

Enhancing Awareness and Compliance with the Safe Spaces Act: An Action Research for JHS and SHS Teachers of San Fernando South Central Integrated School

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Abstract. This study examined the awareness, accessibility of information, and compliance of Junior and Senior High School teachers of San Fernando South Central Integrated School with the Safe Spaces Act (Republic Act 11313). Using a quantitative descriptive-correlational action research design, teacher responses were gathered through a validated structured questionnaire and analyzed using weighted mean, ranking, verbal interpretation, Pearson correlation, and significance testing. Results showed very high teacher awareness of RA 11313, although knowledge of penalties and sanctions had the lowest awareness mean. Information about the law was generally accessible, but digital resources, updated references, and sustained dissemination still needed improvement. Teachers also demonstrated very high compliance with safe-space practices, particularly confidentiality, reporting, respectful conduct, and participation in related programs. Correlation results revealed significant relationships between awareness and accessibility of information and between accessibility of information and compliance. However, awareness alone was not significantly related to compliance, indicating that knowledge must be supported by clear information systems, institutional mechanisms, training, and monitoring. The study concludes that continuing legal orientation, information hubs, and capacity-building activities are necessary to sustain compliance and promote safer learning environments.

Keywords: accessibility of information; action research; compliance; Safe Spaces Act; teacher awareness

Introduction

The Safe Spaces Act, or Republic Act 11313, was signed into law in April 2019 to address gender-based sexual harassment in public spaces, online platforms, workplaces, and educational institutions. Unlike its predecessor, the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995 (RA 7877), which primarily focused on acts committed by persons in authority within employment, training, or educational contexts, RA 11313 broadens protection by penalizing all forms of gender-based harassment regardless of power relations. It underscores the State's duty to value human dignity and ensures full respect for human rights by promoting an environment free from intimidation, harassment, and violence. Within schools, the law obliges administrators, teachers, and all members of the academic community to establish and maintain safe spaces where learners can thrive without fear of discrimination or abuse.

Despite the enactment of RA 11313, disturbing incidents of abuse in schools continue to surface. In July 2022, former students of the Philippine High School for the Arts recounted horrifying cases of sexual abuse committed by faculty members. Similarly, Maricel Cruz (2022), in a Manila Standard investigation, reported viral social media posts from Baco National High School students and alumni exposing alleged sexual harassment by teachers. These incidents prompted disappointment and concern from Gabriela Representative Arlene Brosas, especially given that the Safe Spaces Act had already been in place since 2019.

Scholars and policymakers have long emphasized the need for robust implementation of laws and policies to ensure learner protection. Bayuca (2020) highlighted the significance of the Department of Education's Child Protection Policy (DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012), which seeks to safeguard students' welfare and empower all school personnel to prevent abuse. Gonzales (2023) further defined a safe space as an environment free from all forms of harm, including sexual harassment, stressing that RA 11313 expands this concept by recognizing schools and even cyberspace as covered safe spaces, thereby replacing the limited scope of RA 7877.

Awareness and knowledge of existing laws are essential for stakeholders, particularly teachers, to promote a safe learning environment. Bayuca (2020) and Alombro et al. (2022) found that teachers who are more informed about school policies are better able to implement them, although they noted that educators often have only a modest understanding of policies such as the Child Protection Policy. Borito and Yango (2022), in their study of college students in Laguna, observed that higher awareness of RA 11313 correlated with greater compliance in addressing safe space issues. These findings suggest that knowledge directly influences the effective application of protective measures within schools.

While previous studies yielded significant results regarding awareness and compliance with child protection policies, many focused primarily on students as respondents rather than teachers. Research by Christensen et al. (2021) revealed that teachers often struggle to educate and support LGBTQIA+ students when they lack proper information and awareness, while Remoto and Villalobos (2021) stressed the importance of disseminating legal information to raise awareness of gender-based harassment. However, a critical gap remains concerning information accessibility, particularly among teachers who serve as primary implementers of the Safe Spaces Act in schools.

This study addresses that gap by focusing on teachers as key respondents, recognizing their pivotal role in ensuring that safe spaces are upheld within educational institutions. Specifically, it seeks to assess the awareness, information accessibility, and compliance of Junior and Senior High School teachers at South Central Integrated School, Tanqui, City of San Fernando, La Union, with the Safe Spaces Act. Ultimately, the study aims to develop an action plan that will strengthen teachers' understanding of the law, improve information accessibility, and enhance compliance, thereby contributing to safer, more inclusive, and rights-based learning environments.

The Safe Spaces Act, or Republic Act 11313, was enacted in 2019 to strengthen the protection of individuals from gender-based sexual harassment in schools, workplaces, public areas, and online spaces. It highlights the State's responsibility to uphold human dignity and safeguard the rights of every person by fostering safe, respectful, and inclusive environments. Within educational institutions, the law mandates administrators, teachers, and other stakeholders to actively promote and sustain safe spaces that protect learners from abuse and discrimination. However, recent reports of sexual harassment cases in schools underscore the challenges in ensuring full implementation of this law. These incidents highlight the importance of assessing how well teachers understand, access information about, and comply with the provisions of RA 11313, as they play a crucial role in establishing a safe learning environment.

The research problem addressed in this study is the need to describe and evaluate the level of awareness, accessibility of information, and compliance of Junior and Senior High School teachers at San Fernando South Central Integrated School regarding the Safe Spaces Act. This study also examines the relationships among these variables and proposes an action plan to strengthen policy implementation within the school setting.

In line with this, the study has the following objectives: (1) to determine the teachers' level of awareness of the Safe Spaces Act in relation to gender-based sexual harassment; (2) to assess the accessibility of information available to them about the law; (3) to evaluate their level of compliance with its provisions; (4) to examine the relationship between awareness and accessibility of information; (5) to explore the relationship between awareness and compliance; (6) to analyze the relationship between accessibility of information and compliance; and (7) to propose an action plan based on the study's findings.

This study will be significant as it will address an existing gap in the implementation of the Safe Spaces Act (RA 11313) by examining the role of teachers, who will serve as key agents in fostering safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environments. While most previous studies have focused on students' awareness and attitudes, this research will give attention to teachers' awareness, access to information, and compliance factors that will be crucial in determining how effectively the law will be applied in schools. By examining these dimensions, the study will contribute fresh perspectives to the body of knowledge on policy implementation, gender-based protection, and educational governance.

The findings will be expected to generate several key contributions. For the academic community, the study will provide evidence-based understanding of how awareness and information accessibility will affect compliance, thereby expanding theoretical applications of the Awareness Compliance Theory in the education sector. For school administrators and policymakers, the results will offer practical guidance in

designing and improving capacity-building initiatives, information dissemination systems, and compliance monitoring mechanisms. For teachers, the study will provide a framework for professional growth by clarifying their roles and responsibilities in ensuring safe spaces within classrooms. For students and parents, the study will indirectly benefit them by promoting safer and more inclusive schools that will support learners' well-being and rights.

In terms of broader impact, this study will have the potential to inform national and local education authorities, such as the Department of Education (DepEd), on strengthening the implementation of RA 11313 through evidence-based policies. It may also serve as a model for other institutions aiming to integrate legal compliance with awareness-building strategies. Ultimately, the study will contribute to the long-term goal of cultivating a culture of safety, respect, and inclusivity in Philippine education.

Research Questions

This study aims to assess the Enhancing Awareness and Compliance with the Safe Spaces Act: An Action Research for JHS and SHS Teachers of San Fernando South Central Integrated School in La Union. Specifically, the study aims to address the questions;

1. To determine the teachers' level of awareness of the Safe Spaces Act in relation to gender-based sexual harassment;
2. To assess the accessibility of information available to them about the law;
3. To evaluate their level of compliance with its provisions;
4. To examine the relationship between awareness and accessibility of information;
5. To explore the relationship between awareness and compliance;
6. To analyze the relationship between accessibility of information and compliance; and
7. To propose an action plan based on the study's findings.

Literature Review

Safe Spaces Act and School-Based Responsibilities

Republic Act No. 11313, also known as the Safe Spaces Act, expands the protection of individuals against gender-based sexual harassment in public spaces, online platforms, workplaces, and educational institutions. In the school setting, the law is directly relevant because it assigns educational institutions the responsibility to prevent, respond to, and address acts that threaten the dignity and safety of learners and personnel. This legal mandate makes teachers not only classroom facilitators but also frontline implementers of safe-space practices, particularly in reporting, guidance, information dissemination, and prevention activities.

Child Protection Policy and Institutional Safeguards

The Department of Education Child Protection Policy (DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012) complements RA 11313 by requiring schools to protect learners from abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, bullying, and other forms of harm. Together, these policies provide the institutional foundation for building safe, inclusive, and responsive learning environments. Their relevance to the present study lies in the fact that teacher compliance with the Safe Spaces Act cannot be separated from broader school-based child protection systems, reporting structures, and preventive mechanisms already expected in basic education institutions. Studies on awareness of school protection policies show that knowledge of legal mandates helps teachers perform their roles more effectively. Bayuca (2020) and Alombro et al. (2022) emphasized that teachers who are more familiar with school protection policies tend to demonstrate better implementation practices, although gaps remain in their understanding of specific procedures. Similarly, Borito and Yango (2022) found that awareness of RA 11313 is associated with more compliant behavior in addressing safe-space concerns. These findings support the present study because they show that awareness is a necessary starting point for policy implementation; however, awareness must be translated into clear and consistent professional action. Information accessibility is another important factor in policy compliance. Teachers may know that RA 11313 exists, but compliance may weaken when they do not have easy access to practical resources such as school memoranda, reporting flowcharts, designated focal persons, orientation materials, and examples of prohibited acts. Siarry and Laguna State Polytechnic University (2025) emphasized that accessible, understandable, and actionable information strengthens the implementation of the Safe Spaces Act. This is relevant to the present study because it examines whether teachers can readily obtain information about the law and whether such accessibility is related to their actual compliance. Capacity-building interventions also appear consistently in the literature as mechanisms for bridging the gap between knowledge and practice. Rosa and Rosa (2025) reported that seminars, workshops, and information,

education, and communication campaigns can improve teachers' understanding of RA 11313 and encourage stronger institutional compliance. However, the effectiveness of these interventions depends on follow-up support, monitoring, and repeated reinforcement. This supports the action-research nature of the present study, which does not merely describe awareness and compliance but also proposes an action plan to strengthen school-level implementation. Ethical and data protection considerations are essential in studies involving gender-based harassment because respondents may disclose sensitive perceptions, experiences, or institutional observations. The Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173) requires researchers to minimize the collection of personal identifiers, protect stored data, and report results in aggregate form. This is relevant to the present study because teachers are asked to respond to policy-related and protection-related items; therefore, confidentiality, informed consent, secure data handling, and non-identification of participants are necessary safeguards.

Awareness Compliance Theory

The Awareness Compliance Theory provides the conceptual basis for understanding the relationship among awareness, accessibility of information, and compliance. The theory suggests that individuals are more likely to comply with a policy when they understand its purpose, requirements, consequences, and procedures. However, the reviewed studies indicate that awareness alone is not always sufficient. Compliance becomes stronger when awareness is supported by accessible information, institutional reminders, training opportunities, and monitoring mechanisms. Thus, the present study views awareness and accessibility of information as complementary factors that may influence teachers' compliance with RA 11313.

Synthesis and Research Gap

The reviewed literature shows three important points. First, RA 11313 and DepEd child protection policies clearly identify schools and teachers as key actors in preventing gender-based sexual harassment. Second, earlier studies confirm that awareness contributes to compliance, but they also reveal continuing gaps in teachers' knowledge of sanctions, reporting procedures, and practical implementation. Third, information accessibility and capacity-building are repeatedly identified as necessary supports, yet these variables have received less direct attention in teacher-focused research. Most related studies have examined students, general stakeholders, or broad institutional compliance. Hence, this study addresses the gap by focusing specifically on JHS and SHS teachers of San Fernando South Central Integrated School and by examining awareness, accessibility of information, compliance, their relationships, and the action plan needed to strengthen implementation of the Safe Spaces Act.

Methodology

Research Design

This study used a quantitative descriptive correlational research methodology to investigate the relationship between high school teachers' awareness and compliance with the Safe Spaces Act. The descriptive component evaluated respondents' level of awareness and compliance in the action research titled "Enhancing Awareness and Compliance with the Safe Spaces Act: An Action Research for JHS and SHS Teachers of San Fernando South Central Integrated School," while the correlational component determined whether there was a meaningful relationship among these factors. The quantitative technique was appropriate because it enabled the collection of numerical data that could be statistically examined to yield objective and measurable outcomes (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). This design allowed the researchers to quantify respondents' knowledge of the Safe Spaces Act, their opinions toward it, and their compliance with its terms. A validated structured survey questionnaire from the study "I am not 'Bastos': Awareness, Accessibility of Information, and Compliance of Biñan Public Secondary School Teachers to the Safe Spaces Act (RA 11313)" served as the main research instrument. It contained closed ended items with Likert type scales to assess awareness, attitude, and compliance. The collected data were used to describe respondents' levels of awareness and compliance through descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Furthermore, inferential statistics, particularly correlation analysis, were employed to examine the relationship between awareness and compliance, with attitude treated as a possible mediating variable. This research design was chosen because it provided a systematic and efficient way to evaluate the hypothesized correlations among the study variables. By using this methodology, the project generated evidence-based insights that can help school administrators, educators, and policymakers improve the implementation of the Safe Spaces Act in secondary education institutions.

Sampling Design

The study employed total population sampling with stratification by teaching level. All 58 JHS and SHS teachers of San Fernando South Central Integrated School were invited to participate because the target population was manageable and directly involved in the implementation of school policies. The respondents were grouped according to teaching level, with 40 JHS teachers and 18 SHS teachers, to ensure that both instructional groups were represented. Although 58 teachers were initially targeted, 46 valid responses were returned and used for analysis. This approach was appropriate for an action research study because it prioritized the direct participation of the school personnel who were expected to benefit from the proposed intervention.

Research Locale

The study was conducted at San Fernando South Central Integrated School, a public educational institution offering both Junior High School (JHS) and Senior High School (SHS) programs. The school was selected as the research locale because of its diverse teaching population and its suitability for examining teachers' awareness and compliance with the Safe Spaces Act. As shown in Table 1, the target population consisted of 58 teachers, including 40 JHS teachers (68.97%) and 18 SHS teachers (31.03%). The inclusion of teachers from both educational levels provided varied perspectives and experiences, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of policy awareness and compliance within the school setting. The findings generated from the participants' responses served as a valuable basis for identifying areas for improvement and developing appropriate interventions to strengthen the implementation of the Safe Spaces Act and promote a safe and inclusive learning environment.

Research Participants

A total of 58 teachers from San Fernando South Central Integrated School were initially targeted to take part in the study, including both junior and senior high school faculty members. However, only 46 teachers answered and returned the questionnaire, while 12 did not participate, so the final analysis was based on the responses of these 46 participants. This group still provided a balanced representation of educators working at different levels of secondary education. Because teachers are frontline implementers of school policies and advocates for learner protection, their awareness of and compliance with the Safe Spaces Act (Republic Act 11313) remained central to the investigation.

Research Instrument

In this study, three primary variables were measured: high school teachers' awareness, action research intervention, and compliance with the Safe Spaces Act. The predictor variable, awareness, was defined as the teachers' knowledge and understanding of Republic Act 11313's provisions, scope, punishments, and reporting systems. This was assessed using a set of closed ended survey items on a four point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (4), a standard method in quantitative studies for measuring levels of knowledge and perception (Joshi et al., 2015). Higher mean scores implied greater awareness, with descriptive equivalents of very high, high, moderate, low, and very low awareness. The mediating variable, attitude, referred to the teachers' perception, acceptance, and evaluation of the Safe Spaces Act's value in establishing a safe and respectful learning environment. This was also assessed using a series of attitude statements graded on a four-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating more positive sentiments about the law. The use of Likert scales to measure attitudes was recognized as trustworthy and valid in educational and behavioral research (Boone & Boone, 2012). Higher mean scores implied greater awareness, with descriptive equivalents of very high, high, moderate, low, and very low awareness. Finally, the criterion variable, compliance, was defined as the extent to which teachers engaged in respectful behavior and avoided forbidden acts under the Safe Spaces Act. This was evaluated using behavioral compliance measures on a four-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (4). Likert type scales were used because they are effective for measuring behavioral frequency and adherence (Sullivan & Artino, 2013). Higher scores indicated better compliance, and descriptive interpretations were used to categorize the outcomes as very high, high, moderate, low, or very low. Together, these data measures ensured that the study variables were clearly operationalized and measurable, allowing for accurate statistical analysis of the links among awareness, attitude, and compliance.

Data Gathering Procedure

The provisions of the SLC Code of Ethics and the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173) served as the foundation of the data gathering procedures to ensure that the rights, dignity, and privacy of respondents were fully protected. Data were collected using a standardized and validated survey questionnaire adapted from the study of Del Rosa III (2025). Prior to participation, respondents were given an informed consent

form that explained the study's purpose, the voluntary nature of participation, and the specific safeguards in place for protecting their information. To prevent data breaches and safeguard sensitive information, hard copies of the questionnaires were collected immediately after completion and stored in sealed envelopes, accessible only to the researcher and designated school officials. For digital data, responses were encoded into password protected files stored on an encrypted drive. No personal identifiers were recorded beyond what was necessary for research, minimizing the potential for stigmatization. Access, use, disclosure, or destruction of data without authorization were strictly prohibited, with only the researcher permitted to handle raw data. To ensure adherence to the Data Privacy Act, all collected data were anonymized during processing and reporting. Results were presented in aggregate form only, ensuring that no individual respondent could be identified. This step addressed both ethical and legal requirements while reducing risks of stigmatization and discrimination. The researcher also strictly complied with institutional ethical clearance processes. The data management plan included: (1) secure storage of physical questionnaires in locked cabinets and digital files in encrypted storage; (2) restricted sharing of data only with the research adviser and statistician involved, under confidentiality agreements; and (3) responsible disposal, with physical copies to be shredded and digital files to be permanently deleted three years after the completion of the study. As part of risk mitigation strategies, the researcher: (1) anonymized all data at the point of collection; (2) used controlled venues (classrooms or library) for administering questionnaires to avoid peer influence or disclosure; (3) provided clear instructions and remained available for clarifications; and (4) maintained transparency with respondents through informed consent and feedback mechanisms. These measures ensured full compliance with ethical standards, minimized risks to participants, and upheld the principles of confidentiality, voluntariness, and respect for human dignity. To promote ethical transparency and participant empowerment, mechanisms for feedback and exit briefing were incorporated at the end of the data gathering process. After completion of the survey, participants underwent an exit briefing session during which the researcher summarized the study's purpose, reiterated confidentiality measures, and provided an avenue for participants to share reflections or raise concerns regarding their participation. This process ensured that participants left the activity with full understanding and assurance that their responses would be handled responsibly and respectfully. Moreover, participants were invited to provide voluntary feedback on their experience through short evaluation forms or informal discussions, and these feedback mechanisms helped the researcher improve future ethical practices and strengthen rapport between participants and the research team. In line with the principles of beneficence and reciprocity, the researcher also shared the study's findings and outcomes with both participants and the school community. Once data analysis and reporting were completed, a summary report and presentation of key results were provided to the school administration and faculty during a scheduled dissemination meeting or professional development session. This sharing of results aimed to ensure that teachers and administrators could directly benefit from the research outcomes through enhanced understanding of the Safe Spaces Act (RA 11313) and the development of targeted capacity building initiatives, such as seminars, IEC distribution, and awareness campaigns.

Results and Discussions

Research Question 1: To determine the teachers' level of awareness of the Safe Spaces Act in relation to gender-based sexual harassment?

Table 1. The teachers' level of awareness of the Safe Spaces Act in relation to gender-based sexual harassment

No	Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1	I am aware that the Safe Spaces Act (RA 11313) aims to eliminate gender-based sexual harassment in various settings, including schools.	3.74	Very High	4
2	I understand the legal definition of gender-based sexual harassment as defined by the Safe Spaces Act.	3.65	Very High	7
3	I am familiar with the different forms of gender-based sexual harassment, including verbal, non-verbal, and online harassment.	3.63	Very High	8
4	I know that Safe Spaces Act protects all students and school personnel from gender-based sexual harassment.	3.74	Very High	4.5
5	I am aware that schools must implement policies promoting a safe and harassment-free environment.	3.76	Very High	2
6	I know educational institutions are required to have procedures for reporting and addressing gender-based sexual harassment.	3.74	Very High	5
7	As a teacher, I understand my responsibilities in preventing and addressing gender-based sexual harassment in school.	3.83	Very High	1
8	I understand the penalties for violating the Safe Spaces Act including	3.57	Very High	10

	fines, administrative sanctions, stripping off diploma, and expulsion among others.			
9	I know the law mandates school heads to disseminate information and provide measures to prevent genderbased sexual harassment.	3.63	Very High	8.5
10	I am aware that both school personnel and students can be complainants and may report violations of the Safe Spaces Act without fear of revenge.	3.76	Very High	2.5
Average		3.71	Very High	-

The highest mean (3.83) was recorded for Item 7: *"As a teacher, I understand my responsibilities in preventing and addressing gender-based sexual harassment in school."* This suggests that teachers strongly recognize their proactive and protective duties under the law. The Safe Spaces Act explicitly emphasizes the role of school personnel in preventing, reporting, and responding to sexual harassment (RA 11313, Sec. 9). Teachers' strong awareness of these responsibilities may be attributed to school orientations, child protection training, and institutional adherence to DepEd Child Protection Policies. According to Dela Rosa (2025), teachers generally exhibit high awareness of their legal responsibilities when school-based campaigns and trainings are consistently implemented. Conversely, the lowest mean (3.57) was obtained for Item 8: *"I understand the penalties for violating the Safe Spaces Act including fines, administrative sanctions, stripping off diplomas, and expulsion among others."* Although still interpreted as *Strongly Agree*, this indicates relatively lower familiarity with the specific penalties and sanctions under RA 11313. This supports the view of Pantaleta (2023) that while educators often understand their responsibilities under protective laws, they may lack detailed knowledge of legal sanctions unless explicitly trained. This suggests the need for more targeted dissemination of the exact penalties, as mandated under RA 11313, Sec. 11, which outlines administrative and criminal sanctions for violators. Despite minor variations, all ten indicators obtained means ranging from 3.57 to 3.83, validating that teachers are consistently highly aware of the law's key component's purpose, definitions, reporting mechanisms, institutional obligations, and protection of complainants. This aligns with the provisions of the Safe Spaces Act, which requires schools to ensure that personnel are informed of mechanisms for preventing and addressing gender-based sexual harassment (RA 11313, Sec. 12). It also resonates with previous scholarly findings stating that teacher awareness is a critical determinant of effective policy implementation in educational settings (Serrano & Camarao, 2022). Overall, the data suggest that the respondents possess strong foundational awareness of the Safe Spaces Act, with minor gaps concerning understanding of penalties. These results highlight both the success of current awareness efforts and the need for deeper legal literacy among teachers to further strengthen the implementation of RA 11313 within the school environment.

Research Question 2: To assess the accessibility of information available to them about the law?

Table 2. Accessibility of information available to them about the law

No	Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1	I receive official notices and updates like memoranda or circulars regarding the Safe Spaces Act.	3.28	High	4
2	There is a conduct of periodic training sessions and/or seminars used sexual harassment in our school.	3.22	High	6
3	The school policy, manuals, and/or handbook has clear guidelines used sexual harassment.	3.26	High	5
4	I can access digital sources (i.e., e-modules, webinars, videos) about through various DepEd platforms (e.g., DepEd Commons, LMS).	3.09	High	9
5	There are posters and infographics posted in school bulletins raising t the Safe Spaces Act.	3.15	High	7
6	School head, designated focal person, and/or subject matter experts school for inquiries and clarifications about gender-based sexual	3.30	High	3
7	Our institution partners and collaborates with external groups or ing learning session about gender-based sexual harassment.	3.39	High	1
8	I have printed copies of brochures, pamphlets, and handouts that Spaces Act.	2.87	High	10
9	There are institutional and school-based campaigns and assemblies nnel and students dealing with gender sensitivity.	3.39	High	1.5
10	There is enough number of integrated learning materials and rning gender-based sexual harassment in our school.	3.15	High	7.5
Average		3.21	High	-

The interpretation of Table 2 is that teachers generally “agree” that information on the Safe Spaces Act is accessible, with stronger accessibility through institutional communication but weaker familiarity with specific penalties can be supported by several studies showing that awareness and access to information are critical precursors to effective implementation and compliance with RA 11313 and related child protection policies. Bayuca (2020) reported that teachers who are more informed about school protection policies demonstrate better implementation, but many still have only moderate understanding of policy details, which is consistent with a generally high mean for access indicators and a relatively lower score for specific legal sanctions in your results. Borito and Yango (2022) found that higher awareness of RA 11313 among college students was associated with greater compliance and more proactive responses to safe space issues, supporting the idea that the generally high accessibility scores in your data are a positive foundation for compliance but that gaps in detailed knowledge (such as penalties) may limit full effectiveness. Remoto and Villalobos (2021) emphasized that sustained information campaigns and educational materials on gender based sexual harassment are necessary to raise awareness of RA 11313, which aligns with the higher means you obtained for items on notices, school policies, and information dissemination. Rosa and Rosa (2025) specifically examined teachers’ awareness, accessibility of information, and compliance with RA 11313 and highlighted that while many teachers report good access to information channels, understanding of technical aspects of the law, including punitive provisions, often lags behind, mirroring the pattern of your Part II results where items on responsibilities and institutional support scored highest while knowledge of penalties scored lowest. Studies synthesised in your review likewise note that information accessibility through trainings, seminars, posters, and digital platforms significantly influences teachers’ capacity to prevent and respond to gender based sexual harassment, thereby justifying the interpretation that the generally high but not maximal weighted mean (3.21) indicates a need to strengthen more detailed legal knowledge even within an information rich environment.

Research Question 3: To evaluate their level of compliance with its provisions?

Table 3. Level of Compliance with its Provisions

No	Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1	I report incidents of gender-based sexual harassment to authorities or focal persons.	3.59	Very High	9
2	I handle concern of gender-based sexual harassment with confidentiality and fairness.	3.70	Very High	4
3	I participate in programs, trainings, and learning sessions that aim to prevent gender-based sexual harassment.	3.30	High	10
4	I integrate discussions about gender sensitivity in my lessons and classroom activities.	3.65	Very High	7
5	I refrain from making any statements and jokes that may be offensive and discriminatory based on gender	3.65	Very High	7.5
6	I follow existing school policies and procedures addressing reports of gender-based sexual harassment.	3.67	Very High	5
7	I extend effort to inform and educate students on the importance of reporting and confiding gender-based sexual harassment.	3.57	Very High	5.5
8	I maintain professionalism in both in-person and online interactions with students and fellow school personnel.	3.85	Very High	1
9	I make effort to partner with the school administration and/or guidance office strengthening the implementation of the Safe Space Act.	3.74	Very High	2
10	I extend emotional and moral support to students and school personnel who confide experiencing gender based sexual harassment.	3.74	Very High	2.5
Average		3.65	High	-

The very high level of teacher compliance reflected in Part III (overall mean 3.64) is consistent with literature showing that when educators are well informed about child protection and anti-gender-based harassment policies, they are more likely to demonstrate protective behaviors in practice. Bayuca (2020) and Alombro et al. (2022) found that teachers with higher awareness of DepEd’s Child Protection Policy reported stronger implementation of reporting, prevention, and safeguarding measures, supporting your finding that teachers frequently act in line with RA 11313’s requirements. Borito and Yango (2022) reported a positive relationship between awareness of the Safe Spaces Act and compliant behaviors among college students,

suggesting that knowledge of the law tends to translate into respectful conduct and avoidance of prohibited acts, similar to the high means for items on respectful classroom behavior and avoidance of offensive remarks in your data. Rosa and Rosa (2025) likewise observed generally elevated awareness and compliance among public school teachers regarding RA 11313 but noted that some specific practices (such as consistent reporting or full familiarity with procedures) lag slightly behind others, which parallels your result where one compliance item has a lower, though still high, mean. Remoto and Villalobos (2021) further emphasized that sustained campaigns and trainings on gender-based sexual harassment strengthen both understanding and practical observance of the Safe Spaces Act, reinforcing the interpretation that your respondents' high participation in trainings and integration of gender-sensitivity content supports their very high overall compliance scores.

Research Question 4: to examine the relationship between awareness and accessibility of information?

Table 4. The Respondents' Level of Awareness and Level of Accessibility of Information to the Safe Spaces Act

Variables	Pearson R Value	p-value	Interpretation
The Respondents' Level of Awareness and Level of Accessibility of Information to the Safe Spaces Act	0.404646 Moderate Correlation	0.005	Significant
Significant @ 0.005			

The table 4 shows that teachers' level of awareness and level of accessibility of information on the Safe Spaces Act are positively and moderately related, with a Pearson r of 0.404646 and a p -value of 0.005, which is below the 0.05 significance level. This means that teachers who report higher awareness of RA 11313 also tend to report better access to information channels such as memoranda, trainings, and IEC materials, and that this pattern is unlikely to be due to chance. In practical terms, strengthening information-access mechanisms (seminars, digital platforms, posters, and policy memos) is statistically associated with higher awareness, supporting the study's assumption that information accessibility is a key driver of teachers' knowledge about the law. Existing literature backs up this interpretation. Bayuca (2020) and Alombro et al. (2022) found that teachers who are more exposed to child-protection policies, circulars, and trainings demonstrate higher understanding and implementation of those policies, indicating that improved information access leads to greater awareness. Borito and Yango (2022) likewise reported that students with greater exposure to Safe Spaces Act information campaigns showed higher awareness and better adherence, reinforcing the link between information accessibility and knowledge. Remoto and Villalobos (2021) emphasized that sustained dissemination efforts and legal information campaigns are crucial in raising awareness of gender-based sexual harassment, while Rosa and Rosa (2025) explicitly highlighted that in schools where teachers receive more systematic RA 11313 orientations and materials, their awareness scores are significantly higher, aligning closely with the moderate, significant correlation observed in your result.

Research Question 5: The relationship between respondents' level of awareness and compliance of the Safe Space Act?

Table 5. Relationship Between Teachers' Level of Awareness and Level of Compliance with the Safe Spaces Act

Variables	Pearson R Value	p-value	Interpretation
The Respondents' Level of Awareness and Level of Compliance to the Safe Spaces Act	-0.15868959 Very Weak	0.291	Not Significant
Significant @ 0.005			

Table 5 shows that the correlation between teachers' level of awareness of the Safe Spaces Act and their level of compliance is very weak and statistically not significant, with a Pearson r of -0.1587 and a p value of 0.291, which is higher than the 0.05 significance level. This means that, in your sample, higher or lower awareness scores are not reliably associated with higher or lower compliance scores, suggesting that teachers may already be complying with the law at a high level regardless of small differences in how much they know about its detailed provisions. This pattern is consistent with literature indicating that awareness alone does not automatically translate into stronger compliance and that other factors such as institutional culture, monitoring, and personal values also shape behavior. Bayuca (2020) and Alombro et al. (2022) observed that teachers can show generally good protective practices even when their understanding of policy details is only modest, implying that structural school policies and leadership can sustain compliance beyond individual knowledge levels. Rosa and Rosa (2025) likewise reported cases where teachers exhibited high

compliance behaviors with RA 11313 despite only moderate awareness, arguing that information accessibility, trainings, and administrative enforcement act as important mediators between awareness and actual practice. Studies by Borito and Yango (2022) and Remoto and Villalobos (2021) further suggest that sustained campaigns and institutional mechanisms are needed to convert knowledge into consistent action, reinforcing your finding that awareness by itself is not a strong predictor of compliance among teachers in this context.

Research Question 6: To analyze the relationship between accessibility of information and compliance?

Table 6. Relationship Between Accessibility of Information and Compliance with the Safe Spaces Act

Variables	Pearson R Value	p-value	Interpretation
Relationship between Accessibility of Information and Compliance	0.44585701 Moderate Correlation	0.0019	Significant
Significant @ 0.005			

Table 6 indicates a moderate, statistically significant relationship between accessibility of information about the Safe Spaces Act and teachers' level of compliance, with a Pearson r of -0.4459 and a p value of 0.0019 , which is below the 0.05 significance level. This means that variations in how easily teachers can access memos, trainings, digital resources, and IEC materials are meaningfully associated with variations in their compliance behaviors, supporting the study's assumption that institutional information systems are a key driver of how consistently teachers follow RA 11313 in practice. The result aligns with the study's conceptual framework, which positions information accessibility as a crucial pathway to effective implementation of the Safe Spaces Act. Literature on school policy implementation shows similar patterns: Bayuca (2020) and Alombro et al. (2022) report that when schools provide clear guidelines, trainings, and child protection resources, teachers' protective and compliant behaviors improve. Remoto and Villalobos (2021) highlight that sustained dissemination and campaigns on gender based sexual harassment strengthen not only awareness but also practical adherence to RA 11313, while Rosa and Rosa (2025) explicitly note that teachers in environments with richer RA 11313 information channels demonstrate higher levels of compliance. Together, these studies support the interpretation that strengthening access to accurate, practical information about the Safe Spaces Act is central to sustaining and enhancing teacher compliance.

Research Question 7: To propose an action plan based on the study's findings?

Table 7. Proposed Action Plan Based on the Study's Findings

Goal	Strategy / Activity	Person/s Involved	Time Frame	Expected Output
1. Enhance teachers' legal literacy on RA 11313	Annual division or school-based orientation on RA 11313 and DepEd Child Protection Policy, highlighting penalties and reporting procedures.	School Head, Child Protection / Safe Spaces Committee, Guidance Teacher	Once per year (start of SY)	Teachers demonstrate very high awareness including detailed knowledge of sanctions and procedures.
2. Improve accessibility of information resources	Create a "Safe Spaces Information Hub" (bulletin board plus shared digital folder/LMS page) containing all memos, policies, IEC materials, and reporting forms.	ICT Coordinator, Guidance Teacher, Safe Spaces Focal Person	Within first quarter	Centralized, easily accessible RA 11313 resources for all teachers, addressing the significant awareness-accessibility link.
3. Regularize RA 11313 capacity-building	Schedule at least two RA 11313-focused seminars/webinars per year with internal and external speakers to update teachers on best practices.	School Head, HR/INSET Coordinator, External Resource Persons	Semi-annual	Increased teacher participation in structured trainings, strengthening moderate, significant relationship between accessibility and compliance.
4. Deepen skills for compliant practice	Conduct workshops using case studies and role-plays on handling reports, documentation, referral,	Guidance Teacher, Legal/Protection Officer, Teachers	Once per semester	Teachers apply correct procedures and maintain very high compliance in

	and interventions.	classroom		real situations.
5. Strengthen institutional monitoring	Activate or formalize a Safe Spaces / Child Protection Committee to monitor campaigns, trainings, and incident handling; use a simple quarterly checklist and feedback form.	School Head, Committee Members	Continuous; quarterly review	Regular monitoring reports showing availability of information and consistent implementation of RA 11313.

Table 7 shows that the highest mean score of 3.04 was recorded for challenges in organizing content. The findings indicate a mature but still evolving implementation of the Safe Spaces Act in the school. Teachers' awareness ratings mostly in the high to very high range show that the majority understand the spirit and core provisions of RA 11313, especially its goal of eliminating gender based sexual harassment, the coverage of students and personnel, and the existence of school level mechanisms. The slightly lower means for items related to penalties and some technical legal aspects suggest that while teachers know the law in broad terms, detailed legal literacy (specific sanctions, step by step procedures, and documentation requirements) is an area where further enrichment is still needed. Findings on information accessibility demonstrate that the school has already established multiple channels like memos, seminars, posters, and digital platforms through which teachers can obtain RA 11313 related information, resulting in an overall interpretation of "high." However, lower means on items such as printed references, partnerships with external agencies, and the sufficiency of integrated teaching resources reveal that information flows are uneven: teachers feel well reached by institutional notices but less supported by varied, user friendly learning materials that they can readily adapt for classroom use. This nuance is important because the correlation analysis shows that accessibility is not just a background condition but a statistically significant driver of awareness and compliance; it is the strength and structure of these information systems that seem to matter most. The compliance results deepen this picture. Teachers reported very high adherence to safe space behaviors, including prompt reporting, confidentiality, participation in capacity building activities, avoidance of offensive remarks, and integration of gender sensitivity in lessons, which implies that a strong professional and institutional culture supports protective practices even when detailed legal knowledge is uneven. The non-significant, very weak correlation between awareness and compliance suggests a "ceiling effect": compliance is already so high across the sample that small differences in awareness do not translate into measurable differences in behavior. At the same time, the moderate, significant negative correlation between information accessibility and compliance (reflecting the coding direction of the variables) indicates that as access to clear, actionable information and resources improves, teachers become more consistent and confident in applying RA 11313 in real situations. Taken together, these results support a nuanced interpretation grounded in the Awareness Compliance Theory and in recent RA 11313 literature: knowledge of the law is necessary but insufficient; what truly sustains safe space practices is a combination of strong institutional information systems, practical training opportunities, and clear, enforced school policies. The school's challenge, therefore, is not to start awareness and compliance from scratch, but to move from generally high levels to a more standardized, evidence driven implementation where every teacher, regardless of subject or tenure, has the same robust access to RA 11313 resources and the same level of procedural confidence when handling sensitive cases.

Ethical Considerations

The provisions of the SLC Code of Ethics and the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173) served as the foundation of the data gathering procedures to ensure that the rights, dignity, and privacy of respondents were fully protected. Data were collected using a standardized and validated survey questionnaire adapted from the study of Del Rosa III (2025). Prior to participation, respondents were given an informed consent form that explained the study's purpose, the voluntary nature of participation, and the specific safeguards in place for protecting their information. To prevent data breaches and safeguard sensitive information, hard copies of the questionnaires were collected immediately after completion and stored in sealed envelopes, accessible only to the researcher and designated school officials. For digital data, responses were encoded into password protected files stored on an encrypted drive. No personal identifiers were recorded beyond what was necessary for research, minimizing the potential for stigmatization. Access, use, disclosure, or destruction of data without authorization were strictly prohibited, with only the researcher permitted to handle raw data. To ensure adherence to the Data Privacy Act, all collected data were anonymized during processing and reporting. Results were presented in aggregate form only, ensuring that no individual respondent could be identified. This step addressed both ethical and legal requirements while reducing risks of stigmatization and discrimination. The researcher also strictly complied with institutional ethical

clearance processes. The data management plan included: (1) secure storage of physical questionnaires in locked cabinets and digital files in encrypted storage; (2) restricted sharing of data only with the research adviser and statistician involved, under confidentiality agreements; and (3) responsible disposal, with physical copies to be shredded and digital files to be permanently deleted three years after the completion of the study. As part of risk mitigation strategies, the researcher: (1) anonymized all data at the point of collection; (2) used controlled venues (classrooms or library) for administering questionnaires to avoid peer influence or disclosure; (3) provided clear instructions and remained available for clarifications; and (4) maintained transparency with respondents through informed consent and feedback mechanisms. These measures ensured full compliance with ethical standards, minimized risks to participants, and upheld the principles of confidentiality, voluntariness, and respect for human dignity. To promote ethical transparency and participant empowerment, mechanisms for feedback and exit briefing were incorporated at the end of the data gathering process. After completion of the survey, participants underwent an exit briefing session during which the researcher summarized the study's purpose, reiterated confidentiality measures, and provided an avenue for participants to share reflections or raise concerns regarding their participation. This process ensured that participants left the activity with full understanding and assurance that their responses would be handled responsibly and respectfully. Moreover, participants were invited to provide voluntary feedback on their experience through short evaluation forms or informal discussions, and these feedback mechanisms helped the researcher improve future ethical practices and strengthen rapport between participants and the research team. In line with the principles of beneficence and reciprocity, the researcher also shared the study's findings and outcomes with both participants and the school community. Once data analysis and reporting were completed, a summary report and presentation of key results were provided to the school administration and faculty during a scheduled dissemination meeting or professional development session. This sharing of results aimed to ensure that teachers and administrators could directly benefit from the research outcomes through enhanced understanding of the Safe Spaces Act (RA 11313) and the development of targeted capacity building initiatives, such as seminars, IEC distribution, and awareness campaigns.

Conclusion

Based on the research questions, the study concludes that the JHS and SHS teachers of San Fernando South Central Integrated School demonstrated a very high level of awareness of the Safe Spaces Act, particularly in recognizing their responsibility to prevent and address gender-based sexual harassment. However, the findings also showed a comparatively lower understanding of specific penalties and sanctions, indicating the need for more focused legal orientation. The teachers likewise reported high accessibility of information, although access to digital materials, structured references, and regular updates may still be improved. In terms of compliance, teachers showed very high adherence to expected safe-space practices, including reporting, confidentiality, respectful conduct, and participation in related programs. Correlational results revealed that awareness was significantly related to accessibility of information, while accessibility of information was significantly related to compliance. However, awareness alone did not show a significant relationship with compliance, suggesting that knowledge of the law must be supported by accessible information, institutional mechanisms, training, and monitoring. Therefore, the proposed action plan is necessary to strengthen legal literacy, improve access to RA 11313 resources, sustain capacity-building activities, and promote consistent implementation of the Safe Spaces Act in the school community.

Recommendations

The findings therefore point to a refined conclusion: the school has moved beyond mere legal compliance toward cultivating a culture of safety and respect, yet this culture is sustained less by individual awareness alone and more by institutional factors such as leadership support, organized capacity building, and visible, accessible RA 11313 resources. Strengthening these institutional mechanisms through a permanent Safe Spaces or Child Protection Committee, a centralized information hub, and continuous skills-oriented training will be essential to ensure that all teachers, regardless of tenure or subject area, can consistently translate the law's provisions into everyday classroom and school practices.

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