

The Impact of Involvement in Organizations on the Political Awareness of the Engineering Students from Tarlac State University

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Abstract: This study explored the impact of organizational involvement on the political awareness of the Engineering students from Tarlac State University. The researchers employed quantitative, descriptive-correlational research design using a questionnaire as the research instrument. Data was collected from a total of 232 respondents chosen via simple random sampling technique. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to analyze the data statistically, specifically for the frequency distribution, mean, and Spearman's rank correlation. The results showed that most of the students are members of a college-based organization. In terms of the nature of involvement, the majority identified themselves as active members of their organization. High frequency of involvement was also observed. The respondents garnered an overall political awareness score of 3.50 indicating moderately high political awareness. Correlation analysis showed that there is a moderate positive correlation between the frequency of involvement of the students in their organizations and their political awareness. For the nature of involvement and political awareness, a weak to moderate positive correlation was observed. These results imply that the students that have more active involvement in their respective organizations tend to be more politically aware. Overall, the findings of the study revealed that the organizational involvement of students impacts their political awareness.

Keywords: Political awareness, political participation, student leaders, student organizations, university-based organizations, youth political participation.

1. Introduction

A. Background of the Study

Student organizations are groups that are formed within an educational institution that allows students to pursue a common goal or interest. They are also avenues in inculcating to the students a sense of responsibility to the nation [1].

Participation in student organizations offers many advantages. The students' organizational experience helped them develop skills that made them valuable assets and improved their employability [2]. Members of student organizations were also deemed to be more involved in their respective communities [3]. Student organizations are platforms that instill civic responsibility and active engagement of the youth to political and societal affairs [4]. A study was

conducted to determine the university's role in promoting political awareness among students. The findings indicate that university students indeed possess a significant level of political consciousness [5].

Political awareness is defined as the comprehensive perception and knowledge of the societal problems and affairs of the state and the ability to analyze them and make informed political decisions [5]. In the study conducted by Edera et al, political knowledge was measured based on the respondents' knowledge of political processes, leaders, and issues, as well as public policies. Voter turnout and participation in political activities such as forums and rallies were the basis of measurement of political involvement [6]. In the present study, the term political awareness encompasses both the political knowledge and involvement of the respondents. A study was done in Jordanian universities to identify the factors that affect the political participation of university students, including gender, age, family income and regional affiliations [7]. In contrast, the present study aims to identify the impact of the organizational involvement of the students on their political awareness. A review of related literature and studies focusing on the theme "Education and Political Participation" was done by Willeck and Mendelberg where the relationship of civic education and political participation was richly discussed [8]. Al-Khaza'leh and Lahiani emphasized in their study the role of universities in fostering political awareness among their students. It was also found that there were significant differences in the level of political awareness among students depending on their program and year level [5]. The findings of the study above were further solidified by a study conducted by C. Malafaia et al, emphasizing the role of the school in bridging the gap between youth and politics [9]. A study was conducted in Saudi Arabia focusing on the study of history as a factor that influences the political awareness of the students [10]. M. Achour and H. Alghamdi utilized a questionnaire as a research instrument that measures political awareness based on the students' interest in politics. This aspect was integrated into the research instrument used in the present study. The role of social media in increasing the political participation of the youth was

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highlighted in the study conducted in Pakistan. Social media platforms such as Facebook provided more accessible political information, which consequently increased the participation in both online and offline political activities [11]. Although there are several studies and literatures that discuss the factors affecting the political awareness of university students, little is known regarding the direct influence of university-based organizations on students' political awareness. Thus, the present study aimed to address this research gap.

B. Research Objectives

This study aims to determine the impact of university-based organizations on political awareness of the students from Tarlac State University. Specifically, it seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- 1) Describe the level of involvement of students in the University-based organizations in Tarlac State University in terms of frequency and nature of involvement.
- 2) Determine the level of political awareness of the students from Tarlac State University.
- 3) Assess whether the level of involvement in University-Based Organizations has a direct correlation to the political awareness of the students from Tarlac State University.

2. Methodology

A. Research Design

The researchers utilized a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design. The descriptive component of the study was used to describe the level of involvement of the students at Tarlac State University in their respective university-based organizations as well as their political awareness. Additionally, a correlational approach was used to examine the relationship between the two variables. The study is considered non-experimental as no variable manipulation was employed.

B. Research Instrument

The primary research instrument that was utilized in this study was a questionnaire with three components comprising the demographic profile which includes the age, sex, and the year level, the level of involvement of the students in their respective organizations in terms of frequency and nature, and the political awareness of the students. A five-point Likert scale coded as 1 – Strongly Disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Agree, 5 – Strongly Agree, was employed to measure the level of involvement in organization of the students as well as their political awareness.

The reliability of the research instrument was tested using Cronbach's Alpha. Both the level of involvement and political awareness component of the questionnaire yielded Cronbach's Alpha value greater than 0.70 proving that the research instrument is reliable. In addition, the data undergone preparation prior to analysis by excluding erroneous and incomplete responses. The research instrument was validated through expert review and pilot testing.

The study strictly adhered to ethical standards such as confidentiality. An informed consent was secured, and the aim of the research was clearly discussed with the respondents prior to having them answer the questionnaire. All data collected in this study were kept confidential and solely used for academic purposes.

C. Data Collection

For efficient data collection, this study was limited to students enrolled in the Mechanical Engineering program at Tarlac State University. This specific program was selected due to its accessibility and the willingness of its students to participate. While this limits the scope of the findings to a single program, the study still provides valuable insights into the relationship between the organizational involvement and political awareness of the students. The population of this study comprises a total of 550 students enrolled in the Mechanical Engineering program at Tarlac State University. Using Slovin's formula with a 95% confidence level, a sample of 232 respondents was determined to represent the population. A simple random sampling technique was utilized since the respondents are relatively homogenous in nature. The questionnaire was distributed via Microsoft Teams, which is the official online platform being used by the University.

D. Data Analysis

The data collected was subjected to appropriate statistical analysis. Frequency and mean were computed to determine both the level of involvement in terms of frequency and nature of involvement in organization, and the political awareness of the students. Spearman's rank correlation analysis was utilized to determine the relationship between the frequency and nature of involvement of the students in their organizations and their political awareness. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software will be used to analyze the data collected.

3. Results and Discussion

A. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 1
Demographic information of the respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Year Level		
1 st year	58	25.00%
2 nd year	56	24.10%
3 rd year	62	26.70%
4 th year	56	24.10%
Type of Organization		
College-based organization	130	49.61%
Civic or community service	55	20.99%
Religious or spiritual	60	25.86%
Arts and culture	45	19.40%
Sports or athletics	32	13.79%
Student government	25	10.78%
Non-member	33	12.22%

Table 1 presents the demographic information of the respondents which includes their year level and type of organization to which they belong. The type of organizations used in the research instrument were based on a study on the different types of college student organizations [12]. The

respondents may have multiple answers for the type of organization they are involved in. Thus, allowing a single respondent to be counted in more than one category.

The table shows that the highest number of respondents came from the 3rd year level, with 62 students comprising 26.70% of the total. It can also be observed that the percentages of the respondents across different year levels are relatively similar, which suggests a well-distributed sample.

For the type of organization, almost half of the respondents are members of a college-based organization, with 130 students or 49.61% of the total. This may indicate that college-based organizations are the most accessible within the university. Following college-based organizations in terms of the highest number of members are religious or spiritual, civic or community service, and arts and culture organizations. Whereas sports or athletics, and student government organizations have the lowest engagement. Respondents who are not affiliated with any organization comprise only 12.22% of the total.

B. Level of Involvement in Organizations of the Students

The level of involvement of the students in their respective organizations was described in terms of the nature and frequency of involvement. The respondents categorized the nature of their involvement as leaders, active members, or passive members.

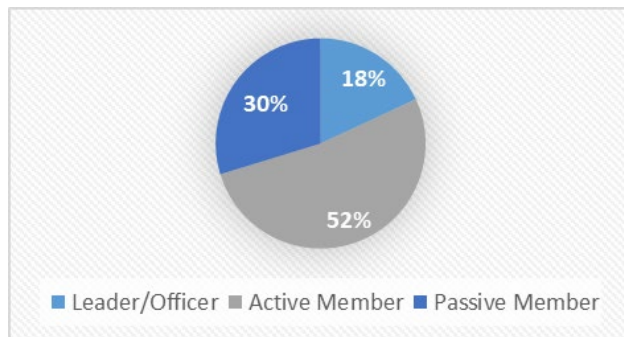


Fig. 1. Nature of involvement of the respondents

Figure 1 shows the distribution of the respondents according to the nature of their involvement in their respective organizations. A total of 42 students or 52% of the total number of respondents identified themselves as active members. Active members are followed by passive members that comprise 30% of the total. Passive members attend or participate in organizational activities infrequently. Lastly, leaders account

for 18% of the total. They represent those who are holding formal positions within their organizations.

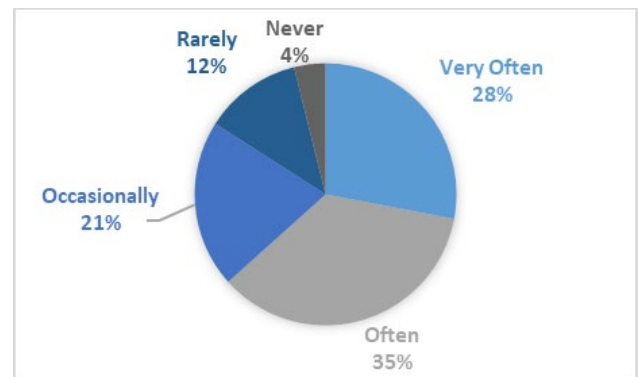


Fig. 2. Frequency of involvement of the respondents

The frequency of involvement of the students is illustrated in Figure 2. The respondents described their frequency of involvement in their organizations based on their participation level using a five-point Likert scale with ratings very often, often, occasionally, rarely and never.

Majority of the respondents showed high frequency of involvement with 28% rating their participation “Very Often” and 35% rating their participation “Often”. They comprise more than half of the total number of respondents. 21% of the students rated their participation “Occasionally”, followed by 12% rating “Rarely”. Only 4% of the total rated their participation as “Never”. This data shows a high frequency of involvement from the respondents.

C. Political Awareness of the Students

The political awareness of the students was measured using a five-item questionnaire, with each item rated on a five-point Likert scale (5-Strongly agree, 4-Agree, 3-Neutral, 2-Disagree, and 1-Strongly Disagree). The total score for political awareness was determined by getting the average of the item scores. The questions covered the different aspects or indicators that influence the political awareness of the students such as their knowledge of current national issues, their participation in political activities, as well as their intention to vote. For interpretation, a higher score indicates a higher inferred level of political awareness. Table 2 shows the results of the questionnaire on political awareness.

Table 2
Political awareness of the students

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
I am informed about current national political issues.	3.65	0.88	Agree
I am interested in discussing political issues with others.	3.20	1.02	Neutral to Slightly Agree
I plan to vote in national or local elections when eligible.	4.45	0.75	Agree to Strongly Agree
I have attended or plan to attend a political forum, rally, or debate.	2.80	1.15	Neutral to Slightly Disagree
I feel confident in my ability to make informed political decisions.	3.40	0.95	Agree
Composite Mean	3.50	0.95	

Table 3
Relationship between the involvement of students in organization and their political awareness

	Political Awareness (Ranked Composite Score) (p)	p-value
Nature of Involvement	0.330	<0.001
Frequency of Involvement	0.415	<0.001

D. Relationship Between the Involvement of Students in Organization and their Political Awareness

To determine the relationship between the frequency and nature of involvement of the students in their organizations and their political awareness, Spearman's rank correlation was utilized. Table 3 shows statistically significant positive monotonic correlations between all examined pairs of variables. For the relationship between the nature of involvement and the political awareness of the students, Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (ρ) is 0.330 which implies a weak to moderate positive correlation. In addition, the computed p -value is <0.001 which indicates that the result is statistically significant. The results indicate that the students who have identified themselves as either leaders or active members achieved higher scores on political awareness than the students who have identified themselves as passive members.

A moderate positive correlation was found between the nature of involvement of the students in their organizations and their political awareness. Computed Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (ρ) is 0.415 with p -value <0.001 . Consequently, it can be inferred that those students who are frequently involved in organizational activities tend to be more politically aware. This aligns with the findings that students who were actively involved in organizational activities were also highly involved in their communities. [3]

Although the results showed statistically significant correlations between the frequency and nature of involvement of the students in their organizations and their political awareness, causation is not directly implied. Other factors that may influence both organizational involvement and political awareness such as the students' availability as well as their preexisting knowledge and interests in politics were no longer examined.

4. Conclusion

The study aimed to determine if there is a relationship between the level of involvement in organization and the political awareness of Engineering students in Tarlac State University. A questionnaire was utilized as research instrument which contained three main components: the demographic profile of the respondents, assessment of their level of involvement in terms of nature and frequency, and assessment of their political awareness. A total of 232 respondents were selected using simple random sampling to represent a population of 550 students enrolled under the BS Mechanical Engineering program at Tarlac State University. The data collected were then subjected to statistical analysis specifically frequency distribution, mean and Spearman's rank correlation.

The level of involvement of students in the University-based organizations in Tarlac State University was described in terms of frequency and nature of involvement. In terms of the nature of involvement, results of data analysis revealed that there are more respondents who identified themselves as active members

than passive members. A small number of respondents identified themselves as leaders who hold positions within their respective organizations. Results of data analysis also showed that majority of the respondents have high frequency of involvement in organizational activities. The overall political awareness score was 3.50 which indicates a moderately high political awareness.

A weak to moderate positive correlation was found between the nature of involvement of students in organization and their political awareness. Whereas for the frequency of involvement of students in organization and their political awareness, moderate positive correlation was observed. The results of the correlation analysis proved to be statistically significant with both p -values <0.001 .

In conclusion, the level of involvement of the students in their organizations has a notable impact on their political awareness. The conduct of further studies is recommended to cover the other factors that may influence the level of organizational involvement and political awareness to solidify the findings of this study.

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