



Political awareness and involvement of college of arts and sciences students of Laguna State Polytechnic University

Jherwin P. Hermosa

Laguna State Polytechnic University, Philippines

jherwin.hermosa@lspu.edu.ph

ABSTRACT

The study sought to determine the level of Political Awareness and Involvement of College of Arts and Sciences Students of Laguna State Polytechnic University. The quantitative and descriptive-correlational method was employed using a self-made questionnaire with 60 respondents. To determine the relationship of political awareness and involvement of the respondents, Pearson correlation analysis was used. The research revealed that the respondents' political awareness such as public policies, political leaders, and political issues is high. On the other hand, the respondents' political involvement pertaining to voting, involvement in public discussions, and political activism are high. It was revealed that the awareness of political leaders is significantly correlated to voting and involvement in public discussion, while the awareness of political issues is significantly related to involvement in voting. While there is no relationship with the remaining variables.

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INTRODUCTION

In the life of any societies, politics, political endeavour and political awareness are always of great importance for they are part and parcel of the societies' daily life and existence. Our history will tell us that in organizing people's life whether in political, social, economics, religious and educational dimensions result from political activities, their present as well as future life is totally reliant on the political verdicts made by political leaders. (Al-Khaza'leh, 2021). Accordingly, Dioso & Medaña (2021) mentioned that Politics is defined to serve as a medium of utilization of provision for a decision, action and position, whereby "people act together through institutionalized procedures to resolve differences, to conciliate different interests and values, and to make public policies in the pursuit of common purposes." Thus, politics is a pursuit of common interests wherein collective effort from the public, private sector and the government is needed to achieve common purposes.

Fairbrother (2013) our political and even our social system considers political awareness as one of its main pillars, and neglecting its importance throughout the stages of states' constructions will inevitably mean a shallow and baseless foundation that will lead to its eventual collapse and downfall when facing problems and crises involving the State and its people regardless of its political or demographic makeup. Abonu et.al. (2013) stated that awareness is the totality of individuals' assessment, knowledge and even understanding of things. It develops and grows together with the growth and development of the human persons' life, thus resulting from the multi facet cultural inclination that affects the individual in his or her total human development. Conventionally, awareness is understood as the perception of the self and his surrounding environment, (Al Faituri, 2020), on the other hand, political awareness is also understood as the citizen's familiarity of his rights and duties, of the phenomena that is unfolding around him and his capability in recognizing the affairs of the states around him with a comprehensive and deep realization of the truth whose meaning is embedded in himself rather than distance. (Kavita, 2017) The understanding of awareness in terms of political aspect is necessary for any democratic political creations that honours and value the basic liberties and human rights of all people. (Althubetat and Jarrar, 2013) Fortunately, learning the Philippine Constitution is now part of the curricula in all levels of instruction in all schools pursuant to Art XIV, Sec. 3 (1). Discussions such as fundamental rights and privileges, basic concept of the government such as the branches, and procedures and processes of the Philippine politics are included. It is a pre-requisite that everyone should prioritize in making themselves involved and informed about the current political issues, figures, decisions and more importantly their political rights and their role as political active participants in the nation building. (Kuo tsu, 2016)

On the other hand, political involvement can be understood as voluntary rather than coerced activities of persons in political affairs such as voting, membership and activities connected with political groups, political parties and political bodies (Rani, 2001). It is said that those people who are less familiar with political issues, figures and political activities has a tendency to be less participative and involved in political endeavours. (Kuotsu, 2016) affirmed that political involvement sprung from the persons' freedom to speak and express himself, to peacefully assemble, to be involved in public affairs, his rights to campaign, be elected and hold public office at all levels of the government. In connection with this, those who are engage in political discussions with others usually show an interest in politics and some level of knowledge (Kuotsu, 2016) Political involvement is generally considered to be symbolic of the extensiveness to which democratic ideals are applied (Rani, 2001). The educational system of the country is mandating higher educational institutions to include Philippine History, Politics and Governance which includes lessons such as the Philippine Constitution. The aim is for students to be aware of his fundamental rights and freedom as he is the most significant element of the State. So to guarantee that the basic rights especially of the youth are well respected and recognized, it is highly encourage that even in their young age they must actively and meaningfully participate in their society and in democratic practices and processes is of central prominence. However, the level of political awareness and political involvement among students has not been fully studied and as a result, some are still not knowledgeable of their functions as members of the society.

OBJECTIVES

The study has two (2) main objectives: (1) the study wants to gauge the level of political awareness and involvement of the students; and (2) the study wants to know if the political awareness is significantly related to their level of political involvement.

METHODS

This study used descriptive-correlation design. The study employed descriptive method design in the form of a survey questionnaire. A set of questionnaire was prepared for the students aimed at assessing the level of political awareness. This was likewise correlated with their involvement. A self-administered survey questionnaire consisting of 3 sections was employed in this study. The first section included the questions with reference to the demographic profile of respondents such as age, gender, religion, and year level. The second part consists of 15-item questions for the level of political awareness with the following parameters: public policies, political figures, and political issues, having 5 questions each. The third part consists of 15-item questions for the level of political involvement in terms of: voting, engagement in public discussions, and political activism, having 5 questions each. The political awareness and participation included were derived by reviewing the literature. Each item would be rated using five (5) point Likert scale ranging from “very highly aware/very highly involved (5) to not aware at all/no involvement at all (1). Random sampling was used to determine the number of respondents. The various statistical treatments used in this study were arithmetic mean and Pearson Product – Moment Correlation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1 shows the summary table of the profile of the respondents. The data shows that majority of the respondents when it comes to age were belong to the age bracket of 18-20 years old with 27 respondents or 45%. It can be inferred that majority of them are 1st year students under the College of Arts and Sciences. When it comes to sex, noticeable that female respondents were the majority with 37 respondents of 61.67%. The researchers conclude that the female students were more receptive and active to participate in this research study. In terms of religion, majority were professing there Roman Catholic Faith with 33 respondents or 55%. Despite the fact the LSPU is non-sectarian, majority of its students are catholic. In terms of year level, majority of the respondents were 1st year with 22 respondents or 30%, we can conclude that they were more active in this kind of endeavor such as research study.

Table 1. Executive summary of the profile of the respondents

| Profile of the Respondents | | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------------------|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1. Age | 18-20 | 27 | 45% |
| | 21-23 | 23 | 38.33% |
| | 24-26 | 10 | 16.67% |
| Total | | 60 | 100% |
| 2. Gender | Male | 23 | 38.33% |
| | Female | 37 | 61.67% |
| Total | | 60 | 100% |
| 3. Religion | Roman Catholic | 33 | 55% |
| | Christian Baptist | 11 | 18.34% |
| | Iglesia ni Cristo | 14 | 23.33% |
| | Others | 2 | 3.33% |
| Total | | 60 | 100% |
| 4. Year Level | 1st year | 22 | 36.67% |
| | 2nd year | 18 | 30% |
| | 3rd year | 20 | 33.33% |
| Total | | 60 | 100% |

Respondents' Perceived Level of Political Awareness

Table 2 shows the respondents' perceived level of political awareness in terms of public policies. It is clear from the data below that the indicator 2 "*Public policies mostly aimed at protecting the rights of individuals*" and indicator 3 "*The public policies are clearly implemented by the Government to all its citizens*" had both received a mean of 3.95 which is verbally interpreted as "*Highly Aware*" Meanwhile the indicator 4 "*The participation of the community as well as the private sector is essential in the implementation of public policies*" got the lowest mean of 3.87. Generally the respondents' perceived level of political awareness in terms of public policies got an overall mean of 3.91 which has a verbal interpretation of "*Highly Aware.*" The results manifested that the respondents are familiar and aware with the policies and decrees around them in their community and relate positively with the political measures out of their adherence to the public interest. Smith, (2018) affirms this results of which revealed a high level of political awareness, but contradicts Al Haweelah (2009) study which manifested a generally average level of political awareness and that of Harker (2016) which showed a low level of students' political awareness.

Table 2. Respondents perceived level of political awareness in terms of public policies

| Public Policies | Mean | SD | VI |
|---|------|------|----|
| I am aware of the laws, ordinances and/or barangay resolution in my community /country. | 3.91 | 1.01 | HA |
| Public policies mostly aimed at protecting the rights of individuals. | 3.95 | 1.02 | HA |
| The public policies are clearly implemented by the Government to all its citizens. | 3.95 | .995 | HA |
| The participation of the community as well as the private sector is essential in the implementation of public policies. | 3.87 | 1.00 | HA |
| The Legislative branch is the one which create or formulate public policies. | 3.90 | .974 | HA |
| Overall | 3.91 | .999 | HA |

Legend: 5.0–4.20 Very Highly Aware/VHA 4.20–3.41 Highly Aware/HA 3.40–2.61 Moderately Aware/MIA 2.60–1.81 Less Aware /LA 1.80–1.0 No Awareness at All/NIA

Table 3 presents the respondents' perceived level of political awareness in terms of Political Leaders. It is evident that the indicator 2 "*They are people responsible for making and implementing strategies and policies meant to better serve the interests of the community*" got the highest mean of 3.99, followed closely by indicator 4 "*Elected political leaders are accountable to the people and not to their heads*" and indicator 5 "*Political leaders are either elected or appointed*" with a mean of 3.96 and 3.91 respectively. Meanwhile the indicator 3 "*The qualification to be a leader are met by the officials*" has the lowest mean of 3.88. Generally the respondents' perceived level of political awareness in terms of Political Leaders got an overall mean of 3.93 which is verbally interpreted as "*Highly Aware.*" The researchers find out that the students has a high regards with their political leaders, they were aware of the functions, duties and responsibilities to the people. Saroha (2012) in his study he emphasized that allowing the youth to have a significant role in politics plays a huge impact in the general development of a country. Political leaders have most impact in order to lead a nation towards development. It is also suggested that political leaders are the key agents if a change is desired in order to overcome the slow development recorded by countries yearly (Sunday, 2017).

Table 3. Respondents' perceived level of political awareness in terms of political figures

| Political Leaders | Mean | SD | VI |
|--|------|------|----|
| 1. Political leaders are often referred as public servants | 3.90 | .974 | HA |
| 2. They are the one responsible for creating and implementing guidelines and policies meant for the common good. | 3.99 | .992 | HA |
| 3. The qualification to be a leader are met by the officials. | 3.88 | .972 | HA |
| 4. Elected political leaders are accountable to the people and not to their heads. | 3.96 | .991 | HA |
| 5. Political leaders are either elected or appointed. | 3.91 | .974 | HA |
| Overall | 3.93 | .980 | HA |

Legend: 5.0–4.20 Very Highly Aware/VHA 4.20–3.41 Highly Aware/HA 3.40–2.61 Moderately Aware/MIA 2.60–1.81 Less Aware /LA 1.80–1.0 No Awareness at All/NIA

Table 4 shows the respondents' perceived level of political awareness in terms of Public Issues. It is clear that the indicator 4 "TRAIN law has been implemented to support the Build Build Build program of the President" got the highest mean of 4.00, followed by indicator 2 "The current administration has allowed China to explore in the disputed islands" and indicator 1 "The Philippine government has focused on eradicating crimes and drugs under the Duterte administration" got a mean of 3.98 and 3.97 respectively. While the indicator 3 "The current Administration has responded well to the Covid 19 pandemic" has the lowest mean of 3.89. Generally the respondents' perceived level of political awareness in terms of Public Issues has an overall mean of 3.96 which has a verbal interpretation of "Highly Aware." With this result, we can say that the students were giving so much emphasis on the current issues that affects the country in general. They are updated on the events and issues that concerns them and the national interest of the country. According to the study of Krzywosz (2017) he emphasized the importance of politics, mainly to the youth: Young individuals are utilizing the internet for the good of politics, but through time, there emerge challenges that involve the integrity of information - misinformation, and the politics' prospective to uphold voice and awareness more than influence. Through this, digital literacy is also essential.

Table 4. Respondents' perceived level of political awareness in terms of public issues

| Public Issues | Mean | SD | VI |
|---|------|------|----|
| 1. The Philippine government has focused on eradicating crimes and drugs under the Duterte administration. | 3.97 | .952 | HA |
| 2. The current administration has allowed China to explore in the disputed islands. | 3.98 | 1.02 | HA |
| 3. The current Administration has responded well to the Covid 19 pandemic. | 3.89 | 1.01 | HA |
| 4. TRAIN law has been implemented to support the "Build Build Build" program of the President. | 4.00 | .978 | HA |
| 5. President Duterte is planning to convert the current political system to a Federal system of government. | 3.96 | .938 | HA |
| Overall | 3.96 | .979 | HA |

Legend: 5.0–4.20 Very Highly Aware/VHA 4.20–3.41 Highly Aware/HA 3.40–2.61 Moderately Aware/MIA 2.60–1.81 Less Aware /LA 1.80–1.0 No Awareness at All/NIA

Respondents' Perception on the Level of Involvement

Table 5 shows the respondents' perceived level of involvement in terms of Voting. It is evident that the indicator 1 "Campaign actively my chosen candidate during elections" with a mean of 4.07. Meanwhile the indicator 3 "Give and share feedback, thoughts, or opinions about the outcome of elections" has the lowest mean of 3.89. Generally the respondents' perceived level of involvement in terms of Voting has an overall mean of 3.96 which has a verbal interpretation of "Highly Aware". This result indicates that the youth due to social media are much more inclined to political related endeavours. In the study conducted by Corpuz (2014), she discovered that the generation today are more keen in exercising their right to suffrage because they believe that only in this, that they

can help the country to achieve progress. The same with the study of Andrea (2011) were they found out that blogging of students about politics gains political efficacy to promote the awareness of the youth in selecting future leaders of a country.

Table 5. Respondents' perceived level of involvement in terms of voting

| Voting | Mean | SD | VI |
|---|------|------|----|
| 1. Campaign actively my chosen candidate during elections. | 4.07 | .905 | HI |
| 2. Serve as a watcher during elections. | 3.98 | .954 | HI |
| 3. Give and share feedback, thoughts, or opinions about the outcome of elections. | 3.89 | .867 | HI |
| 4. Report prohibited activities during elections. | 4.00 | .912 | HI |
| 5. Utilize social media for campaign awareness and responsible voting. | 3.96 | .939 | HI |
| Overall | 3.96 | .915 | HI |

Legend: 5.0–4.20 Very Highly Involved/VHI 4.20–3.41 High Involved/HI 3.40–2.61 Moderately Involved/MI 2.60 –1.81 Less Involved /LI 1.80 –1.0 No Involvement at All/NIA

Table 6 shows the respondents' perceived level of involvement in terms Political discussion. We can see that indicator 4 “I post/share ideas on social media that ignites political responses and conversations” which has a mean of 4.10. Meanwhile the indicator 5 “I Attend public forums on barangay and municipal ordinances” got the lowest mean of 4.02. Generally the respondents' perceived level of involvement in terms Political discussion got an overall mean of 4.06 which has a verbal interpretation of “Highly Involved”. This result is a validation that the youth nowadays are active and more involve in political matters since they are well informed and educated about their rights and roles in the nation buildings. The lack of awareness of many students in politics leads to some students to seek to their fellow youth to be interested in politics. Kishimoto (2014), pointed out that majority of students from universities in Japan were frustrated with the political indifference of their colleague. With this, many students were creatively doing anything to convince their friends and schoolmates to have involvement in political affairs. Many of them were using social media as a tool to call out other youth. With that, the social media becomes the main source to encouragement to students to be involved in political topics and endeavours.

Table 6. Respondents' Perceived Level of Involvement in terms political discussion.

| Political Discussion/Forum | Mean | SD | VI |
|---|------|------|----|
| 1. I participate in Public forums and debates of candidates during campaign period. | 4.03 | .911 | HI |
| 2. I actively participate in public forums and discussions in social media. | 4.08 | .894 | HI |
| 3. I attend public consultations on pressing issues in the community. | 4.08 | .874 | HI |
| 4. I post/share ideas on social media that ignites political responses and conversations. | 4.10 | .934 | HI |
| 5. I attend public forums on barangay and municipal ordinances. | 4.02 | .957 | HI |
| OVERALL | 4.06 | .914 | HI |

Legend: 5.0–4.20 Very Highly Involved/VHI 4.20–3.41 High Involved/HI 3.40–2.61 Moderately Involved/MI 2.60 –1.81 Less Involved /LI 1.80 –1.0 No Involvement at All/NIA

Table 7 shows the respondents' perceived level of involvement in terms Activism. It is evident that the indicator 4 “I express activism through different forms of arts such as using pen, lens, brush, the voice, the body, and the imagination” got the highest mean of 3.43 while the indicator 2 “I participate in political rallies and movements” has the lowest mean of 3.32. Generally the Respondents Perception on the Level of Involvement in terms of political activism has an overall mean of 3.36 which is verbally interpreted as “Moderately Involved.” This is to show that even though the youth of today are well educated on their political roles and rights, they are still valuing the spirit of freedom and peace. Maboloc (2015) stated that the involvement of the youth is significant in carrying a social reform but they are well aware also of its limits and eventual consequences. In addition, politics must begin with the choice of right principles, but people end up debating about unique personalities and attributes.

Table 7. Respondents' perceived level of involvement in terms activism

| Activism | Mean | SD | VI |
|--|------|------|----|
| 1. I can air my sentiments and grievances through social media. | 3.41 | .953 | HI |
| 2. I participate in political rallies and movements. | 3.32 | .932 | MI |
| 3. I criticize the government publicly. | 3.34 | .911 | MI |
| 4. I express activism through different forms of arts such as using pen, lens, brush, the voice, the body, and the imagination | 3.43 | .867 | HI |
| 5. I express activism by not participating with government activities/events. | 3.33 | .934 | MI |
| Overall | 3.36 | .919 | MI |

Legend: 5.0–4.20 Very Highly Involved/VHI 4.20–3.41 High Involved/HI 3.40–2.61 Moderately Involved/MI 2.60 –1.81 Less Involved /LI 1.80 –1.0 No Involvement at All/NIA

Correlation between the Level of Political Awareness and Involvement of CAS Students

Table 8. Test of correlation between the level of political awareness and involvement of CAS students

| Independent Variable | Dependent variable | Co efficient | Sig. | Interpretation |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|------|----------------|
| 1. Public Policies | Voting | -0.13 | .912 | NS |
| | Public Forums and Discussions | .85 | .475 | NS |
| | Political Activism | -.010 | .937 | NS |
| 2. Political Leaders | Voting | .332** | .005 | S |
| | Public Discussions | .362** | .002 | S |
| | Political Activism | .032 | .795 | NS |
| 3. Political Issues | Voting | -.283* | .014 | S |
| | Public Discussions | -.049 | .662 | NS |
| | Political Activism | .050 | .673 | NS |

*Legend: ** Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed) * Correlation is Significant at 0.05 level (2 – tailed)*

Table 8 shows the test of correlation between the Level of Political Awareness and Involvement of CAS Students. The data reveals that all the variables on the level of political awareness in terms of Political leaders and Involvement such as Voting and Public Forums and Discussion were all found significant. While in Political Issues in terms of Voting and Involvement such as Voting was also found significant where the $p < 0.05$ probability level. While the remaining variables were all found not significant.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

It can be concluded that the college of arts and sciences students of Laguna State Polytechnic University has a high level of political awareness. It was manifested in the findings that they have a political involvement. Thus, it is highly recommended that the Students Affairs and Services (SAS) may develop more programs that will help students to be politically aware and engage in political involvement through leadership trainings and seminars. Faculty members may integrate discussion of politics, current events and governance in their subjects or courses. The Local Government Unit of San Pablo and other municipalities may formulate youth friendly programs or projects and encourage their involvement even in the midst of pandemic. Future researchers could do a similar study using different variables add more respondents to further study more the political awareness of the students.

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