

GENDER GAP IN POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN LAHORE

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Abstract

It has been seen that women participate less in more advance democracies than man. Does It indicate that they have less political knowledge or political interest towards that? To know either it actually exists or not here we investigated the hypothesis that gender predict high or low political knowledge. Considering knowledge gap hypothesis, the current study aimed to explore that the female is less knowledgeable than man. Quantitative questionnaire methodology was used in current study. For this purpose, a sample of 150 students from different universities of Lahore was collected by random convenient sampling. Gender equality in access to political knowledge is an important thing for the creation of inclusive and sustainable society. Empirical Findings depicts that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between gender and political knowledge. In addition to this, age is also a significant factor that contributes much in having or possess interest towards political knowledge. Besides these men found to be more interested, more knowledgeable toward politics as compared to their counterparts' females. Like media, socioeconomic factors also play a foremost role to enhance political knowledge, it has been seen in this study that people with low socioeconomic status have less knowledgeable about political controversies or activities as compared to those with high socioeconomic status.

Keywords: *Political knowledge, Knowledge gap, Gender, Sustainable Society.*

INTRODUCTION

Many cross-section studies have shown that political knowledge is still inconsistently dispersed among people. Men are more politically knowledgeable than women.(Wolak & McDevitt 2011;Kittilson and SchWindat-Bayer 2012; Fraile 2014; Dow 2009).Women's less interest in politics leads to lack of political participation

which turned societies less sustainable.(Cristina & Ayber,2020).To create a sustainable and inclusive society this political knowledge gap needs to be covered.(UNDP,2007)Gender equality in access to political knowledge is an obligatory thing for the establishment of sustainable and inclusive society.(Roig et al., 2020)

To empower women and girls give them equal opportunities of involvement and participation at all level of decision making in political, economic and public life. (SDGs target 5.5) Gender equality is the key goal of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Sustainable Development isn't possible without women. (Roig et al., 2020)

The gender inequality in political knowledge and participation are known to be quite resilient across time (Dolan, 2011; Ferrin et al, 2017; Rittenberg 2016; Stolle & Gidengil 2010).A woman seems to know and participate less in more Advance democracies than men (Burns, 2007). If women have less political knowledge, then men, they may be poorly represented in democratic system. This may indicate an obvious drawback. (Fraile , 2014).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Political knowledge is considered to play a major role in society. The people who are well aware by politics they can make their representatives accountable for their certain actions. An informed citizen of country can demand transparency. But still Empirical statistics propound those men possess more political knowledge as compared to women. The formulation of this study is to explore the awareness of political knowledge among male and female University students in Lahore. This study is concerned with the investigation of the relationship between students' perspective and their concerns towards political knowledge.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research article aims to explore

- i. The main factors that contribute to create a gender gap about political knowledge among people.*
- ii. That Media consumption playing a significant role in shaping people's knowledge about politics.*
- iii. That education plays a role in enhancing political knowledge.*

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ1. To what extent there's a gender gap in political knowledge, and what factors contribute towards this?

RQ2. Whether or not the demographics play any role in political awareness of the university students?

RQ3. Are there educational institutions playing a significant role for shaping political knowledge of students?

RQ4. Do socioeconomic factors contribute significantly to the gender gap in political knowledge?

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RQ5. *To what extent media consumption habit contribute in shaping political knowledge of people?*

HYPOTHESIS

H0 *There is no significant relationship between political knowledge and gender.*

H1 *There is a significant relationship between Political knowledge and Gender.*

H2 *There is a significant role of demographics in political knowledge of university students.*

H2a. *There is a significant role of age in political knowledge of university students.*

H2b. *There is a significant role of education in political knowledge of university students.*

H3c. *There is a significant role of social status in political knowledge of university students.*

LITERATURE REVIEW

Females are found to be less knowledgeable than males (Lizotte, K., H. & Sidman, 2009). Politics ordinarily considered men's game. (Kittilson, 2016; Lawless and Fox, 2010; Paxton et al., 2007), According to Dawn report, from 106m enlisted voters of Pakistan, just 44pc are females. Regardless females are registered, male voters' turnout in 2018 general decisions were at 9.1pc, along with 11m a large number of male castings a ballot than females. Females remain less confident than males of their aptitude to understand politics. (Gidengil, E., Giles, J., & Thomas, M.,2008). Both male and females having a lot of differences in their political behavior and attitudes but these particularities are simple and incongruent. (Sapiro,2003)Political attitude and behavior differences are small beyond demographics. (Huddy, L., Cassese, E., Lizotte, M.-K., Wolbrecht, C., Beckwith, K., & Baldez, L.,2008).When everything is taken into account, women have faced discrimination and obstacles towards attaining political power (Jain, M. K.2023). Political attitude and behavior differences are small beyond demographics. (Huddy, L., Cassese, E., Lizotte, M.-K., Wolbrecht, C., Beckwith, K., & Baldez, L., 2008).

Researches show that the males find themselves in a more harmonious environment for political relevance as compared to girls. Male and female both have different brought up environment about politics; they come up with that grown political knowledge and political interest. Then unsurprisingly women declared to be less informed about politics as compared to their counterparts. (Keeling & S., 2023).Political understanding is a vital tool for citizens to take part in politics efficiently.(Jessica, Fortin-Rittberger, 2016).As seems obvious, a lack of political

education produces indifference towards politics, which in turn breeds a decrease in political engagement and a decrease in the long-term sustainability of societies. Women's representation in politics and ability to defend their interests would be weakened if this phenomena constantly describes women as a collective (Rosa, Roig., Cristina, Aybar., Jose, M., Pavía 2020). Previous studies shows that different variables like age, social status and education are highly correlated with political knowledge of an individual .Teenagers discover that the political system is a "man's world" and that girls frequently fail to acquire the mindsets and skills required to be politically adept. Women tend to feel more powerless and have little interest in politics as a result (Robert, M., Kunovich., Sheri, Kunovich, 2016). In our patriarchal society most of the time men are holding power and women tend to stay less informed about politics and less concerned about governance. (Simon & A., 2017).

Literature focused on the socialization process which revolves around gender. Men and women both are assigned with some roles to live in society, men are primarily encouraged to take part in political activities, on the other side, and women are generally discouraged or prohibited to do so at their young age. (Bos et al.,2022). It creates a negative impact that leads women to stay less informed, and society towards a political inequality which may makes a gender gap in political knowledge. (Keeling & S., 2023). Political socialization of young people is necessary. It has been seen through various studies that young girls found with same knowledge and political interest towards country's government, but still studies also shows that including cognitive factors there's a gender gap in political knowledge either they are young children or adults. (Simon & A., 2017).

Studies suggested that socioeconomic status of people highly contributes to their interest towards politics, but children have same socioeconomic status at their childhood, girls also having same educational or income status at that time and having no difference in knowledge. Some studies also suggests that difference in political knowledge formerly present at their early age. (Abendschön & Tausenpfund,2017). But after a childhood stage, socioeconomic status gradually changes and it contributes a lot to their interest towards politics or country's government. (Marta,2014.) Women mostly have a lack of resources that is basic for building political opinion, political knowledge and acquire information regarding politics, other decision-making processes and causation of political participation too. Political knowledge depends mainly on motivation. People would not be paying attention to politics or remember any political details if they had little interest in politics. Ability plays a role in political knowledge as well. Learning and remembering information about politics should be easier for those with higher levels of education and cognitive abilities (Robert, M., Kunovich., Sheri, Kunovich, 2016).

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THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This current study is based on gender Gap in political knowledge. knowledge gap hypothesis theory strongly supports and fits in a best way to this study that how information is evinced in society and how media is playing a weighty role in shaping people's opinion or create knowledge among individuals about politics. It states that how differently people acquire same information, knowledge, apprehensions or any kind of news from media. Furthermore, it is all about haves and have not in society. Apprehensions are not equally distributed in society. Relevancy of this theory towards current study is well suited. As aforesaid the aim of the study to check out the gender gap in political knowledge, political interest in political activities etc. It is all about the difference or inequalities between educated and non-educated, less or poor educated male and females about politics in society. (Ghafourian & Yasin, 2022) It actually explains that people with strong or supreme socioeconomic status principally uses media to stay familiar or briefed about politics in contrast with people having low socioeconomic status, and it actually creates a knowledge gap among people.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

In this research, quantitative methodology was used to measure and to answer all the research questions about the gender gap in political knowledge among students by using software SPSS.

POPULATION

For this current research study, population was from 5 different public and private sector universities of Lahore namely: PU, LCWU, UMT, LGU and UOL.

Variables		frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	73	48.7%
	Female	77	51.3%
Marital Status	Married	15	10%
	Unmarried	135	90%
Education	14 Years	14	9.3%
	16 Years	85	56.7%
	18 Years	51	34%
Employment Status	Employed	63	42%
	Unemployed	87	58%

Age	17-20 Years	10	6.7%	SA MPL ING TEC HNI QUE
	21-24 Years	84	56%	
	25-28 Years	55	36.7%	
	29-32 Years	1	.7%	

AND SAMPLE SIZE

Questionnaire was designed to collect data. The data was collected by random convenient sampling. The sample size was 150 students.

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

For this research paper, data was collected from 150 students (N=150) belonging to different universities in Lahore with the help of convenient sampling. Online Questionnaire link was provided to students. Out of which 48.7% are male and 51.3% students are female. All are from different age group ranging 17-32Years with different level of education i.e. (9.3% with 14 years of education, 56.7% with 16 years of education and 34% possess 18 years of education) they also have different employment status out of which 42% are employed and 58% are unemployed see (Table:1.1)

TABLE:1.1 DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS (STUDENTS)

As explain earlier that, this research is about knowing the gender gap in political knowledge. A wide range of students were asked to know about their political interest, political structure and function of local government. Out of seventy-three males, thirty-nine (53.4%) were agree and only eight (1.0 %) remained neutral. Similarly, out of seventy-seven females, thirty-five (45.4%) were agree and twenty-three (29.8%) remained neutral. (SeeTable:2.1) It indicates that male students have more political knowledge about political structure and function of local government then females.

Table:2.1 Gender * Political Structure and Function of Local Government Crosstabulation

Count		Political structure and function of local government					Total
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Gender	male	24	9	8	1	1	3
	Female	11	5	3	7	1	7
Total		35	4	1	8	2	50

It seems that females are not politically well aware but sometimes they might

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have more interest in certain political activities for certain time. Respondents were asked either they know or not know about the key policies of candidates in recent elections. Thirty (41.0%) males were strongly agreeing and only one (1.36%) was strongly disagree. Twelve (15.5%) were strongly agree and only one (1.2%) was strongly disagree see (Table:2.2). Surprising results were obtained as compared to (Table:2.1). It clearly demonstrates that females know less about political activities.

Table:2.2 Gender * key policies and positions of the political candidates in recent elections Crosstabulation

		<i>key policies and positions of the political candidates in recent elections</i>					
		<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>total</i>
<i>Gender</i>	<i>male</i>	30	30	9	3	1	3
	<i>Female</i>	12	24	24	16	1	7
<i>Total</i>		42	54	33	19	2	50

To actually know the perception of male and female students either they think or don't that there's a weighty difference of political knowledge among them. Sixty-Seven (44.6%) out of one hundred and fifty were agree, forty-four (29.3%) were strongly agree that there's a difference. Thirteen (8.6%) out of one hundred and fifty were disagree, only three (2.0%) were strongly disagree and twenty-three (15.3%) were neutral about this (See Table:2.3). It clearly describes that there is a difference in political knowledge between men and women.

Table:2.3 Gender * Significant difference in political knowledge between men and women Crosstabulation

		<i>Significant difference in political knowledge between men and women</i>					
		<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>total</i>
<i>Gender</i>	<i>male</i>	27	26	13	6	1	
	<i>Female</i>	17	41	10	7	2	
<i>Total</i>		44	67	23	13	3	50

=Another aim of this study is to find out that media consumption is playing a

role in shaping or creating public opinion about politics. To know this, students were asked about it and seventy-two (48.0%) were agree, fifty-one (34.0%) were strongly agree, five (3.3%) were disagree, and only two (1.3%) both males and females were strongly disagreeing that media is playing a supreme role in shaping opinion of public.

Table:2.4 Media role in shaping public opinion.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	51	34.0	34.0	34.0
	Agree	72	48.0	48.0	82.0
	Neutral	20	13.3	13.3	95.3
	Disagree	5	3.3	3.3	98.7
	Strongly Disagree	2	1.3	1.3	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

RELIABILITY OF DATA

For checking the reliability of the data, reliability test is being done with the help of SPSS. And resultant value is 0.748 which indicates that the collected data having good reliability.

Case Processing Summary

Reliability Statistics

Table:3.1

Independent Sample T-Test
To test the null hypothesis that there is

Valid cases	Exclude	Total
50	0	50
00.0	00.0	00.0

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.748	20

no relationship between political knowledge and gender, independent sample T-Test is performed.

With F distribution and degree of freedom df

$P \approx 0$, Results are statistically significant, showing that null hypothesis is rejected but alternative can be accepted.

Table:4.1 Independent Sample T-Test

INDEPENDENT SAMPLES TEST

Levene's Test
for Equality
of Variances

t-test for Equality of Means

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	F	ig.	f	tailed	Mean	td. Error	Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the
Political Knowledge								
Equal variances assumed	.499	116	4.71948	000	-2.65949	56357	.37731	1.5458
Equal variances not assumed			4.73946	.293000	-2.65949	56114	3.7684	1.5505

To further check the correlation between these two variables correlation test was performed.

BIVARIATE PEARSON’S CORRELATION TEST

To test the hypothesis: H1 that there is a significant relationship between political knowledge and gender gap, a Bivariate Pearson’s Correlation test is performed by using SPSS. It is used to test the relationship between two variables. Either both variables have some association with one another or not.

Pearson Correlation coefficient (r) values ranging from +1 to -1.

Pearson’s Correlation between gender and political knowledge found significant. The r value +0.669 indicates that there’s a strong positive correlation between political knowledge and gender and high degree of association with one another variable being studied.

Table:4.2

Pearson’s Correlations		Gender	Political Knowledge
Gender	Pearson Correlation	1	.362**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	37.473	99.660
	Covariance	.251	.669
	N	150	150
Political Knowledge	Pearson Correlation	.362**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

Sum of Squares and Cross-products	99.660	2026.540
Covariance	.669	13.601
N	150	150

It suggests that one variable is strongly correlate with another. By obtaining this value 0.669 one can summarize that the variability of one variable 69% depends on the variability of another variable.

ONE-WAY ANOVA

To test the hypothesis that demographics play a role in political knowledge. One way ANOVA test was performed with different demographics age and employment status.

Table:5.1

ANOVA

Political Knowledge and

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	164.205	1	164.205	13.049	.0008
Within Groups	1862.5	8	12.583		
Total	2026.54	19			

$\alpha = 0.05$

$P = 0.0008$

Significant at $p < 0.05$

Table:5.1 & 5.2

Table:5.2

ANOVA

Political Knowledge

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	265.045 1		265.045	22.269	.0001
Within Groups	1761.45 148		11.902		
Total	2026.54 149				

$\alpha = 0.05$

$P = 0.0001$

Significant at $p < 0.05$.

Role of age and socioeconomic status are statistically significant with p value < 0.05 , and α level 0.05.

CONCLUSION

There are many studies about gender gap in political knowledge. But, in this research article researcher implement more inclusive approach to find out why gender gap still exists in political knowledge while living in 21st century. By the end of this

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article, researcher is on a point to conclude that there is a gender gap exists amidst male and female students. Students were asked by different kind of questions to fulfill the aim of this study and answers to all of the five research questions about political knowledge, awareness about politics, media consumptions, their social status contribution towards politics and the role of educational institutions for enhancing or creating political knowledge among students. Stats clearly shows that men are more politically knowledgeable then women. Men show more interest in news listening and used to stay more informed about politics and ongoing political controversy. On the other hand, females used to stay update about politics but their interest span quite less then man. Females just listen or watch news just for the formality or if they do so with interest, they don't follow up the story and remained less informed. Media plays a key role in shaping public opinion. Like media, socioeconomic factors also play a foremost role to enhance political knowledge, it has been seen in this study that people with low socioeconomic status have less knowledgeable about political controversies or activities as compared to those with high socioeconomic status.

LIMITATIONS

Beside all the findings there's some limitations in this study. Empirical findings shouldn't be overelaborated. Gender gap in political knowledge could be explained more precisely and accurately by more research and with long term panel studies. Therefore, there is some space for enlargement and broaden the study, still some ways to go. The significant of this study is that we provide quite stronger evidence that there is a gender gap in political knowledge. Women actually know less about politics, having low interest in political activities as compared to man.



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