



SAFETY AND INCLUSION OF LGBTQIA+ STUDENT-ATHLETES IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF SAFE SPACES ACT

Trisha Maye Gamalo , Jerma Madrio, Eufemio Balito, Jr., , Janet Quicho, Ruel Lood, Jamesmile Conui, Jr.

Holy Name University, Tagbilaran City, Bohol, Philippines

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36713/epra30623>

DOI No: 10.36713/epra30623

ABSTRACT

This study examined the safety and inclusion of LGBTQIA+ student-athletes in selected higher education institutions in Tagbilaran City, Bohol, in relation to the implementation of the Safe Spaces Act (Republic Act No. 11313). Specifically, it aimed to determine the status of Safe Spaces Act-aligned policies, programs, and mechanisms and to describe the reported experiences of LGBTQIA+ student-athletes in terms of safety and inclusion in sports settings and broader campus environments. A qualitative descriptive research design was employed. Data were gathered through document analysis, individual interviews, and a focus group discussion using purposive sampling. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis.

Findings revealed that while institutions demonstrate awareness of national legal frameworks, the development and documentation of institutional policies remain limited and inconsistent. Reporting mechanisms and preventive activities vary in their level of formalization, and policies addressing LGBTQIA+ inclusion, protection, and sports contexts are minimal. In terms of reported experiences, participants described inclusion as largely shaped by informal practices and interpersonal relationships. While sports environments foster a sense of belonging, experiences of safety and inclusion vary, with instances of teasing, exclusion, and discomfort reported in certain contexts.

The study highlights the need to strengthen institutional policies, improve awareness, and develop more inclusive systems to ensure consistent safety and inclusion for LGBTQIA+ student-athletes.

KEYWORDS: *Safe Spaces Act, LGBTQIA+ student-athletes, inclusion, safety, higher education*

INTRODUCTION

Education is widely recognized as a fundamental human right that must be accessible, inclusive, and safe for all individuals. Global initiatives such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 4 on Quality Education, emphasize the importance of equitable access to inclusive and non-discriminatory learning environments. Within this global agenda, the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ individuals has gained increasing attention, as educational institutions are expected to foster environments that support diversity and promote student well-being. However, despite these efforts, LGBTQIA+ students continue to experience unsafe and hostile school climates, including discrimination and exclusion, which negatively affect their well-being and participation in educational settings (Russell & Bishop, 2021; Hoanglan, 2021).

In the Philippines, Republic Act No. 11313, also known as the Safe Spaces Act, was enacted to address gender-based sexual harassment in public spaces, workplaces, online platforms, and educational institutions. The law mandates schools to implement anti-harassment policies, establish reporting mechanisms such as Committees on Decorum and Investigation (CODI), conduct awareness programs, and ensure protection regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression. These provisions underscore the institutional responsibility of schools to actively promote safe and inclusive environments for all learners (Gonzales, 2023; Cortez, 2021).

Despite the existence of this legal framework, challenges in policy implementation remain evident. A gap often exists between policy formulation and its actual practice within educational institutions. Studies have shown that while schools may report a high level of policy implementation, factors such as limited resources, lack of awareness, and cultural resistance continue to hinder effective execution (Inductivo, 2024; Gemar Mori, 2024). Moreover, even when awareness and compliance appear high, continuous improvement and reinforcement of implementation strategies are necessary to ensure that policies translate into meaningful protection for students (Borito, 2022).



Within this context, LGBTQIA+ student-athletes represent a distinct subgroup that may face unique challenges. As individuals who navigate both academic and athletic environments, they are exposed to multiple spaces where safety and inclusion must be ensured. Sports settings, in particular, are often characterized by strong gender norms and expectations, which may influence acceptance, participation, and access to safe spaces. Research indicates that LGBTQIA+ students frequently encounter discrimination, marginalization, and hostile environments despite the presence of institutional policies aimed at promoting inclusivity (Wainer, 2019; Baylon et al., 2024). These challenges may arise not only in sports settings such as training and competitions but also in broader campus environments, including classrooms, organizations, and institutional facilities.

Furthermore, there is a lack of localized research focusing on LGBTQIA+ student-athletes in higher education, particularly in areas such as Tagbilaran City, Bohol. While existing studies have examined LGBTQIA+ inclusion and policy implementation in general educational contexts, limited empirical research explores the intersection of policy implementation and the experiences of student-athletes. Previous research has emphasized the need for qualitative and context-specific investigations to better understand inclusivity and safety in educational environments (Galgo, 2023). This indicates an insufficient body of localized research connecting institutional practices under the Safe Spaces Act with the actual experiences of LGBTQIA+ student-athletes.

In response to these gaps, this study aims to examine the status of Safe Spaces Act-aligned policies, programs, and mechanisms in selected higher education institutions and to describe the experiences of LGBTQIA+ student-athletes in terms of safety and inclusion in both sports settings and broader campus environments. Through this approach, the study seeks to provide a clearer understanding of how policies are implemented and how they influence student experiences.

Ultimately, this study contributes to the improvement of policy implementation and inclusive practices in educational institutions. It offers context-specific insights that may guide school administrators, educators, and policymakers in strengthening efforts to create safer and more inclusive environments for LGBTQIA+ student-athletes.

Safe and inclusive education is widely recognized as essential to student well-being and academic success. International frameworks such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 4 on Quality Education, emphasize the need for equitable, inclusive, and non-discriminatory learning environments. Global organizations such as UNESCO highlight that schools play a critical role in ensuring that all learners, regardless of identity, feel safe, respected, and supported.

However, research consistently shows that LGBTQIA+ students continue to face unsafe school environments. Studies have documented experiences of bullying, discrimination, and social exclusion, which negatively affect students' mental health, academic performance, and participation (Russell & Bishop, 2021; Hoanglan, 2021; Allen et al., 2020). Unsafe school climates are also associated with increased absenteeism and dropout rates among LGBTQIA+ learners.

Despite global efforts to promote inclusivity, these findings indicate that the presence of policies alone does not guarantee safe educational environments. This highlights the importance of examining how inclusive policies are implemented and experienced within specific contexts.

In the Philippine context, inclusivity and protection for LGBTQIA+ individuals are primarily anchored in Republic Act No. 11313, also known as the

Safe Spaces Act of 2019. This law expanded protection against gender-based sexual harassment beyond workplaces to include schools, public spaces, and online platforms.

The Safe Spaces Act mandates educational institutions to implement key measures such as anti-harassment policies, the establishment of Committees on Decorum and Investigation (CODI), accessible reporting mechanisms, awareness programs, and protection regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression (SOGIE). These provisions position schools as central actors in promoting safe and inclusive learning environments (Cortez, 2021; Gonzales, 2023). Article V of the Safe Spaces Act (Republic Act No. 11313) outlines the responsibilities of educational and training institutions in addressing gender-based sexual harassment. It requires schools to adopt and implement comprehensive anti-harassment policies, establish reporting mechanisms, and create Committees on Decorum and Investigation (CODI) to handle complaints. It also mandates the conduct of regular awareness programs and ensures protection for all individuals regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression (SOGIE).

These provisions emphasize that educational institutions are not only expected to prevent harassment but also to proactively create safe, inclusive, and supportive environments for all learners. In addition, CHED and DepEd policies further reinforce the responsibility of educational institutions to operationalize these mandates. Schools are expected not only to comply with the law but also to actively create environments that prevent discrimination and support diversity.

Despite these legal mandates, its effectiveness depends on the consistency of its implementation in educational institutions. Despite the presence of comprehensive policies, several studies highlight a gap between policy formulation and actual implementation. Educational institutions often demonstrate formal compliance; however, the effectiveness of these policies remains inconsistent.

Research by Inductivo (2024) and Mori (2024) revealed that implementation is hindered by factors such as limited resources, insufficient training, lack of awareness, and cultural resistance. These barriers affect the ability of schools to fully operationalize the



provisions of Safe Spaces Act. Additionally, Borito (2022) found that while awareness of policies may be high among students, this does not necessarily translate into effective protection or consistent enforcement. Institutions may adopt policies on paper but fail to implement functional reporting systems, awareness programs, or long-term monitoring mechanisms.

These findings demonstrate a critical issue: compliance does not always equate to effectiveness. This gap between policy and practice highlights the need to examine how policies are experienced by students in real educational settings.

LGBTQIA+ students in educational environments continue to face various forms of discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion. Research indicates that these experiences can negatively impact students' sense of belonging, academic engagement, and overall well-being (Wainer, 2019).

Inclusive school climates are therefore essential in promoting student safety and participation. Studies show that environments that actively support diversity contribute to improved academic outcomes, reduced bullying, and better mental health among LGBTQIA+ learners. In addition, the concept of safe spaces emphasizes the importance of creating environments where students feel respected, supported, and free from discrimination, both physically and socially (Gay-Milliken & DiScala, 2020). These spaces play a critical role in fostering inclusion and promoting student well-being.

However, even in institutions with inclusive policies, discrimination may persist due to cultural norms, lack of awareness, and inconsistent enforcement. These challenges highlight the importance of not only having policies but also ensuring their effective implementation.

Within the broader LGBTQIA+ student population, student-athletes represent a distinct group with unique experiences. Sports environments are often characterized by strong gender norms and expectations, which may influence inclusion and acceptance.

Research shows that LGBTQIA+ student-athletes face challenges related to participation, identity expression, and social acceptance. Discrimination, verbal harassment, and marginalization are commonly reported, particularly in competitive sports settings (Baylon et al., 2024).

Studies on LGBTQIA+ student-athletes in sports contexts have identified challenges related to inclusion, participation, and identity expression within environments often shaped by traditional gender norms (Krane, 2016; Symons et al., 2017). Similarly, Anderson and Travers (2017) found that while some athletes experience acceptance, instances of exclusion and discrimination remain present in competitive sports settings. These findings highlight the importance of structured institutional policies and mechanisms in promoting safe and inclusive sports environments, consistent with the provisions outlined in Article V of the Safe Spaces Act.

At the same time, student-athletes navigate both academic and athletic environments, exposing them to multiple contexts where inclusion must be ensured. While some studies report increasing acceptance among peers, structural and institutional support remains necessary to address persistent inequalities. These findings emphasize the importance of examining how inclusive policies, such as the Safe Spaces Act, are implemented within both academic and sports settings.

Local studies in the Visayas provide important insights into how inclusivity is experienced within specific cultural contexts. Research conducted in Cebu found that heteronormative practices continue to persist despite the presence of inclusive policies, indicating a gap between policy frameworks and daily practices (Baylon et al., 2025).

In Bohol, studies by Galgo (2024) and Galgo et al. (2023) revealed that while inclusivity is generally recognized among students and teachers, there remains a gap between awareness and actual implementation. Instances of subtle discrimination and conditional acceptance were also observed, reflecting cultural influences on inclusivity.

These findings highlight that while policies promoting inclusivity exist, their effectiveness is shaped by local cultural norms and institutional practices. Furthermore, there is limited research focusing specifically on LGBTQIA+ student-athletes in higher education within Tagbilaran City, Bohol.

The reviewed literature demonstrates consistent findings across global, national, and local contexts. Globally, inclusive educational environments are recognized as essential for student well-being, yet LGBTQIA+ students continue to experience discrimination and exclusion.

At the national level, the Safe Spaces Act provides a comprehensive legal framework for promoting safety and inclusivity in educational institutions. However, studies reveal that implementation remains inconsistent due to various institutional and cultural challenges.

Local research further confirms the gap between policy and practice, showing that while inclusivity is acknowledged in principle, its application in everyday school settings remains limited. Existing studies primarily focus on general student populations or measure policy awareness and compliance, with limited attention to how policies are actually experienced in both academic and athletic environments. Moreover, there is insufficient research examining the relationship between the implementation of the Safe Spaces Act and the experiences of LGBTQIA+ student-athletes.

Despite the growing body of literature, there remains a lack of localized and context-specific research examining how the implementation of the Safe Spaces Act relates to the experiences of LGBTQIA+ student-athletes in higher education.



This study seeks to address these gaps by examining both the institutional implementation of Safe Spaces Act-aligned policies and the experiences of LGBTQIA+ student-athletes, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of inclusivity in both educational and sports contexts.

Statement of the Problem

This study examines how the Safe Spaces Act (RA 11313) is implemented and experienced by LGBTQIA+ student-athletes in higher education institutions, particularly in relation to safety and inclusion in sports and campus environments.

Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the status of Safe Spaces Act-aligned policies, programs, and mechanisms in selected higher education institutions?
2. What are the reported experiences of LGBTQIA+ student-athletes regarding safety and inclusion in:
 - a. sports settings (e.g., training, competitions), and
 - b. broader campus spaces (e.g., classrooms, organizations, facilities)?

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a qualitative descriptive research design to examine the implementation of Safe Spaces Act-aligned policies, programs, and mechanisms, and to describe the experiences of LGBTQIA+ student-athletes in higher education institutions.

A qualitative descriptive approach is appropriate for this study as it focuses on presenting a clear and straightforward description of real-world situations without extensive theoretical interpretation. This design allows the researchers to understand how policies related to Republic Act No. 11313 (Safe Spaces Act) are implemented and how they are experienced by LGBTQIA+ student-athletes in terms of safety and inclusion within both sports and campus environments.

The study is conducted in selected higher education institutions in Tagbilaran City, Bohol. These institutions may include public and private colleges and universities that offer organized sports programs.

To ensure confidentiality and comply with ethical standards, the names of the institutions involved in the study are not disclosed. All references to the research setting are presented in general terms to protect the identity of the participating schools.

Tagbilaran City serves as a regional educational hub in Bohol, hosting a diverse student population drawn from both urban and rural areas. This setting provides a meaningful backdrop for exploring how national legislation such as the Safe Spaces Act is interpreted, communicated, or rendered invisible at the institutional level, particularly in relation to marginalized student populations. Conducting the study within the same city also helped control for broader sociocultural variables, allowing differences in student experiences to be more closely associated with institutional environments rather than geographic context.

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research approach and involved ten (10) LGBTQIA+ student-athletes drawn from two selected higher education institutions in Tagbilaran City, Bohol. Five (5) participants were recruited from each institution. The participants were undergraduate students who voluntarily self-identified as members of the LGBTQIA+ community and were actively engaged in athletics, either as varsity athletes or intramural sports participants.

Purposive sampling was used to select participants who were capable of providing relevant and meaningful insights regarding safety, inclusion, and support within academic and athletic environments, particularly in relation to the implementation of the Safe Spaces Act. This sampling strategy was appropriate given the study's focus on describing participants' experiences rather than achieving statistical generalization.

To be eligible for participation, students had to meet the following criteria: (a) voluntarily self-identify as LGBTQIA+, with disclosure remaining optional and strictly confidential; (b) be currently enrolled undergraduate students; (c) be actively involved in athletics, either as varsity players or intramural participants; (d) be at least eighteen (18) years old at the time of the study to ensure legal capacity to provide informed consent; and (e) have completed at least one academic year in their institution to ensure sufficient exposure to both academic and athletic environments.

Students who did not self-identify as LGBTQIA+, were not engaged in athletics, were below eighteen (18) years of age, or were not currently enrolled during the data collection period were excluded from the study.

Participant recruitment followed an ethical, privacy-protective, and permission-based process. After securing institutional approval, the researchers coordinated with athletics coordinators, student affairs personnel, and leaders of relevant student organizations who served as gatekeepers. These individuals were familiar with their respective student communities and assisted in identifying potential participants who met the general characteristics of the study without disclosing personal identities.

Gatekeepers initiated initial contact by briefly explaining the study and emphasizing that participation was entirely voluntary and that declining would not result in any academic, athletic, or organizational consequences. Only students who explicitly granted permission to be contacted had their contact information shared with the researchers. No lists or personal information of non-consenting students were disclosed.



The researchers then contacted willing participants through secure communication channels to provide detailed information about the study and to conduct a brief and confidential eligibility screening. Participants who met the inclusion criteria and agreed to participate were provided with an informed consent form prior to the interview.

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. Participants retained the right to withdraw at any point without penalty. Withdrawal was honored in cases where a participant revoked consent, declined to continue, became unavailable, or when continued participation posed potential emotional discomfort. These safeguards ensured the protection of participants' rights and well-being in accordance with ethical standards for qualitative educational research.

Although three institutions were included in the Ethics Review Board–approved research protocol, only two institutions granted permission within the data collection period. The third institution granted permission only after the data collection period had concluded. As a result, no data were collected from that institution, and it was excluded from the final implementation and analysis of the study.

The study utilized two primary data collection instruments: a policy checklist and a semi-structured interview guide.

The policy checklist was used to examine institutional compliance with the Safe Spaces Act (Republic Act No. 11313). This instrument was developed based on the key provisions of Article V of the Safe Spaces Act, particularly those related to anti-harassment policies, reporting mechanisms, Committees on Decorum and Investigation (CODI), awareness programs, and protection regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression. The checklist served as a structured tool in reviewing institutional documents such as student handbooks, official policies, and guidelines.

The checklist was designed to classify each policy indicator based on the level of available evidence. Specifically, indicators were categorized as Documented (formally written in official records), Reported (supported by external frameworks or secondary sources), Claimed (mentioned without supporting documentation), or Not Present (no evidence found in the reviewed materials). This classification enabled a more nuanced evaluation of institutional compliance and directly informed the document analysis.

The semi-structured interview guide was used to gather in-depth information on the experiences of LGBTQIA+ student-athletes. The guide consisted of open-ended questions designed to explore participants' awareness of institutional policies, experiences of safety and inclusion, and perceptions of how these policies are implemented in practice. Questions covered both sports environments (e.g., training and competitions) and broader campus settings (e.g., classrooms, student organizations, and institutional facilities).

The use of a semi-structured format allowed consistency across interviews while providing flexibility for participants to elaborate on their responses. This approach also enabled the researchers to probe further into areas where participants' experiences aligned with or differed from the institutional policies identified in the document analysis.

The researchers followed a well-structured approach to gathering data for the study while ensuring that all ethical standards were adhered to and the necessary permissions were obtained.

Data gathering commenced only after formal approval of the research protocol by the Holy Name University Ethics Review Board (HNU-ERB) to ensure compliance with institutional, national, and ethical research standards.

Following ERB clearance, the researchers secured authorization from the Dean of the College of Education of Holy Name University and obtained endorsement letters addressed to the administrators of the participating higher education institutions in Tagbilaran City, Bohol.

As an initial contextual step, the researchers formally requested access to publicly available and institutionally provided documents, including student handbooks, administrative memoranda, and athletics-related materials. These documents were reviewed not to measure policy compliance, but to establish the institutional status and visibility of Safe Spaces Act–aligned policies, programs, or mechanisms, thereby situating participant narratives within their broader institutional context.

The primary data source of the study consisted of semi-structured, in-depth interviews with LGBTQIA+ student-athletes. Interviews were conducted at a time and venue chosen by participants, either in a private institutional setting or through a secure online platform, to ensure comfort and confidentiality. Each interview lasted approximately 20–30 minutes.

With participants' informed consent, interviews were audio-recorded, and field notes were taken to capture contextual details and non-verbal cues relevant to the discussion. Each participant completed only one interview session, with the option to pause or withdraw at any point without consequence.

Participants did not receive financial compensation. However, consistent with local hospitality practices, light refreshments were offered after interviews as a non-coercive token of appreciation for their time and insights.

Given the sensitive nature of sexual orientation, gender identity, and athletic participation, strict ethical safeguards were implemented. Participants were assigned pseudonyms and unique identification codes (e.g., U1_P1, U2_P1), which were used in transcripts and reports to protect anonymity. Identifying details were masked or generalized when necessary to prevent institutional or individual identification.



All research materials, including audio recordings, transcripts, and consent forms, were securely stored. Digital files were encrypted and password-protected, while physical documents were kept in a locked cabinet accessible only to the researchers and thesis adviser. Data retention and disposal followed HNU-ERB protocols.

A distress protocol was observed throughout the interview process. Participants were reminded of their right to pause, skip questions, or withdraw. When emotional discomfort was observed or expressed, interviews were paused and participants were offered the option to discontinue or continue at their own pace. Referrals to campus counseling or support services were made available when appropriate. In cases involving disclosures of harm or risk, ERB safeguarding procedures were followed while prioritizing participant autonomy and transparency.

The data collected from institutional documents and interviews were analyzed using a combination of document analysis and thematic analysis. This approach allowed the researchers to systematically examine institutional evidence while also capturing patterns in participants' experiences.

The analysis began with the examination of institutional documents related to the implementation of the Safe Spaces Act (Republic Act No. 11313). A structured classification framework was employed to assess the status of each policy indicator. Specifically, each indicator was categorized as Documented, Reported, Claimed, or Not Present based on the availability and verifiability of evidence. Documented refers to formally written policies found in official institutional records; Reported refers to policies derived from external legal frameworks or secondary sources; Claimed refers to practices mentioned without supporting documentation; and Not Present indicates the absence of evidence in the reviewed materials. This categorical approach enabled a systematic evaluation of the extent of policy implementation without generating themes.

Following the document analysis, interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis. All interview recordings were transcribed verbatim immediately after data collection. The transcripts were reviewed multiple times to ensure accuracy and to facilitate immersion in the data. Coding was conducted to identify significant statements and recurring patterns across participants' responses. These codes were then grouped into categories and subsequently developed into themes that represented the key findings related to the experiences of LGBTQIA+ student-athletes.

The findings from the document analysis and interview data were then compared and interpreted in relation to each other. The document analysis provided a basis for understanding institutional policies, while the thematic analysis of interviews offered insights into how these policies were experienced in practice. This process allowed for triangulation, enhancing the credibility and depth of the study.

The interpretation of findings was further guided by the provisions under Article V of the Safe Spaces Act, particularly those concerning institutional responsibilities such as the establishment of anti-harassment policies, reporting mechanisms, Committees on Decorum and Investigation (CODI), awareness programs, and the promotion of safe and inclusive environments regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression. This framework ensured that both institutional data and participant experiences were analyzed in relation to established legal standards.

Verbatim quotations were retained to preserve participants' voices and to strengthen the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. Through this integrated analytical process, the researchers were able to present the data in a clear, organized, and meaningful manner, reflecting both the institutional status of Safe Spaces Act implementation and the experiences of LGBTQIA+ student-athletes.

In line with the requirements of the Holy Name University Ethics Review Board (HNU-ERB), the researchers affirmed their adherence to the highest ethical standards in the conduct of this study. The researchers declared that there was no conflict of interest that may influenced the design, implementation, or reporting of the research. This study was undertaken solely for academic purposes, with no financial or institutional bias toward any of the participating higher education institutions.

Matters related to specimen handling were not applicable to this study, as the research did not involve the collection or analysis of biological, chemical, or physical specimens. Similarly, assent procedures were not applicable, since all participants will be 18 years old and above, and therefore legally capable of providing informed consent. Each participant was fully briefed on the nature, purpose, and procedures of the study before voluntarily signing the informed consent form. These measures ensured that the study was conducted ethically, transparently, and in full compliance with institutional and national research ethics standards.

Declaration of AI Use in Research Methodology and Manuscript Writing

This research employed artificial intelligence (AI) support in selected stages of the study, specifically for structuring, rewording, and formatting the manuscript. The AI-powered research assistant used was a Custom GPT created by HNU-COED. No AI tools were used to generate raw data, analyze findings, or draw conclusions.

The researchers affirmed full responsibility for the ethical use of AI throughout the study. In line with HNU and international research ethics guidelines, the AI-assisted contributions were transparently acknowledged, carefully reviewed, and quality-checked to ensure accuracy, clarity, and coherence. Data confidentiality and security were safeguarded, and all interpretations, analyses, and



conclusions remained the responsibility of the researchers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Status of Safe Spaces Act–Aligned Policies, Programs, and Mechanisms in Selected Higher Education Institutions

This section presents the results of the document analysis conducted to examine the extent to which the selected institutions have established policies, programs, and mechanisms aligned with the Safe Spaces Act. Using a structured policy checklist, institutional documents such as student handbooks, manuals, and related materials were reviewed and analyzed across key areas, including general policy provisions, reporting and complaint mechanisms, preventive and educational measures, school spaces and facilities, sports and athletics policies, sanctions and accountability, and support systems for victims.

The findings are summarized in consolidated tables for each institution to provide a comprehensive view of the presence, documentation, and implementation of these mechanisms. Each table presents the identified indicators, their status, and corresponding source documents to clarify the nature of the evidence. This format allows for a systematic presentation of results and facilitates comparison across policy areas within each institution.

To guide the analysis, the status of each policy indicator was categorized as Documented, Reported, Claimed, or Not Present based on the availability and verifiability of institutional documents. Documented refers to formally written policies in official records; Reported refers to policies derived from external legal frameworks or secondary sources; Claimed refers to practices mentioned without supporting documentation; and Not Present indicates the absence of evidence in the reviewed materials.

**Table 1. Status of Safe Spaces Act–Related Policies, Programs, and Mechanisms
Based on Available Documents in Institution**

Category	Policy Indicators	Status
A. General Policy Provision	Definitions of GBSH	Reported (Law-Based)
	Prohibition of GBSH	Reported (Law-Based)
	SOGIE-inclusive language	Not present
	Reference to RA 11313	Not present
	Protection for all genders	Reported (Law-Based)
	Policy applies to both students and employees	Reported (Law-Based)
B. Reporting and Complaint Mechanisms	Reporting procedures for GBSH incidents	Documented
	Confidential reporting	Documented
	Designated office for receiving reports	Documented
	Timeline for processing complaints	Documented
	Protections against retaliation	Documented
C. Preventive and Educational Measures	Referral to counseling or psychosocial services	Documented
	Orientation programs about the Safe Spaces Act	Claimed
	Training for faculty/staff on handling GBSH	Claimed
	Campus-wide advocacy or awareness activities	Claimed
	Preventive measures for online harassment	Documented
D. School Spaces and Facilities	Policies covering classrooms and academic spaces	Documented
	Policies for restrooms and gender-neutral spaces	Not Documented
	Policies for dormitories, lounges, or common areas	Not Documented
	Safety protocols for campus events or activities	Claimed
E. Sports and athletics office	Anti-harassment policy specific to sports teams	Reported (Law-Based)
	Guidelines for coaches regarding respectful conduct	Not Present



	Inclusion of LGBTQIA+ athletes in sports policies	Not present
	Complaint mechanisms for athletic activities	Documented
	Protocols for locker rooms, changing areas, sports spaces	Not present
	Measures protecting student-athletes from bullying or discrimination	Not present
F. Sanctions and accountability	Clear sanctions for GBSH violations	Documented
	Due process procedures	Documented
	Disciplinary actions for employees, students, and coaches	Documented (Student-specific)
	Procedures for appeal	Not Present
G. Support system for Victims	Access to counseling or mental health services	Documented
	Support for LGBTQIA+ students	Not Present
	Protection orders or safety plans	Not Present

The findings from the document analysis of Institution 1 are based primarily on their Student Handbook, including Appendix D2, Appendix B1, Appendix A7, and provisions under Student Services and Code of Discipline sections. This document was examined to determine the presence and extent of policies, programs, and mechanisms aligned with the Safe Spaces Act.

In terms of general policy provisions, Appendix D2 of their Student Handbook includes definitions of gender-based sexual harassment (GBSH) and a general statement prohibiting such acts within the institution. It also indicates that protection applies to all genders and covers both students and employees. However, these provisions were anchored in national legislation, particularly Republic Act No. 7877, rather than being explicitly articulated as institutional policies. The document does not include SOGIE-inclusive language, and no explicit reference to Republic Act No. 11313 (Safe Spaces Act) is identified.

For reporting and complaint mechanisms, Appendix B1 of their Student Handbook, titled Administrative Disciplinary Rules, provides detailed procedures for filing and handling complaints. The document specifies requirements for written complaints, identifies responsible offices such as the Office of the Director of the Center for Student Affairs, and outlines the roles of the Committee on Decorum and Investigation (CODI) and the Disciplinary Board. It also includes timelines, due process provisions, protection against retaliation, and referral to counseling or psychosocial services. These provisions are clearly stated and formally documented in the handbook.

In relation to preventive and educational measures, the reviewed documents do not contain formal provisions for orientation programs, training for faculty and staff, or campus-wide awareness activities related to GBSH. However, Appendix A7 of their Student Handbook includes policies on the responsible use of social media, which address issues of online harassment.

With regard to school spaces and facilities, provisions under Student Rights Article 1 of their Student Handbook include general policies governing classrooms and academic environments. However, no specific policies are stated in the document regarding restrooms, gender-neutral spaces, dormitories, lounges, or common areas. Similarly, no documented safety protocols for campus events or activities are identified.

In terms of sports and athletics, Appendix D2 of their Student Handbook includes anti-harassment provisions based on national law; however, these are not specific to sports contexts. While complaint procedures outlined in Appendix B1 are applicable to all students, the documents do not contain provisions specifically addressing sports teams, coach conduct, LGBTQIA+ inclusion in athletics, or protocols for locker rooms and sports facilities.

For sanctions and accountabilities, the Article 5 of their Student Handbook includes sexual harassment as a major offense under general disciplinary provisions. Appendix B1 further outlines due process procedures for handling cases, ensuring fair investigation and decision-making. However, these provisions are not presented as part of a distinct GBSH-specific policy. Additionally, while disciplinary actions for students are documented, the documents do not clearly specify provisions for employees or coaches, and no formal appeal procedures after final decisions are stated.

Finally, in terms of support systems, the Article 12 of Student Services section of their Student Handbook states that counseling and guidance services are available to students through designated counselors. However, no provisions are stated in the documents regarding support specifically for LGBTQIA+ students. Likewise, no documented mechanisms such as protection orders or safety plans



are identified.

Overall, the analysis of the Student Handbook and its appendices shows that Institution 1 provides clear documentation for procedural mechanisms such as reporting, complaint handling, and disciplinary processes. However, many areas including preventive measures, inclusive school spaces, sports-specific policies, and specialized support systems are either not stated in the documents or remain limited to general or law-based provisions. This indicates that while some mechanisms are formally documented, the institutionalization of Safe Spaces Act-aligned policies is not comprehensive.

Table 2 presents the results of the document analysis for Institution 2, based on selected policy indicators derived from Article V of the Safe Spaces Act (Republic Act No. 11313). The table shows that most policy indicators fall under the categories of Claimed and Not Present, indicating that while certain practices are mentioned, they are not consistently supported by formal documentation. This suggests that the institution's alignment with national policy is largely referenced or implied rather than institutionalized through officially documented policies.

Table 2. Status of Safe Spaces Act-Related Policies, Programs, and Mechanisms Based on Available Documents in institution 2

Category	Policy Indicators	Status
A. General Policy Provisions	Definitions or mention of Gender-Based Sexual Harassment (GBSH)	Claimed
	Clear statement prohibiting GBSH within the institution	Claimed
	Inclusion of SOGIE-inclusive language	Claimed
	Policy explicitly referencing the Safe Spaces Act (RA 11313)	Claimed
	Inclusion of all genders in protection clauses	Not present
	Policy applies to both students and employees	Claimed
B. Reporting and complaint mechanisms	Clear reporting procedures for GBSH incidents	Claimed
	Anonymous or confidential reporting options	Claimed
	Designated office for receiving reports	Claimed
	Timeline for processing complaints	Claimed
	Protections against retaliation	Claimed
	Referral to counseling or psychosocial services	Claimed
C. Preventive and Educational Method	Orientation programs about the Safe Spaces Act	Claimed
	Training for faculty/staff on handling GBSH	Claimed
	Campus-wide advocacy or awareness activities	Claimed
	Preventive measures for online harassment	Claimed
D. School Spaces and Facilities	Policies covering classrooms and academic spaces	Claimed
	Policies for restrooms and gender-neutral spaces	Claimed
	Policies for dormitories, lounges, or common areas	Claimed
	Safety protocols for campus events or activities	Claimed
E. Sports and Athletics Policies	Anti-harassment policy specific to sports teams	Claimed
	Guidelines for coaches regarding respectful conduct	Claimed
	Inclusion of LGBTQIA+ athletes in sports policies	Not present
	Complaint mechanisms for athletic activities	Claimed
	Protocols for locker rooms, changing areas, sports spaces	Not present



	Measures protecting student-athletes from bullying or discrimination	Not present
F. Sanctions and Accountability	Clear sanctions for GBSH violations	Claimed
	Due process procedures	Not present
	Disciplinary actions for employees, students, and coaches	Not present
G. Support Systems for victims	Procedures for appeal	Not present
	Access to counseling or mental health services	Claimed
	Support for LGBTQIA+ students	Claimed

The results for Institution 2 indicate that several policy indicators were claimed as present; however, no supporting institutional documents were provided, and some materials were identified as confidential and therefore not accessible for verification. Further clarification during data collection revealed that formal policies specifically aligned with the Safe Spaces Act are not yet implemented within the institution.

These findings suggest that although there may be general awareness or informal implementation of gender-based sexual harassment-related measures, such practices are not formally documented or institutionalized.

Based on the document analysis of institutional records, particularly the Student Handbooks and their relevant appendices, the status of Safe Spaces Act-aligned policies, programs, and mechanisms in the two institutions can be described as partially aligned but unevenly institutionalized.

The institutions are described as partially aligned but unevenly institutionalized because while some mechanisms such as reporting procedures and disciplinary processes reflect the provisions of the Safe Spaces Act and are documented, other essential components, including preventive measures, inclusive policies, and LGBTQIA+-specific support systems, are either not stated or not formally institutionalized.

Institution 1 demonstrates a higher level of formal documentation, particularly in procedural areas such as reporting and complaint mechanisms, due process, and disciplinary procedures, as explicitly stated in their Student Handbook and its appendices. However, several key areas including preventive and educational measures, inclusive school spaces, sports-specific policies, and LGBTQIA+-focused support systems are either not stated in the reviewed documents or remain limited to general or law-based provisions. This indicates that while foundational mechanisms are in place, institutional policies are not fully comprehensive or explicitly aligned with the Safe Spaces Act.

In contrast, Institution 2 reflects a lower level of institutionalization, with most policy indicators categorized as *Claimed* or *Not Present* due to the absence of verifiable documentary evidence. Although some policies and practices were reported during data collection, these were not supported by accessible institutional documents, and formal policies aligned with the Safe Spaces Act are not yet implemented. This suggests that institutional mechanisms remain largely informal and are not formally documented or operationalized.

Overall, the findings indicate that both institutions demonstrate awareness of national legal frameworks related to gender-based sexual harassment; however, the development and formal institutionalization of Safe Spaces Act-aligned policies remain incomplete. While Institution 1 shows partial alignment through documented procedural mechanisms, Institution 2 reflects minimal documentation and limited policy implementation, highlighting significant gaps in ensuring comprehensive and inclusive institutional responses.

Reported Experiences of LGBTQIA+ Student-Athletes Regarding Safety and Inclusion

This section presents, analyzes, and interprets the reported experiences of LGBTQIA+ student-athletes in selected higher education institutions. Using a qualitative descriptive design, data from semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were analyzed through axial coding to identify recurring patterns related to safety, inclusion, and everyday school experiences.

The discussion is grounded primarily in participants' responses and supported by relevant literature on LGBTQIA+ inclusion in educational and sports settings (UNESCO, 2019; Anderson & Travers, 2017; Symons et al., 2017). References to national frameworks such as the Republic Act No. 11313 are used only as contextual support rather than as the main analytical lens.

Theme 1: Limited Awareness of Institutional Protections

Participants' responses show that awareness of policies related to safety and inclusion is generally limited. Several participants clearly expressed that they are not familiar with the Safe Spaces Act or related school mechanisms.



One participant stated, *"wala ko kaayo kabalo... wala koy idea about GAD"* (U1_P1), while another shared, *"murag nadunggan ra... pero wala pa ko kahibaw"* (U1_P2). A participant also responded directly, *"No"* when asked about awareness (U1_P3). Even those who had heard of the law expressed uncertainty, as reflected in *"familiar siya... pero dili specific"* (U1_P5).

In the second institution, participants emphasized the absence of visible policies, stating, *"there are still no safe space for us here"* (U2_P1) and *"wala sad... none so far"* (U2_P2-P5).

These responses indicate that participants' experiences of safety are not guided by clear knowledge of institutional policies. This supports findings in previous studies that awareness of gender-related protections is often limited when dissemination is insufficient (Cortez, 2020; Gonzales, 2021). As noted by UNESCO (2019), awareness plays an important role in enabling students to access support systems.

Theme 2: Use of Informal Practices in Inclusion

Participants generally described their experiences as positive due to the acceptance they receive from coaches, teammates, and peers. However, this acceptance is primarily based on informal practices rather than formal structures.

One participant explained, *"walay act pero sa ilahang action safe mi"* (U1_P1), indicating that safety is experienced through behavior rather than policy. Another described their team environment as supportive, stating, *"team feels like family... welcome mi"* (U1_P2). Similarly, a participant noted, *"open ra ang coach... welcome mi"* (U1_P4).

Participants from the second institution shared similar experiences, such as *"environment okay ra... open ra ang straight"* (U2_P1) and *"respect man gud sila"* (U2_P2).

These responses show that inclusion is largely shaped by interpersonal relationships and the overall culture within teams. This is consistent with previous studies suggesting that inclusive environments are often influenced by social interactions and peer dynamics (Mori, 2021; Borito, 2022). In sports settings, acceptance is commonly facilitated by coaches and teammates (Anderson & Travers, 2017).

However, because inclusion is based on informal practices, it may vary depending on the people involved and may not be consistent across different settings.

Theme 3: Sense of Belonging and Inclusive Participation in Sports

Participants consistently described sports settings as spaces where they feel included and accepted. Their responses indicate that participation is based on skill and performance rather than gender identity.

For instance, one participant stated, *"focus mismo sa skills"* (U1_P1), emphasizing merit-based participation. Another participant reported that gender identity does not affect their involvement, responding *"No"* when asked if it affects sports participation (U1_P3).

Participants also highlighted the supportive nature of sports environments. One participant stated, *"support inside the court"* (U2_P3), reflecting positive interactions during sports activities.

These findings suggest that sports settings provide opportunities for inclusion by focusing on teamwork and shared goals. This is supported by research indicating that sports can promote inclusion when emphasis is placed on ability and collaboration rather than identity (Krane, 2016; Denison & Kitchen, 2015).

Theme 4: Experiences of Safety and Discrimination

While participants reported positive experiences, they also described situations where safety is not consistent. Some participants mentioned teasing, exclusion, and discomfort in certain environments.

For example, one participant shared, *"sometimes sungogon mi... sarcastic jokes"* (U1_P1), while another noted, *"dili makasabay... mag lahi nalang mi"* (U1_P1). Concerns about unequal treatment were also mentioned, such as *"naay favoritism sa teacher"* (U1_P1).

In the second institution, participants reported more direct experiences of discrimination, including *"excluded mi sa basketball kay gay"* (U2_P3) and *"mura mig laughing stock"* (U2_P4). Participants also expressed discomfort in shared spaces such as restrooms.

These responses indicate that safety depends on context and varies across environments. This is consistent with literature showing that LGBTQIA+ students may experience both inclusion and discrimination within educational settings (Russell & Bishop, 2016; Symons et al., 2017).

The findings suggest that while some spaces are supportive, others still present challenges that affect students' sense of safety.

Theme 5: Need for Stronger Policies, Programs, and Inclusive Spaces

Participants identified several areas for improvement, particularly in terms of awareness, facilities, and support systems.

One participant stated, *"need more policies... more awareness"* (U1_P1), while another suggested, *"mag orientation para aware tanan"* (U1_P1). Participants also recommended specific measures such as *"anti-discrimination policy with fines"* (U1_P1).



In terms of facilities, participants emphasized the need for inclusive spaces, with one stating, “*naay ika tulo nga restroom*” (U1_P2). Participants from the second institution also suggested seminars and programs to promote awareness and inclusion.

These responses indicate that participants recognize the need for more structured support within their institutions. This is supported by studies emphasizing that policies, programs, and inclusive environments contribute to improved safety and well-being among LGBTQIA+ students (UNESCO, 2019; Gay-Milliken & DiScala, 2020).

CONCLUSION

This study examined the status of Safe Spaces Act-aligned policies, programs, and mechanisms in selected higher education institutions, as well as the experiences of LGBTQIA+ student-athletes in terms of safety and inclusion.

The findings reveal that the implementation of Safe Spaces Act-aligned policies in the selected institutions remains partial and uneven. While Institution 1 demonstrates the presence of formally documented procedures particularly in reporting mechanisms, due process, and disciplinary systems and these are not comprehensive and are largely based on general or law-derived provisions rather than fully developed institutional policies. Key components such as preventive and educational programs, inclusive school spaces, sports-specific policies, and LGBTQIA+-focused support systems are either not documented or not explicitly institutionalized. In contrast, Institution 2 shows minimal documentation and lacks formally implemented policies aligned with the Safe Spaces Act, indicating that existing practices are largely informal and not reflected in accessible institutional records.

These findings suggest that both institutions have yet to fully translate national legal frameworks into comprehensive and context-specific institutional policies. The absence of explicit Safe Spaces Act provisions, SOGIE-inclusive language, and structured preventive and support mechanisms highlights gaps in policy development and institutional commitment to inclusive and safe educational environments.

Furthermore, the experiences of LGBTQIA+ student-athletes reflect a similar pattern of inconsistency. While many participants reported feelings of acceptance and inclusion, particularly within sports teams, such experiences are largely shaped by informal practices and interpersonal relationships rather than formal institutional support. At the same time, instances of teasing, exclusion, and discomfort in certain spaces indicate that safety is not consistently experienced across all environments.

Taken together, the findings indicate a disconnect between existing legal frameworks, institutional policies, and the experiences of students. While some mechanisms are in place, these are insufficient to ensure comprehensive, inclusive, and consistent protection for LGBTQIA+ student-athletes. This underscores the need for higher education institutions to move beyond general compliance and toward the development of clearly defined, inclusive, and fully institutionalized policies aligned with the Safe Spaces Act.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings and conclusions of the study, several recommendations are proposed to improve the implementation of Safe Spaces Act-aligned policies and enhance the safety and inclusion of LGBTQIA+ student-athletes in higher education institutions.

1. Educational Institutions and Administrators. Educational institutions and administrators are encouraged to fully develop and implement policies aligned with the Safe Spaces Act, particularly in relation to the provisions outlined under Article V of Republic Act No. 11313. This includes ensuring that policies are clearly documented, institution-specific, and consistently applied across all areas of the school environment. In addition, institutions may establish and operationalize Committees on Decorum and Investigation (CODI) to address complaints related to gender-based sexual harassment. Strengthening reporting mechanisms is also recommended to ensure that they are accessible, confidential, and responsive to the needs of students.

2. Student Affairs Offices. Student Affairs Offices may enhance their efforts in promoting awareness and understanding of the Safe Spaces Act by conducting regular seminars, orientations, and information campaigns. These initiatives can help improve students' knowledge of their rights and the available support systems within the institution. Furthermore, the development of inclusive programs, such as gender sensitivity training, peer-support initiatives, and diversity campaigns, may contribute to fostering a more supportive and inclusive campus environment.

3. Athletic Departments and Coaches. Athletic departments and coaches are encouraged to promote inclusive practices within sports environments by ensuring equal participation opportunities regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Establishing a supportive and respectful team culture, along with the development of guidelines that promote inclusion and prevent discrimination, may help create safer and more inclusive spaces for LGBTQIA+ student-athletes.

4. Policy-Makers. Policy-makers may consider strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems to ensure that the provisions of the Safe Spaces Act are effectively reflected in higher education institutions. Providing clear guidelines, technical support, and institutional assistance can help schools in developing and implementing policies and programs that promote safety and inclusion. These efforts may contribute to more consistent application of the law across different institutional contexts.



5. Future Researchers. Future researchers may consider conducting similar studies in other regions or institutional settings to allow for broader comparison of findings. Expanding the scope of participants to include administrators, faculty members, and non-athlete students may provide a more comprehensive understanding of institutional practices and experiences related to safety and inclusion. Additionally, the use of mixed-methods or longitudinal research designs may offer deeper insights into the long-term impact of policy development and implementation.

REFERENCES

- Allen, K., Hammack, P. L., Himes, H. L., & Moskowitz, D. A. (2020). *Safe spaces: Making schools and communities welcoming to LGBT youth*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Anderson, E., & Travers, A. (2017). Out in sport: The experiences of openly gay and lesbian athletes in competitive sport. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 64(7), 943–956. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2016.1233467>
- Baylon, M., Dela Cruz, J., & Santos, A. (2025). *Embracing diversity: Promoting safe spaces for LGBTQIA+ college students in a local college*. [Unpublished manuscript].
- Bayani, R., & Flores, L. (2019). A study on discrimination among LGBTQ youth of senior high school students at ETTMNHS S.Y. 2018–2019. *Ascendens Asia Journal of Multidisciplinary Research Abstracts*, 3(2).
- Borito, R. (2022). Awareness, attitude, and compliance with RA11313 – Safe Spaces Act among college students in a higher educational institution in Laguna. *Journal of Education and Society*, 7(2), 45–59.
- Commission on Higher Education (CHED). (2015). *CHED Memorandum on gender sensitivity guidelines*. CHED.
- Cortez, R. G. C. (2021). Public perceptions of the Safe Spaces Act (RA 11313). In *Proceedings of the DLSU Research Congress 2021* (pp. 1–12). De La Salle University. <https://www.dlsu.edu.ph/wp-content/uploads/pdf/conferences/research-congress-proceedings/2021/WCFE-02.pdf>
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- David, J. (2024). How lax implementation of the Safe Spaces Act fails to exact justice for survivors. *Philippine Collegian*. <https://phkule.org/article/1213/uncovering-how-legal-systems-fail-to-exact-justice-for-sexual-harassment-survivors/>
- Department of Education (DepEd). (2012). *Child Protection Policy*. DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012.
- Department of Education (DepEd). (2017). *Gender-responsive basic education policy*. DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2017.
- Denison, E., & Kitchen, A. (2015). *Out on the fields: The first international study on homophobia in sport*. Repucom and Bingham Cup Sydney.
- Domdom, C. (2022). Situating lesbian work inclusivity: Safe spaces implications. *Philippine Journal of Labor and Policy Studies*, 9(1), 88–103.
- Enriquez, P. A. (2017). *How discrimination happens: Being LGBT and the experience of discrimination in access to employment, and the labour market in the Philippines*. International Institute of Social Studies.
- Francisco, A. C., Mixto, F. F. A., Miranda, P. E. D. C., Dela Cruz, J. C. P., Cleofe, S. G. S., Digma, P. J. G., San Juan, R. A. Q., & Raymundo, J. P. S. (2024). Lived experiences of LGBTQIA+ students in Morong National High School. *Philippine Journal of Education and Development*, 15(2), 112–128. <https://scimatic.org/storage/journals/11/pdfs/3414.pdf>
- Galgo, J. (2024). Inclusivity of the LGBTQ+ community in the learning environment as perceived by students and teachers. *International Journal of Education and Pedagogy*, 16(1), 21–35. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/371721527>
- Gamutin, E., et al. (2024). Student-athletes' perceptions on the LGBTQIA+ member inclusion in gender-specific sports in the Philippine educational system. *ResearchGate*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/387480425_Student-Athletes_Perceptions_on_the_LGBTQIA_Member_Inclusion_in_Gender-specific_Sports_in_the_Philippine_Educational_System
- Gay-Milliken, L., & DiScala, J. (2020). Going beyond book displays: Providing safe spaces for LGBTQ youth. *Knowledge Quest*, 48(3), 46–53.
- Gemar Mori, M. (2024). School as a safe space through gender-responsive basic education policy. *Philippine Journal of Educational Policy Studies*, 18(2), 15–34. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/385175775>
- Gonzales, M. (2023). Filling in the loopholes: An assessment of the Philippine Safe Spaces Act. *Journal of Southeast Asian Law and Policy*, 14(1), 99–118.
- Hoanglan, T. (2021). Creating safe and inclusive schools for LGBTQ students. *BU Journal of Graduate Studies in Education*, 13(2), 27–31.
- Human Rights Watch. (2017). "Just let us be": Discrimination against LGBT students in the Philippines. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/06/21/just-let-us-be/discrimination-against-lgbt-students-philippines>
- Inductivo, L. (2024). On schools' safe spaces: A review of gender-responsive basic education in Imus City. *Philippine Journal of Educational Leadership*, 12(1), 45–62. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/381507327>
- Krane, V. (2016). Inclusion and exclusion in sport: Examining sexual minority athletes' experiences. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 51(2), 136–150



25. Ragusta, J. (2025). Awareness of RA 11313 Safe Spaces Act among political science students. *Philippine Journal of Education Policy Studies*, 19(2), 84–95. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/391483905>
26. Raja, A., Lambert, K., Patlamazoglou, L., & Pringle, R. (2023). Diversity and inclusion strategies for LGBTQ+ students from diverse ethnic backgrounds in higher education: A scoping review. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 28(14), 3585–3605. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2023.2217814>
27. Republic Act No. 11313. (2019). An Act defining gender-based sexual harassment in streets, public spaces, online, workplaces, and educational institutions, providing protective measures and prescribing penalties. Government of the Philippines.
28. Russell, S. T., & Bishop, M. D. (2021). Supporting LGBTQ students in schools: Policies, curricula, and GSAs. *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, 17, 339–358. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8454913>
29. Severs, E. (2019). Community safe spaces and youth resilience. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 22(8), 1032–1047.
30. Symons, C., O'Sullivan, G., & Polman, R. (2017). The experiences of LGBT athletes in sport. *Sport in Society*, 20(1), 29–44.
31. Taccad, G. (2025). Statutory analysis and policy evaluation of RA 11313 Safe Spaces Act of 2019. *British Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 7(3), 500–509. <https://doi.org/10.34104/bjah.02500700500>
32. Tavaréz, J. (2022). "I can't quite be myself": Bisexual-specific minority stress within LGBTQ campus spaces. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 69(6), 947–966. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2020.1868180>
33. UNESCO. (2016). Out in the open: Education sector responses to violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression. UNESCO Publishing
34. Wainer, A. (2019). Exploring challenges and problems faced by LGBT students in the Philippines: A qualitative study. *Asian Journal of Social Sciences*, 7(1), 54–66. <https://www.academia.edu/39766171>