being left alone with the person or even in the presence of the other had been mentally taking toll on the female respondent. Work environment inappropriate behavior do not just make an unreliable and threatening workplace, but it also discourages the employees capacity to convey the best of their potential. The employees of DPWH Tarlac 2nd are aware that such crimes and acts are not harmless. They are aware that these are threats to their general well-being, including their financial and social well-being. However, there are many concerns and problems encountered that might need immediate addressing to create more conducive, safe, and secure environment for the employees of DPWH Tarlac 2nd District Engineering Office.

3. Problems encountered of employees of DPWH Tarlac 2nd DEO which affects awareness on the implementation of the Safe Space Act

DPWH – Tarlac 2nd District Engineering Office values the dignity, integrity, and general well-being of its human resources. One of its goals as a national government agency is to ensure that its facility and environment are free from hazards and toxicity that can be brought by offensive acts like sexual harassment.

Table 11
Problems Encountered by the Respondents

Problems encountered	F	%	R
Lack of public information from the Government	72	72%	1
Lack of seminar/orientation for RA 11313 Safe Spaces Act of 2019 or Bawal Bastos Law	57	57%	2
Lack of clear policies implemented by the Department relating to RA 11313 Safe Spaces Act of 2019 or Bawal Bastos Law	48	48%	3

Based on Table 11, the most significant issue reported by the respondents was the lack of public information from the Government which ranked as the top problem encountered by the respondents garnering 72% of the respondents. The lack of information given or disseminated by the government regarding RA 11313 or the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 has been reported to be the most common. While employees have knowledge in terms of sexual harassment in streets, public spaces, online and workplaces as it is frowned upon and that they are still classified as a criminal offense in the Philippines. They might have learned such information and data from social norms, culture, and practices as well as proper public and office etiquette which were established in workplace handbooks or manual. Even so, there is still a notable concern in terms of informing the public with vital information regarding this newly enacted law which is essential for the public to know.

However, there are still issues in terms of really knowing the nooks and crannies of the legal basis of offenses and acts of sexual assault, harassment, and violence due to notable lack of information that the respondents are hearing from the government. Provisions of law are hard to understand if not explained in a simpler context that the general masses will understand, and the lack of information given with no simpler context might lead to confusion and lack of awareness and understanding from the public. The public might show less interest in knowing the law and what comes with it as they have a tough time understanding of the law. While there was information dissemination throughout the communication chamber of the government agencies, the respondents noted that there is a lack of information dissemination in different venues such as streets, social media and more. The respondents reported that this hinders their awareness of the laws and its implementing rules and regulation.

In relation, the second most frequent problems encountered by the respondents is the lack of seminar/orientation on RA 11313 also known as Safe Spaces Act of 2019 or the Bawal ang Bastos Law. With 57% reported responses, this signifies and validates that there is indeed a lack of information dissemination and orientation of the law with the public. While the employees of DPWH Tarlac 2nd DEO spearheaded an orientation relating to the law itself, its goals and objectives and the provisions and clauses that it entails, there is still an issue to be address in terms of orienting the employees and even the general public with the law for better awareness and a more proper understanding of the law as well as their rights, responsibilities and liabilities relating to gender-based sexual harassment that occurs in streets, public places, online and in workplaces. Seminars, orientations and formulation of new policies, rules and laws is essential in ensuring that the public understands the provisions and what the law entails. Understanding newly establish laws is

important as it encompasses new protection that the government deemed necessary for its citizens. Laws like the Safe Spaces Act that caters to a particular crime with different approaches in different setting and venues, orientations and seminars is highly recommended to create a level of understanding of not only their rights, but with what are the responsibilities and liabilities of the general public, employees, employers and even intuitions in terms of gender-based sexual harassment situations.

Lastly, another reported problem is the lack of clear policies implemented by the Department relating to RA 11313 or the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 also known as Bawal ang Bastos Law. Being a national government agency, one of its mandates is to follow policies created and established by its central office and Civil Service Commission. One of the implemented policies that the DEO follows is the 2017 RACCS which was amended last January 20, 2021, with CSC MC No. 11 series of 2021, revising the administrative disciplinary rules on sexual harassment cases. While this memorandum adapts the provisions of RA 11313 or Safe Spaces Act of 2019, the lack of clear and specified policies relating to workplace sexual harassment tailored-fitted to the agency was a concern raised by the respondents as it hinders their awareness on the provisions of the law especially those that can be implemented in a workplace setting. Establishment of special orders, memoranda, department orders formulated in accordance with the provisions of RA 11313 that caters the need of the employees of DPWH in terms of workplace sexual harassment will entail meaningful change in their awareness of the implementation of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019. Formulation of policies might not entail total abolishment of sexual harassment in workplaces rules, but it could also cater and create core groups that could provide support to co-employees who were experiencing sexual harassment and violence in different settings such as in streets, public places, online and workplace. This could help lessen psychological and mental burden like anxiety, fear, stress and depression and survivors might feel understood and still accepted by the society with the empathy that they could receive.

4. Proposed action plans to enhance the awareness of the respondents on the implementation of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019

One of the goals of addressing the problems encountered is to formulate an action plan that will enhance and the awareness of the employees in the implementation of RA 11313 or the Safe Spaces Act of 2019.

Table 12
Action Plans to Address the Problems Encountered

Problems	Objectives	Strategies	Personnel/Office-in-Charge	Expected outcome
Lack of public information from the Government	To disseminate information and awareness on the Law	Posting of photo and video materials; advertisements; launching Sexual Harassment Awareness Day	DPWH; Implementing bodies (PNP, WCPD, PCW, DILG, DICT, MMDA)	Better information and date dissemination and awareness on the provision of the Law
Lack of seminars/ orientations	To orient employees on the provision of the law	Series of seminars and orientation; National Caravans and Forums	DPWH; Implementing bodies (PNP, WCPD, PCW, DILG, DICT, MMDA); Government Agencies	Enhanced awareness on the Law, its provisions and implementing rules and regulations
Lack of clear policies implemented by the Department	To implement a more tailor-fit policies regarding workplace sexual harassment cases	Public consultations on potential policies; Policy formulation; Trainer's training;	Head of offices; Human Resources Officers; Administrative Officers; Committee on decorum and investigation	Improved and clear policies on Sexual Harassment Cases in DPWH Offices

By tackling concerns on the lack of information, lack of orientation and seminars and lack of clear policies implemented by the agency, the district office aims to enhance awareness and knowledge in adhering and abiding the implementing policies, rules, and regulation of the law. The designated personnel, including

the District Engineers, Administrative Officers, Committee Chairperson on decorum and investigations, bear the responsibility of amplifying and enhancing the awareness of the employees of the office in the provisions and clauses of the Function as part of their human rights and responsibilities.

To tackle the lack of public information from the government, Table 12 demonstrates the proposed measure is to create publications of photo and video materials that could be posted and released as educational advertisement that promotes awareness on the Safe Spaces Acts of 2019. This could be through a partnership between the Department of Public Works and Highways as a whole and other government agencies including the implementing bodies of the law such as uniform personnel such as Philippine National Police (PNP), the Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD), the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) as well as Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA). This could potentially result to a better information dissemination using other forms of communication like social media and print media.

Lack of seminars and orientation in workplaces such as DPWH District Offices can be address through launching series of seminars and orientation and delivering national caravans and forums that can be a ground for open discussion on the topics such as sexual harassments, gender-based violences and acts and other topics that needs attention. This can amplify and enhance awareness of employees of DPWH on the provision of the law and other mechanisms that could help address and stop sexual harassment. This can also be done through partnerships with other government agencies that possess expertise and vast knowledge in combating such situations.

Lastly, the problem relating to lack of clear policies on workplace sexual harassment in DPWH can be address by initiating public consultation within the office population on discussion on sexual harassment to be able to formulate policies that is tailored-fit for the agency. Potential solutions for this dilemma are policy formulation, implementation followed by trainers training as well creation of District Committee on the decorum and investigation for sexual harassment cases. While the Department has established its own committee on decorum and investigation also known as CODI of sexual harassment cases, establishing a district level body that could easily perform its jury duty on their respective district office will signify the agency's commitment in combating sexual harassment in a workplace setting. This could potentially result to a more define policies and implementation of the law leading to a better awareness and understanding of its provision and goal.

5. Implications of the study to Public Administration

This research on the level of awareness of DPWH Tarlac 2nd DEO employees in the implementation of the law, particularly the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 holds a significant implication for the field of Public Administration. Firstly, the results of the evaluation provide valuable information and insights for administrators and policymakers involved in gender-based sexual harassment on national government level. Understanding the factors that contribute to the awareness of the employees in the implementation of the law to DPWH Tarlac 2nd can help guide the formulation of more effective policies and strategies to enhance and amplify the employee's level of awareness.

Additionally, it reflects the importance of information dissemination in various communication channels of government agencies to raise awareness on laws that benefit the well-being of its personnel and workforce. Public administrators can use this study as basis in advocating and initiating more programs and projects that involves raising awareness in the implementation of specialized laws such as Safe Spaces Act of 2019 especially in government agencies.

By launching orientations and programs, posting of print and social media advertisements, and conducting discussions and forums, there is an enormous potential in enhancing the level of awareness of not only of civil servants but the public as well. Awareness on the various kinds of gender-based sexual harassment happening in streets, public spaces, online and in workplace settings aligns with the government's goal of valuing the dignity of each human person living in the country and to guarantee full and unconditional respect on their human rights.

Further, this study highlights the importance of valuing partnerships between government agencies to establish a better implementation of laws and its implementing policies, rules, and regulations. The study informs the importance of policy formulation, supports awareness initiatives, and contributes to enhancing the level of awareness of policy implementation of government offices towards a better environment for not only civil servants, but the public as well.

Conclusions

According to the provided summary of findings, the following concluding analysis were derived from the study:

1. Based on the results, it is evident that there are greater percentage of married employees than the single employees in DPWH Tarlac 2nd DEO.
2. Based on the result, respondents are aware that the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 gives protection for both men and women against harassment.
3. Based on the study, respondents are aware that there are penalties and sanctions included in the Safe Spaces Act.
4. Based on the study, there is uncertainty on the awareness of employees that the office can be penalized if the Safe Spaces Act of 2019 is not implemented.
5. According to the results, the employees of DPWH Tarlac 2nd DEO are aware of the general and basic provisions of RA 11313 also known as the Safe Spaces Act of 2019.
6. Based on the study, the employees of DPWH Tarlac 2nd DEO are aware of the various kinds and forms of gender-based sexual harassment on streets and public spaces.
7. Based on the results, employees of DPWH Tarlac 2nd DEO are aware of the provisions and clauses of Safe Spaces Act of 2019 relating to the kinds and forms of online sexual harassment.
8. According to the results, DPWH Tarlac 2nd DEO employees are aware of the various kinds and forms of workplaces sexual harassment and the provisions of the law relating to it.
9. Based on the result, it is evident that there is still a need to address the lack of information dissemination from the government that hinders the awareness of the employees on the implementation of RA 11313 also known as Safe Spaces Act of 2019.
10. Based on the action plan, disseminating of photo and video materials, advertisements and launching of national caravans and forums and public consultation may be the solutions to raise awareness of Safe Spaces Act of 2019 as those are designed to enhance awareness of the employees in the implementation of the law and its implementing policies, rules and regulations.

Recommendations

The following is a list of potential recommendations based on the research's findings, and conclusions.

1. The agency of Department of Public Works and Highways may initiate partnership with implementing bodies such as the uniformed personnel of Philippine National Police (PNP), the Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD), Philippine Commission on Women also known as PCW, national agency of Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), the agency of Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) as well as the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) to structuralized programs and other projects that could further enhance the awareness on the implementation of Safe Spaces Act of 2019. Programs like nationwide caravans, forums, interactive discussions as well as releasing of photo and video materials that are informative and educational.
2. Department of Public Works and Highways, as an agency may consider integrating yearly orientations and seminars for Sexual Harassment Awareness as part of their Learning and Development Plan Programs. By integrating such programs, employees will have continuous learning and reorientation if there are policy updates and other revisions in the implementing policies, rules and regulations of the government and Civil Services Commission alike.
3. Department of Public Works and Highways may consider establishing District Committee on the Decorum and Investigation on Sexual Harassment Cases to amplify, enhance and institute protection for employees on sexual harassment cases.
4. DPWH may consider formulating policies tailored fit for the Agency that will enhance its sexual harassment in line with the clauses and implementing policies, rules, and regulations of RA 11313 or Safe Spaces Act as well as CSC MC No. 11 Series of 2021 with the subject on revising administrative disciplinary rules on sexual harassment cases as an amendment to the provisions and clauses in 2017 Revised Rules on Administrative Cases on the Civil Service.
5. DPWH may integrate public forums and discussions on sexual harassment to gather input from the general populace of the office in formulating policies and regulations regarding gender-based workplace sexual harassment.

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