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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Comparing the Level of Political Awareness among the Students of Social and Natural Sciences: a Case Study of Public Sector Universities in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to determine the level of Political Awareness among the students of public sector universities in Pakistan. Bahauddin Zakariya University (BZU), Multan, Pakistan was selected to generalize the results of this study. A total of 200 students were randomly selected as a sample of the study out of which hundred students (50 males and 50 females) were selected from 5 departments of Social Sciences and the same proportion of the students was selected from 5 departments of Natural Sciences. A test comprising 100 multiple choice questions acquiring the basic knowledge of politics was developed for this study under the guidance of the experts from International Islamic University and BZU, Multan. The collected data were analyzed by applying descriptive (Mean and SD) and the inferential statistics (z-test). The results of the study showed the poor level of political awareness among the total study sample. The level of political awareness among the students including male and female from Natural Sciences comparatively remained below from the students of Social Sciences. The integration of the basic political knowledge in the subject of Pakistan studies at bachelor level and organizing seminars, quizzes regarding political awareness were recommended in this study.

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INTRODUCTION

Pakistan came into existence on the map of the world as a sovereign and independent state on August 14, 1947. At that time, it was proclaimed to be a "Democratic State" but the ground realities tell different stories that even after passing 67 years, it is still in search of positive and solid democratic values to have a stable political system and political structure. Pakistan is a so called democratic country where the democracy has been stolen by bureaucrats, political elites, feudal aristocrats, organizations and small pressure groups influenced by foreign powers (Ali, 2011).

The founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, in his speeches emphasized the pivotal role of students in the overall development of the nation.

Jinnah affirmed the youths of a Nation as the future leaders of tomorrow. Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah advised the students to keep themselves equipped with discipline, faith, unity, education and training for the challenging tasks before them. Pakistan has always been proud of its young students who have always been in the forefront in the hour of trial and need. The students should be well aware of the basic political knowledge in order to bring a real democracy within the country and to take active participation in the political system as a leader (Ijaz, 1976). The positive promotion of political values and stability of political system with strong political structure are of vital importance and significance for a nation. The role of students' participation in this process is critical and the political awareness among the students is a basic

necessity in a country like Pakistan for better understanding of the problems of nation and to pave a way for the solid democracy (Dudman, 2007). The students in Pakistan are considered as human resources who have a huge amount of power that can be utilized in economic, social and political development of the country. It is experienced in advanced countries that students play positive and pivotal role in the overall development of country. If students are deprived from the opportunities they can get involved in negative activities and can disturb the social, political and economic order of the country. Therefore the capacities of the students should be buff off with political awareness and to be utilized properly to promote healthy and positive political values in the country (Aurangzeb, 2008).

Students' vigorous participation in political activities develops their political awareness and their skills to live in society. In advanced countries like Canada and USA, students consider it their duty to take active part in democratic system of the country. In Pakistan, students have little opportunity to take part in political process and this is why they lack the political awareness that influences their attitudes and approaches towards democratic process (Henn et al., 2002). Students are the leaders of tomorrow and a strong potential force that must have political awareness and have knowledge when to oppose and when to support the political system of a country. They may create further awareness among the gullible and common illiterate members of the community. The used masses may not be used by the political kings after having complete awareness about the real democracy and political systems. Therefore, the role of the young students becomes more significant in the overall political development of the country. Political Awareness is believed to be significant and helpful for true democracy because with the help of political awareness politicians and leadership of the country can be made accountable (Kizilbash, 2010).

In this regard, Singh (1998) conducted a study on the "Political socialization of college students at graduate level including science and arts groups and found that the social science students were more politically aware as compare to the students of natural sciences.

Kaur (2000) also conducted a study on determining political awareness among the higher secondary students and showed that the secondary school students including arts and science group had lower level of political awareness. Additionally, it was also observed that the teachers teaching at higher secondary level were also having a little political knowledge. Jabeen (2007) conducted a study on comparing the political awareness among the rural and urban Pakistani women and found that the overall level of political awareness was much declining while the urban women had

slightly more political awareness as compared to rural females. Abonu (2013) conducted a study on the assessment of the political awareness among students of social studies in Nigerian secondary schools and results of the study revealed the poor level of political awareness among the students.

Recently, Kauts and Kumar (2014) conducted a study on the political socialization of the graduate students including male and female and found that male students had more political socialization as compared to the female students from the social sciences.

Keeping in view the same notion in mind, the present study was carried out in order to determine the level of political awareness among the students of the Pakistani Universities.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was designed to assess the level of political awareness among the students from different departments of social and natural sciences from public sector universities in Pakistan. Target population of the study was male and female students from the departments of Political Science, History, Pakistan Studies, Education and Sociology from the faculty of Social Sciences and Departments of Chemistry, Physics, Zoology, Botany and Bio Technology from the faculty of Natural Sciences. A sample of 200 students from different departments of social and natural sciences was selected by using simple random technique. Twenty students including 10 males and 10 females were taken from each department. A test comprising 100 multiple choice items on different factors contributing to political awareness was developed to assess the level of political awareness of the study sample.

The validity of the research tool was determined after taking the opinions of the experts. The reliability of the test was determined after pilot testing by using the split half reliability method with the application of Spear Brown Prophecy formula to make sure the internal consistency of the test items that was found 0.89. The test was administered on the desired sample by the researcher himself and the collected data were analyzed by applying descriptive (Mean, Standard deviation) and inferential (Z-Test) statistics. The standard score for determining the minimum level of political awareness (LPA) was fixed 50 in this study. The scores 60, 70 and 80 were measured as good, very good and excellent respectively for the assessment of LPA.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The mean score of the total sample was 43.90 with 16 standard deviation. The students of the Department of Political Science comparatively have had better level of

political awareness with mean score of 54, Department of History 51, Department of Pakistan Studies with 49, Department of Education 46, Department of Sociology 43, Department of Physics 42, Department of Botany 41, Department of Bio Technology 39, Department of Zoology 38 and the students of the department of Chemistry remained on the lowest level of political awareness with 36 mean score. The students from two departments of social sciences (History and Political Science), only achieved the minimum score required for political awareness i.e. (50).

The score of the students from other departments including social and natural sciences remained below the norm score. The arithmetic mean of the social science students was 48.60 with 14 Standard Deviation. The arithmetic mean of the natural science students was 39.20 and the Standard Deviation was found 13. The calculated arithmetic of male sample was 49.60 with (14) standard deviation. The calculated arithmetic mean of Female sample was 38.20 while the arithmetic mean of male students from social sciences was 56.80. The arithmetic mean of natural science students was 40.40. Similarly, the arithmetic mean values of the female students from social and natural sciences were 42.40 and 36.00 respectively.

Hypotheses of the study

The following null hypotheses were formulated and assessed for the generalization of the study.

H_{01} = No significant difference exists between the level of political awareness between male and female students of the sampled study.

H_{02} = No significant difference exists between the level of political awareness between the students of social and natural sciences.

H_{03} = No significant difference exist between the male students of social and natural sciences regarding the level of political awareness.

H_{04} = No significant difference exists between the level of political awareness between the female study sample from social and natural Sciences.

Testing the hypotheses of the study

The hypothesis H_{01} of the study was tested by applying the parametric test of significance.

This shows that there is a significant difference in the level of political awareness between the male and female students of the study sample. The male students have better political knowledge as compared to the female students as the arithmetic mean $49.60 > 38.20$.

This shows that a significant difference exists in the level of political awareness between the students of both the faculties. Students of social sciences are relatively better aware of the political knowledge than the students of natural science as the mean score of social science students $48.60 > 39.20$ score of students natural science.

Table 1: Testing the hypothesis H_{01}

Samples	Statistics			
	N	X	SD	Z
Male	100	49.60	14	3.12
Female	100	38.20	13	

CV= 3.12; TV= 1.98; CV>TV; Null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 2: Testing the hypothesis H_{02}

Samples	Statistics			
	N	X	SD	Z
Social Sciences	100	48.60	14	5.15
Natural Sciences	100	39.20	13	

CV = 5.15; TV = 1.96; CV>TV; Null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 3: Testing the H_{03}

Samples	Statistics			
	N	X	SD	Z
Male (SS)	50	56.80	14	2.41
Male (NS)	50	40.40	12	

CV= 2.41; TV= 1.98; CV>TV; Null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 4: Testing the Hypothesis H_{04}

Samples	Statistics			
	N	X	SD	Z
Female (SS)	50	42.40	9	2.20
Female (NS)	50	36.00	8	

CV= 2.20; TV= 1.98; CV>TV; Null hypothesis is rejected.

This shows that there is a significant difference in the level of political awareness between the male students of social and natural sciences. The male students of Social Sciences have better political knowledge as compare to the male students of Natural Sciences.

This shows that there is a significant difference in the level of political awareness between the female students of social and natural sciences. The female students of Social Sciences have better political knowledge as compare to the female students of Natural Sciences.

The level of political awareness among the students of Social and Natural Sciences was found very low i.e.43.90 (below the minimum score fixed for the political awareness). The male students have more political awareness and knowledge than the female students as shown by the Mean Score 49.60 (Male) >38.20 (Female). The male respondents of social sciences have better level of political awareness as compared to the male respondents of natural sciences as the Arithmetic Mean $56.8 > 40.40$. Similarly, the female respondents of social sciences have better level of understanding regarding the basic political knowledge than the female respondents of natural sciences as $42.40 > 36.00$.

The students of the Department of Political Science, History, Pakistan Studies and Education have better level of political awareness than all the other departments of university with mean score $54 > 43.90$, $51 > 43.90$, $49 > 43.90$, $46 > 43.90$. The students of

Department of Sociology, Physics, Botany, Bio Technology, Zoology and Chemistry have lowest level of political awareness as indicated by the mean scores 43 < 43.90, 42 < 43.90, 41 < 43.90, 39 < 43.90, 38 < 43.90, 36 < 43.90. The students of the Department of Chemistry have the lowest level of political awareness among all the students with mean score 36.00. This study showed that the lower level of political awareness among the study sample.

The level of political awareness among the students of Natural sciences was comparatively low than the respondents of social sciences. The results of the study support the results of the study conducted by Singh, (1998). The level of political awareness among the female students was comparatively low as compare to the male respondents. The results of the study are in line with the study conducted by Kaur (2000) and Kauts and Kumar (2014). The level of the political awareness of the students of Department of Sociology was comparatively low among the students of Social Sciences. The level of political awareness of the students department of Chemistry was comparatively low among the students of Natural Sciences.

The level of political awareness of the students of the Department of Political science was higher and the level of political awareness of the students of the Department of Chemistry was low in the study sample. This study also supports the results of the study conducted by Harmeet 2003 and Abonu 2013.

Conclusions and Recommendations

To sum up it can be concluded that the students of public sector universities in Pakistan have less basic political knowledge and low level of political awareness. In the light of the conclusions and the above mentioned discussion it was recommended that a political awareness drive should be started in the Public Sector Universities in Pakistan. Booklets regarding the content on basic political knowledge should be developed and distributed among the students. Seminars, Workshops and Quizzes concerning basic political knowledge should be arranged in the institutions of higher education continuously and properly. To enhance the political awareness, tour programs should be arranged to the political institutions of Pakistan. The basic knowledge regarding political

awareness should be integrated in the compulsory subject of Pakistan studies at bachelor level.

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