

EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF POLITICAL AWARENESS ON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between political involvement and its predictors, focusing on political participation among university students. The regression analysis indicates a strong correlation between political involvement and political participation. The findings of the study explore that politically active students are also highly engaged in politics, and being educated and knowledgeable about political issues promotes involvement. The significant adjusted R and R² values highlight that these predictors explain a valuable portion of the variation in political involvement. The study also reveals students' high levels of enthusiasm and engagement in politics, with most expressing interest, activist group affiliations, and belief in the importance of political engagement for societal transformation. Respondents showed optimism about the political system's future and trust in political institutions. They also acknowledged the influence of family and social media on their political views. The support of family members plays a crucial role in shaping political views and inspiring engagement. Overall, the study underscores the interdependence of participation and knowledge in fostering an engaged and informed populace, which is essential for active participation in political processes and driving social change.

Keywords: Political involvement, Political Participation, Students

Background

The relationship between political Awareness and the political activity of university students is a crucial subject in modern culture. University students, as young people about to start working and participating in their communities, are vital in influencing the future of government and civic engagement. Understanding political procedures, concerns, and structures is essential before becoming involved in politics. This exploration investigates how different levels of political Awareness among university students impact their likelihood to engage in political activities, contribute to public discourse, and advocate for societal change. Comprehending these processes is crucial for promoting a knowledgeable citizenry and developing a generation of socially and politically active leaders. Political involvement among college students is a significant and crucial subject in today's society. The political beliefs and actions of young people, especially those in higher education, are vital in influencing society since they are the future leaders and decision-makers. Political Awareness is crucial for understanding the dynamics of political participation among university students. It refers to the extent to which people are knowledgeable about and involved in political problems, procedures, and events. Recently, there has been an increasing acknowledgement of how political understanding impacts the political involvement of college students. Researchers and decision-makers have tried to comprehend how differences in political awareness levels among students influence their engagement in democratic activities,

including voting, agitation, and civic volunteering. This assessment is critical in contemporary democracies when worries about political indifference and disengagement among young people are widespread.

Political engagement is vital in contemporary democratic countries, signifying people's active involvement in political processes and decision-making. Political participation is rooted in political knowledge, which involves people's comprehension of political problems, institutions, and occurrences. Studying the connection between political knowledge and political involvement is crucial for promoting a lively and active democracy. Studies indicate that people with more political knowledge are more inclined to participate in political activities, including voting, attending political events, contacting elected representatives, and engaging in community organizing. Political Awareness is associated with increased political efficacy, which is people's belief in their capacity to impact political results. The active participation of young people in political processes is essential for representative democracies to operate successfully (Dahya et al., 2021). Youth involvement not only helps preserve democratic systems (Medeiros & Almond, 2020) but also promotes more political participation, strengthens the credibility of government, and supports mechanisms of responsibility (Myers, 2017). However, empirical evidence shows that young individuals have the lowest voter participation and political involvement (Dahya et al., 2021). As a result, they need to be adequately represented in political arenas, electoral procedures, and decision-making platforms.

Political Attitudes of the Youth

Research on political attitudes has significantly enhanced our comprehension of the formation of these attitudes, particularly among young adults compared to older individuals. At first, scholars mainly concentrated on the impact of family, disregarding other socioeconomic influences. Initial research focused on the correlation between party affiliations and the impact of parental influence on the political interests of children. Nevertheless, a challenge arose as young children required more clearly defined opinions about the problem, which posed a hurdle in reaching significant conclusions. Hess and Torney-Purta (1967) contended that children can articulate political viewpoints, leading scholars to redirect their attention toward adolescents and young adults. It was assumed that neurological and behavioral differences between children and adults decrease due to learning (Kagan, 2003).

During the peak period of studying political socialization, the Columbia and Michigan Schools were the dominant forces. They discovered strong connections between parents' interests and their children's attitudes, primarily in the United States, with a focus on white middle-class Americans. Scholar Abramson (1977) partially addressed this bias by examining the political effectiveness of people of color across generations. Subsequent research emphasized that partisan socialization within families varies depending on the country, with scholars like Clarke (1978) observing differences between American and French families. Additionally, broader contextual factors and events influence how parents shape political socialization, as Jennings et al. (2009) noted.

Niemi and Hepburn (1995) challenged the notion that political attitudes remain unchanged and that early socialization is essential. The researchers emphasized the importance of longitudinal studies, which showed that attitudes had the potential to undergo substantial changes, even throughout early adulthood. Nieuwbeerta and Wittebrood (1995) challenged the notion of paternal dominance in the inheritance of political party preferences, revealing gender-specific variations. According to their research, daughters were shown to be more prone to adopting their mother's political party preference, while sons were more disposed to follow their father's. The evolution of family structures, such as single or blended

parenting, has resulted in greater individualization and diversity of issues in socialization. Contemporary socialization takes place in many circumstances, which question prior findings regarding the impact of parents.

Social Media's Impact on Political Participation

Since the turn of this century, information and communication technology (ICT) has brought its eminent transformation in all worldly affairs. These developments have unprecedented consequences on how people interact, communicate and engage in social-political discussions. Scholars from numerous fields, viz., media and communication research (and practice), political scientists, sociologists, international relations have conducted consider research the effects of social changes on uses new media/technology. Exercising influence on the internet, is indeed very important for dispersing political information to mass users besides involving them and enabling offline action. In the meantime, political discourse and involvement become more important; transforming from one way communication tools to be interactive communications platform (Emruli & Bača, 2011). They argue that the Internet and social media has meant millennials, who use both services more than older generations in particular online political activities are seen as being useful to them which makes it attractive for participation during mobilisation efforts (Quintelier & Vissers 2008). The linkage of Internet use, political consciousness and engagement in the practice of political activities has been shown to play a pivotal role on elections especially in under developed countries like Pakistan, India Afghanistan etc(McAllister, 2015). This election is the latest to demonstrate risks associated with online disinformation, after manipulation and lies spread on the Internet have influenced public opinion and undermined democratic processes in advanced Western democracies for years (such as during 2016 US presidential campaign or in multiple European countries).

Social media, as Nam (2012) suggests is not only a message to millions but also an engine that drives political change and sculpts new politics. In many ways, then — and nowhere more so than on the internet itself (der!) or social media platforms that process this choice wiki-democracy in ever-increasing proportions. (English) 。 Millennials in both developed and developing countries including Pakistan are the regular users of social media resulting that creates a strong impact on political information flow. Social Media and Parties & Individuals: Social media is also used by political parties or people to disseminate information etc. (Michaelsen, 2011). The availability of the internet has had considerable implications on political communication globally, especially in developed countries due to which new technologies and social media have considerably influenced this field (Riaz, 2010). Based on khan and Sahbaz (2015) Social networks sites SNS will have a huge impact in the social awareness of internet surfers particularly among younger generation. According to the study of Karamat and Farooq (2016), social networking sites have led a major impact on political lives among peoples of Pakistan. Based on Arshad and Hassan (2014) research, university students mainly depend on new media platforms for three purposes; they are to find political information as a source of knowledge which will contribute in providing the behaviors through physical channels. Facebook social networking website is the most popular place among young people in Pakistan to source political news from. As per the data, internet penetration rate in Pakistan is only 19% which is worst. Ittefaq and Iqbal (2018) observed that the social media as well new media platforms are cultured widely in almost every field, may it be politics or health sector or down to education.

Zaheer (2016) found within a research study that the offline engagement of university level students was combined with their Facebook political actions, significantly affecting governmental behaviors and perspectives. This article ends the gap of research by looking at how social media effects on political engagement in a rural area of Pakistan. This study aims to examine the digital and physical political engagement of college students as well as discussing countless topics on social media platforms. Examining the nature of internet-based political participation and its medium-driven effects on offline political engagement in rural Pakistan is at core of this study. Consequently, this research contributes toward widening existing understandings of the use of social media in political contexts previously overlooked by literature that focussed on marginal regions. There are so many ways to become part of a political discussion through using the online platform, which is whether you use internet group chats or social media accounts. Bimber and Copeland (2011) argued that new media have a major impact on the political engagement as well as self-presumed political efficacy of young people. Research conducted by Schulz (2005) shows that new media users are engaging in political actions and discussions. It is not just a more interested public using the Internet. However, at the same time it has convinced them that they are powerful enough to have an impact on this and encouraged their online activism as well as other forms of real-world political engagement.

Political Awareness and Participation

Al-Khaza'leh and Lahiani (2021) In the subheading of a research about revealing that scientifically speaking, it became clear in his article called descriptive study to measure awareness levels The political novice among Al Ain University students and what can be done for this purpose. Study Design and Sample This mixed-methods study is based on a sample of 980 students from different universities. This seems to hold true – undergraduate participants in the present study from the humanities faculty were most politically knowledgeable. It also noted that Political awareness was slightly higher among male students compared to females (again, demonstrating the need for universities in fostering political consciousness of its student body). A cross-sectional study of 400 students was carried out across twelve universities using a multistage sampling technique. Well, it certainly confirmed a robust relationship between political knowledge on the one hand and political activism on the other.

Kholisoh et al. In Jakarta Special Capital Province, (2019), focused on studying the influence of new media to political awareness and engagement among millennials. The authors of this study used quantitative method, studying 400 young adults between the ages for 17 and 37. On Political Participation of Youth A: The Instant and Indirect Influence on Youths' Political Engagingness and Cognition by the Transmission of Traditional Media Information via New Media used a mixed-design research methodology to study how political awareness leads people residing at Nagaland, India both in urban and rural areas engage with politics those aged 18 years & above. This is particularly noteworthy as the study included 402 respondents and found a strong link between political information (or knowledge) about ongoing elections and an individual's engagement with those electoral activities. Furthermore, mass media has been considered important in shaping peoples political interests and participation on varieties of political activities.

In a study by Ahmed et al. In Hamid et al. (2015) study was to measure the level of political awareness among students in a public educational institution, Pakistan. Research conducted with a sample of 200 students in various departments (Faculties), including Social

Sciences and Natural Sciences, showed that there has been #widespread_attrition among the student population. Unsurprisingly, those in the field of social sciences demonstrated a much higher level of political awareness than their natural science peers. Another example is a qualitative study conducted by Amoateng (2015) that focused on 1,214 undergraduate students at the University of Johannesburg in South Africa. The results highlight the influence of parents' political socialization and engagement on students' involvement in politics. There absolutely was a reliable relationship discovered between the period of pupil's governmental understanding and their contribution in activities related to politics. In Nairobi, 2007 Ndiritu executed a research study to determine the impact of television debate programming on political knowledge among Kenyan Youth. The research used purposive (selecting participants who meet criteria; Bhattacharjee 2012) and snowball sampling (primate respondent invites others to participate, i.e., their peers;) methods in order to highlight shows' role on better political socialization of youth. The results show that political TV talks had good effect towards the knowledge of these procedures among young people, politicians contest and stimulation as well motivate them to participate in activities relating to politics. In their study, Yaseen et al. (2018) examined the impact of political debate shows on television and radio upon political awareness among university students studying at University of Karachi, Pakistan. So the researchers also selected 196 randomly chosen members from our own faculties of Social Science and Humanities, along with Sciences. The study found a strong correlation between political talk shows and participant (not average Canadian) political awareness. Further, the study revealed that higher political awareness element brought in more understanding of politics as it enabled students to talk about which resulted in greater involvement for college going generation.

Causal Factors of political participation

Studies showed that while there are multiple factors at work when it comes to university students' political activity. The decline of political engagement that we are currently witnessing alongside the current phenomenon, demands us to both identify and understand its levels. Abstract Socioeconomic status (SES) is an important determinant of the degree to which college students participate in politics. For example, socioeconomic disparities alone can impact political engagement (especially among student populations). Such differences in political resources, notably concerning access to—political information—are said to reduce students' level of engagement with politics, especially among those from disfavored socioeconomic milieus. On the other hand, College Students from high SES families have broader assets and subsequently can take an interest exceptionally in political activities(s.ternal)political ideology is a solid predictor of political engagement among college-going students but not Party loyalty (own). This in line with what van Duyn (2019) found; individuals who were more political congruent to a particular ideology tended to be more engaged than any individual who wasn't. However, minority students with alternative political beliefs will likely feel more hesitant to communicate their thoughts due to the ruling view of those who are a part of the dominant majority.

The political and current events, are referred to as civic literacy. Students who hold a higher sense of knowing and civic literacy also is likely to be more politically active, according to the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) findings. Universities and educators could substantially boost civic literacy by offering general education programs or outreach initiatives. Half a century of research indicates that both the overall political climate and campus atmosphere are crucial determinants for predicting student involvement in

national elections. Campus environment and political climate translate into a difference among students in the degree of involvement (Estrada et al., 2020). A campus atmosphere of inclusiveness and a comfortable political environment will encourage students to take part in political events, so all the students may feel welcomed and express themselves politically.

Objectives of the Study

- To assess the level of political awareness among university students.
- To analyze the various factors influencing political awareness, including educational disciplines, gender, and media exposure.
- To explore the role of universities in shaping political awareness and fostering active political engagement among students.
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Statement of the Problem

The current political environment is characterized by exceptional opportunities for participation and growing worries about indifference and disengagement among people, particularly the younger university student population. This research investigates the significant problem of how political knowledge among university students affects their level of political engagement. Our objective is to examine the potential positive correlation between a greater degree of political knowledge among university students and increasing political involvement. Additionally, we want to identify any obstacles or variables that can hinder such participation. This study aims to investigate the impact of political awareness on the inclination of university students to participate in different political activities, such as voting, activism, and civic engagement. Doing so will provide insights into the dynamics of political involvement within the academic setting.

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter presents the approach adopted for carrying out this research and the research design used in conducting and fulfilling our objectives at large on behalf of this study. Foreground, in terms of a literature review, is the introduction with an abstract background about overviewing and covering all aspects of the research process, i.e., study framework choices (research design), data collection process sampling methodologies, tools, and data analysis techniques. It explained the author's ethical considerations throughout this research journey. This permits organized threats to the reliability and validity of the study to strengthen their support while addressing research topics.

Methods

This study sought to explore the effects of political awareness on university students' sensual participation in politics using a quantitative survey research design involving cross-sectional data collected by random sampling. This design becomes even more valid when used in political sciences and patterns, trends and patterns (Luskin & Bullock, 2021).

Population

The study involved male and female students in various departments of the University of Okara, Depalpur campus of Agriculture University Depalpur; District Okara. There are two universities in Okara district.

Sampling Technique

The study used the random stratified sampling technique to choose participants for research. This was followed to ensure that a representative sample of the study population comprised mostly students from the University of Okara and the University Agriculture Department campus.

Sample Size

Taro Yamane Formula of Sample Size used to calculate the Sample Size of the Study.

$$n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$$

Population size (N) = 15,200

Desired confidence level (C) = 95% (or 0.95)

Margin of error (E) = 5% (or 0.05)

$$n = 15200 / (1 + 15200(0.05)^2)$$

$$n = 15200 / (1 + 15200(0.0025))$$

$$n = 15200 / (1 + 38)$$

$$n = 15200 / 39$$

$$n \approx 389.74$$

Data Analysis and findings

Following the completion of the data collection process, the questionnaire was subjected to coding, and the information that was acquired was then entered into a computer system. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 12.0 was utilized to conduct the subsequent analysis. Cleaning, editing, and data consolidation were performed based on emergent patterns related to the study's topics, factors, and objectives. The data collected from the respondents included both qualitative and quantitative information. Using qualitative data allowed for the clarification of several areas of the study, the formation of findings, and the formulation of suggestions. The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the distribution of measurement scores by analyzing quantitative data through the application of descriptive statistics. This analysis included calculations such as frequencies, means, and percentages. Inferential statistics were utilized to extrapolate the findings from the sample to the entire population, with the Pearson-Product Moment correlation as the critical statistical approach. In addition, the means, frequencies, and percentages were analyzed to guarantee that all of the variables were by the study's objectives.

Table no.1 Regression analysis of predictors on Political Engagement

| Variable | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | p |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|-------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| Constant | 39.072 | 0.801 | | 48.750 | 0.000 |
| Political Participation | 1.017 | 0.094 | 1.050 | 10.785 | 0.000 |
| Political Awareness | 0.276 | 0.042 | 0.640 | 6.570 | 0.000 |
| Adj. R | .551 | | | | |
| R ² | .303 | | | | |

ANOVA: $F(2,386) = 83.968, p > .05$

Table (36) comprised the results of regression analysis aims to understand the predictors of political engagement, using political participation and political awareness as independent variables. The model's constant is 39.072 ($p < 0.001$), indicating that even with zero participation and awareness, a baseline level of engagement exists. Political participation has a significant positive impact on political engagement, with an unstandardized coefficient (B)

of 1.017 and a standardized coefficient (Beta) of 1.050, $t(386) = 10.785$, $p < 0.001$. This suggests that for each unit increase in political participation, political engagement increases by approximately 1.017 units, highlighting the strong influence of participation. Political awareness also significantly contributes to political engagement, with an unstandardized coefficient of 0.276 and a standardized coefficient of 0.640, $t(386) = 6.570$, $p < 0.001$. This indicates that higher awareness leads to increased engagement, albeit to a lesser extent than participation. The model explains a substantial portion of the variance in political engagement, as indicated by an adjusted R of 0.551 and an R^2 of 0.303. The overall model is significant ($F(2, 386) = 83.968$, $p < 0.05$), confirming that the predictors collectively contribute to variations in political engagement.

The study results argue the complexity of the meanings of political activism among university students and several factors that have an impact on their related involvement. Lack of voting and entrepreneurship by university students results in civic ignorance, which can affect other aspects of democracy, such as voting, lobbying, etc. (Goidel and Gross, 2019). This disengagement is potentially detrimental to democratic values and principles as university students' insights on social and political issues concerning youths are central to formulating solutions (Dahya et al., 2021). Some of the reasons that affect political participation may include SES, knowledge or lack thereof in civics, and the kind of college environment that the individuals study in. This means that students from higher SES backgrounds are likely to have more learning materials and practice opportunities for political activities, but this is different from those in the low SES bracket. There is also significance in civic literacy, and students with political awareness are more active (HERI, 2020). Other factors include supportive political contexts and encouraging campus environments that also boost political engagement (Estrada and colleagues, 2020). However, the political engagement of students has not been fully understood based on these factors. Current literature still lacks enough evidence or substantiation of the psychological processes of student political activities. Lelkes et al. (2021) point out the importance of future research on the effects of political participation on changing beliefs and values, as well as experiences and attitudes. There are also social factors involved, such as the influence of peers as well as other social pressures, since students with politically active friends/role models are likely to get involved themselves (Dalton & Klingeman, 2018). The findings maintain that psychological resources like motivation, self-efficiency, and political interest are essential, and higher levels of these psychological resources show higher political participation (Brady et al., 2019). The theory of planned behavior states that behaviors done out of or influenced by intentions completing the C. A. B model of attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control are highly beneficial to political participation (Ajzen, 1991). On this grounds, empirical evidence validates this theory, indicating that these factors predetermine the political activities of college students to a large extent (Jenkins et al., 2018). In this case, social contextual factors include the classroom environment, peers, and family, which affect political participation (Kim et al., 2018). The Malaysian context also supports previous research further emphasizing the role of attitudes, family, social media use, and interaction behavior in determining the level of political participation among university students (Nweekwele, Hassali, Mydin & Salleh, 2019; Salleh et al., 2020; Hosseini & Azman, 2021; Mydin et al., 2021). It is important to increase our knowledge of the correlation between political awareness and involvement in improving young people's political activity, as well as to help policymakers and educators concerning the ways of encouraging people's interest in politics and ensuring they are informed. Based on the findings of the current study, universities should endeavor to immerse students in programmes that create civic literacy and encourage political participation through policies and guidelines that embrace democracy,

graduation and Infolog students to sponsor any policies that squelch students' political feelings and as such, work towards eradicating socio-economic disparities and inequalities. Thus, the motivation, self-efficacy, and interest in politics should be enhanced by universities to make students engage actively

Conclusion

Results show that respondents' level of political involvement is strongly correlated with their level of political participation and political knowledge. Both factors show a substantial relationship to political involvement in the regression study, but political participation shows an even stronger relationship. This data reveals that those who are politically active also tend to be highly engaged in politics. Being educated and knowledgeable about political concerns helps favor involvement. Political awareness also has a critical impact, albeit to a somewhat lower degree. Their significance in encouraging an involved populace is underscored by the high adjusted R and R² values, which indicate that these predictors account for a significant amount of the variation in political involvement. The report notes how these people were active and energized about politics. Nearly all said they agreed or strongly agreed with the idea that politics matters and with statements asking whether they are interested in political issues, affiliated at some level of activist groups on campus and see the societal transformation coming through political action. Respondents also noticed their hopes for the future of politics and were asked about their faith in political institutions, as well as what plays into one having conservative values (such as family) or leaving those ideas by liberal viewpoints via social media.

The research shows that family influence drives well-trajectory development and political engagement. More work is needed to fully understand social media's role in political participation. Only a few respondents identified that they thought about how social media might impact their political opinions, and a significant number had no opinion. Your survey results show that participation makes political knowledge; trust in the institutions of politics and the effect of relatives/social media make a higher level of interest-knowledge-democracy principle. Towards a dynamic political culture which positions participation and the production of knowledge that back to each other, allowing increasingly participatory knowing populous who participate in politics instead of transformation

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