

INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL OPINION ON ACADEMIC PERCEPTION AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the potential impact of political beliefs on academic perceptions among university students, diving into topics such as desire for studying, online political activity, and perceived bias in the academic environment. The key findings show a statistically significant relationship between political attitudes and academic perceptions, particularly in terms of learning motivation and online political activity. This association was explored further using different student groups depending on religion, gender, family income, and year level. Significant differences in perceived bias and online political involvement appeared among these groups, illustrating the complex link between political beliefs and academic judgments. Notably, sex, year level, working position, and family wealth did not show significant variations, implying that the influence of political attitudes on academic perceptions may interact with other social and demographic factors.

These findings highlight the necessity of identifying the possible impact of political views on students' academic experiences, as well as the importance of establishing inclusive and equitable learning environments that embrace varied ideas while minimizing bias. Future research should look deeper into the exact mechanisms underlying the observed relationships, as well as investigate treatments that effectively cater to students' diverse political and academic demands.

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between political opinions and academic perceptions among college students has become a significant focus in higher education. Based from the study of Simmons and Lilly (2010) found out that male students were found to be more politically expressive than female students, while criteria such as parental education, class rank, socializing hours, extracurricular activities, and church attendance were not shown to be substantially connected to student political expression. Ekstrom and Lundholm (2020) advocates for a genuine intersection of political science and learning, focusing on challenges in political science education, including daily thinking's impact on students' understanding of core concepts and knowledge production. Learning activities and educational experiences, on the other hand, have a favorable impact on student political expression. There is ample evidence that individual education influences political engagement: higher education leads to increased participation (Aars and Christensen, 2018). This study explores the intricate relationship between political opinion and academic perception, aiming to uncover the nuanced ways in which these factors interplay among college students.

The contemporary academic environment is not immune to the pervasive influence of political ideologies, as students navigate a complex web of diverse opinions that extends beyond the classroom. Further, He, Dong, Liu and Zou (2021) also emphasized that The internet's appeal to college students is unclear, but it improves teaching quality and helps establish correct

attitudes. However, ideological and political education lacks effectiveness due to teacher professionalism. Strengthening ideological and political education is crucial. The most important role for school management is to provide an optimal school climate that represents virtually every aspect of the school experience (Brink, Loomans, Mobach and Kort, 2020). As institutions strive to cultivate open-mindedness and critical thinking, it becomes crucial to scrutinize the potential impact of political stances on the perception of academic content (Bartal, Vered, & Fuxman, 2020).

According to Perrin and Gillis (2019) highlighted that the link between college education and civic engagement, emphasizing its lasting impact on behaviors like volunteering and voting. It emphasizes the importance of fostering college education for beyond employment prospects. Understanding political opinion's influence on academic perception is crucial for creating equitable learning environments. This exploration contributes to the broader discourse on the role of education in fostering a balanced and inclusive intellectual environment. Shrestaha, Williams, Al-Samarrai, Geldermalsen, and Zaidi (2019) emphasized that changes in government spending on education were not strongly correlated with long-term learning trends. Successful reforms were characterized by decision-making based on information and learning metrics, stakeholder needs, effective communication strategies, and flexibility. Understanding political perspectives and academic perceptions can help educators and policymakers refine strategies. By uncovering the links between political perspectives and academic perceptions, educators and policymakers can refine strategies to promote a more equitable and unbiased learning experience.

This study aims to look into the influence of political opinion in academic perception among college students.

METHODOLOGY

The study utilizes descriptive research design wherein a survey checklist was the main instrument in gathering the required data. This study therefore would look into the influence of political opinion in academic perception among college students. The study was conducted in a state university in Zambales, Philippines. The study used convenient sampling. There are 227 student participants from different year level and courses. The instrument was validated by three experts and treated through reliability testing. There are two parts of the instrument, (a) demographic profiling of the respondents; (b) perceived influence of political opinion in academic perception. Using ANOVA, the study determined whether or not there were statistically significant differences in academic perception regarding the perceived influence of political opinion when categorized by profile variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

| Profile of the Respondents | | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Sex | Male | 84 | 37 |
| | Female | 143 | 63 |
| Socioeconomic Status | Below 10,000Php | 114 | 50 |
| | 10,001 Php – 20,000 Php | 70 | 31 |
| | 20,001 Php – 30,000 Php | 26 | 11 |
| | 30,001 Php – 40,000 Php | 14 | 6 |
| | 40,001 Php – 50,000 Php | 1 | 0 |
| | 50,000 Php and above | 2 | 1 |
| Year Level | 1 st | 116 | 51 |
| | 2 nd | 50 | 22 |
| | 3 rd | 55 | 24 |
| | 4 th | 6 | 3 |
| Working Status | Full-time Student | 200 | 88 |
| | Working Student | 24 | 11 |
| | Business Owner | 2 | 1 |
| Religion | Catholic | 156 | 69 |
| | INC | 12 | 5 |
| | Born Again | 22 | 10 |
| | Islam | 3 | 1 |
| | Aglipay | 4 | 2 |
| | Baptist | 8 | 4 |
| | Latter Day Saints | 4 | 2 |
| | Jehovah's Witness | 4 | 2 |
| | Seventh Day Adventist | 2 | 1 |
| | Methodist | 4 | 2 |
| | Agnostic | 8 | 4 |

Sex. Majority of the student respondents with 143 or 63% are female; 84 or 37% are male.

Socioeconomic Status. 114 or 50% of the student respondents have below 10,000php monthly family income; 70 or 31% are from 10,001 to 20,000php monthly family income; 26 or 11% from 20,001php to 30,000php monthly family income; 14 or 6% from 30,001php to 40,000 monthly family income; 1 or 0% from 40,001 to 50,000 monthly family income and 2 or 1% from 50,000php above monthly family income.

Year Level. Among the student respondents, 116 or 51% are from first-year college; 50 or 22% from second-year college; 55 or 24% are from third-year college; and 6 or 3% are from the fourth-year college.

Working Status. Of all the student respondents, 200 or 88% are full-time student; 24 or 11% are working student; and 2 or 1% are business owner.

Religion. 156 or 69% of the student respondents are Catholics; 12 or 5% are Iglesia ni Cristo; 22 or 10% are Born Again; 3 or 1% are Islam; 8 or 4% comprises Baptist and Agnostic; 4 or 2% came from Aglipay, Latter Day Saints, Jehova's Witness, and Methodist; and 2 or 1% from Seventh Day Adventist.

Influence of Political Opinion in Academic Perception in terms of Perceived Bias Among University Students

The table shows the students perceptions about how the political opinion influences the academic perceptions towards perceived bias.

Table 2. Influence of Political Opinion in Academic Perception in terms of Perceived Bias

| Statements | Mean | Verbal Description | Rank |
|---|------|--------------------|------|
| 1. I have felt my political views have negatively affected my grades or feedback from faculty members. | 1.83 | Slightly Agree | 5 |
| 2. In class discussions, I feel hesitant to express my political opinions because I fear being judged or challenged by other students. | 2.31 | Slightly Agree | 2 |
| 3. There are certain professors or lecturers who seem to favor students with similar political views as themselves. | 2.33 | Slightly Agree | 1 |
| 4. University resources or materials (e.g., course readings, guest speakers) often reflect a specific political perspective that I disagree with. | 2.12 | Slightly Agree | 3 |
| 5. I believe the overall campus climate is biased against students with my political ideology. | 1.90 | Slightly Agree | 4 |
| Total | 2.10 | Slightly Agree | |

This table specifically shows how political opinion influence students' academic perceptions in terms of perceived bias.

The highest ranked statement suggests that there are certain professors or lecturers who seem to favor students with similar political views as themselves with a mean of 2.33 and while the lowest ranked statement is that they have felt that their political views have negatively affected their grades or feedback from faculty members with a mean of 1.83.

The overall mean score of 2.10 indicates that students generally "slightly agree" with the statements about perceived bias.

Students' might be surprised and intimidated by conservative professors' expression, as expectations often misalign with experience (Flaherty, 2020). A teacher should act in the classroom like a High Court judge, answering jurors' questions based on facts and the law to help them return a verdict in accordance with the laws and evidence - rather than using personal views or stances to influence or direct jurors towards a verdict the judge deems fit. A presiding judge will never attempt to engage in the discussions of the jurors; doing so would render the decision null and void (Yee and Mun, 2020).

Influence of Political Opinion in Academic Perception in terms of Motivation for Learning Among University Students

The table shows the students perceptions about how the political opinion influences the academic perceptions towards motivation for learning.

Table 3. Influence of Political Opinion in Academic Perception in terms of Motivation for Learning

| Statements | Mean | Verbal Description | Rank |
|--|-------------|--------------------|------|
| 1. I believe my political views significantly influence the way I engage with academic materials and discussions. | 2.44 | Slightly Agree | 5 |
| 2. Certain political issues or events make it difficult for me to remain objective when approaching assignments or research in related fields." "I feel comfortable expressing my political opinions in class as long as they are grounded in evidence and respectful of others' viewpoints. | 2.90 | Agree | 3 |
| 3. I believe the university environment should strive to be politically neutral and avoid promoting any specific ideology. | 3.26 | Strongly Agree | 1 |
| 4. Exposure to diverse political viewpoints on campus broadens my understanding of the world and challenges my own biases. | 3.10 | Agree | 2 |
| 5. I believe my political views significantly influence the way I engage with academic materials and discussions. | 2.66 | Agree | 4 |
| Total | 2.87 | Agree | |

This table shows the how political opinion influence academic perception in terms of motivation for learning.

The highest ranked statement suggests students believed that university environment should strive to be politically neutral and avoid promoting specific ideology with a mean of 3.26. while the lowest ranked statement suggests students believed that their political views significantly influence the way they engage with the academic materials and discussion with a mean of 2.44.

The overall mean score of 2.87 indicates that students generally “agree” with the statements about perceived motivation for learning.

Willeck and Mendelber (2022) argues open classrooms promote respectful discourse and encourage students to participate in political conversations. Studies employing the Civic School Study 1999, a survey of 14-year-old adolescents, reveal that open classroom climates positively impact voting desires. The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement Civic Education Study 1999 found a positive relationship between open classroom cultures and voting tendencies.

Landwehr and Weisseno (2017) discuss contrary to prior surveys, the study indicated that theory-oriented politics lectures contribute to student knowledge growth. However, more research is needed to assess whether the lessons are taught by externally trained teachers and whether the intervention lasts longer. The research also looked at the connection between competence and political beliefs and motivation. More research on teaching approaches and political didactics is required.

Influence of Political Opinion in Academic Perception in terms of Online Political Engagement Among University Students

The table shows the students perceptions about how the political opinion influences the academic perceptions towards online political engagement.

Table 4. Influence of Political Opinion in Academic Perception in terms of Online Political Engagement

| Statements | Mean | Verbal Description | Rank |
|---|------|--------------------|------|
| 1. The majority of political content I see on social media reinforces my existing beliefs. | 2.58 | Agree | 4 |
| 2. Encountering online political viewpoints that differ from mine makes me feel more informed and understanding of other perspectives. | 3.13 | Agree | 2 |
| 3. The tone and quality of online political discourse often encourages me from engaging further with these topics. | 2.46 | Slightly Agree | 5 |
| 4. I rely on information from news sources, academic databases, and verified individuals rather than social media for reliable political information. | 3.24 | Agree | 1 |
| 5. My online political engagement motivates me to participate in real-world political actions such as community initiatives. | 2.91 | Agree | 3 |
| Total | 2.86 | Agree | |

This table shows the influence of political opinion in academic as perceived in terms of online political engagement. It revealed that students rely on the information from news sources, academic databases, and verified individuals rather than social media for reliable political information evident from the highest mean of 3.24. Meanwhile, they also slightly agreed that the tone and quality of online political discourse often encourages students from engaging further with these topics evident from the lowest mean of 2.46.

The overall mean score of 2.8 indicates that students generally “agree” with the statements about their perceived online political engagement.

Aimeur, Amri and Brassard (2023) discussed that with half of American people accessing news on social media at least occasionally by 2020, social media has become a key source of fake news propagation. Because modified content is easier to make and harder to detect, fake news can have a tremendous impact on society. Snow anticipated that by 2022, developed economies would consume more erroneous information.

Significant Difference in the Influence of Political Opinion in Academic Perception Among University Students when grouped according to Profile Variables Perceived Bias

Table 5 shows the Difference in the Influence of Political Opinion in Academic Perception in terms of Perceived Bias Among University Students when grouped according to Profile Variables.

Table 5. Significant Difference in the Influence of Political Opinion in Academic Perception in terms of Perceived Bias Among University Students when grouped according to Profile Variables

| Profile | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Decision |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|------------------------|
| Sex | Between Groups | 2.714 | 1 | 2.714 | 4.640 | .032 | Reject Significant |
| | Within Groups | 132.206 | 226 | .585 | | | |
| | Total | 134.920 | 227 | | | | |
| Year Level | Between Groups | 1.144 | 3 | .381 | .639 | .591 | Accept Not Significant |
| | Within Groups | 133.776 | 224 | .597 | | | |
| | Total | 134.920 | 227 | | | | |
| Religion | Between Groups | 23.861 | 10 | 2.386 | 4.662 | .000 | Reject Significant |
| | Within Groups | 111.059 | 217 | .512 | | | |
| | Total | 134.920 | 227 | | | | |
| Working Status | Between Groups | 5.691 | 2 | 2.846 | 4.955 | .008 | Reject Significant |
| | Within Groups | 129.229 | 225 | .574 | | | |
| | Total | 134.920 | 227 | | | | |
| Family Monthly Income | Between Groups | 10.152 | 4 | 2.538 | 4.536 | .002 | Reject Significant |
| | Within Groups | 124.768 | 223 | .559 | | | |
| | Total | 134.920 | 227 | | | | |

In the table, it presents the significant difference in the influence of political opinion in academic perception in terms of perceived bias among university students when grouped to profile variables. It revealed that there is significant difference in the perception towards the influence of political opinion in academic perception among university students according to profile variables evident from the p-value .000 in religion, .032 in sex, .008 in working status, and .002 in family monthly income, respectively. However, there is no significant difference profile variables in year level evidently from the p-value .591. This means that based from respondents' profile, they may have varied perception towards influence of political opinion in academic perception and perceived bias.

Yair and Sulitzeanu-Kenan (2015) discussed that in many democracies, accusations of political bias in the media, academia, the courts, and other institutions are prevalent. Despite the prominence of these claims and the public attention they have received, there has been little research on the consequences of perceived ideological distance on perceptions of political prejudice.

Motivation for Learning

Table 6 details the Difference in the Influence of Political Opinion in Academic Perception in terms of Motivation for Learning Among University Students when grouped according to Profile Variables.

Table 6. Significant Difference in the Influence of Political Opinion in Academic Perception in terms of Motivation for Learning Among University Students when grouped according to Profile Variables

| Profile | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Decision |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|------------------------|
| Sex | Between Groups | 1.101 | 1 | 1.101 | 2.795 | .096 | Accept Not Significant |
| | Within Groups | 89.000 | 226 | .394 | | | |
| | Total | 90.100 | 227 | | | | |
| Year Level | Between Groups | 1.792 | 3 | .597 | 1.515 | .211 | Accept Not Significant |
| | Within Groups | 88.308 | 224 | .394 | | | |
| | Total | 90.100 | 227 | | | | |
| Religion | Between Groups | 23.944 | 10 | 2.394 | 7.854 | .000 | Reject Significant |
| | Within Groups | 66.156 | 217 | .305 | | | |
| | Total | 90.100 | 227 | | | | |
| Working Status | Between Groups | .414 | 2 | .207 | .519 | .596 | Accept Not Significant |
| | Within Groups | 89.687 | 225 | .399 | | | |
| | Total | 90.100 | 227 | | | | |
| Family Monthly Income | Between Groups | 1.035 | 4 | .259 | .648 | .629 | Accept Not Significant |
| | Within Groups | 89.065 | 223 | .399 | | | |
| | Total | 90.100 | 227 | | | | |

In the table, it shows the significant difference in the influence of political opinion in academic perception in terms of motivation for learning among university students when grouped to profile variables. It revealed that there is significant difference in the perception towards the influence of political opinion in academic perception in terms of perceived bias among university students according to profile variables evident from the p-value .000 in religion. However, there is no significant difference profile variables in sex evident in .096 p-value, .211 in year level, .596 in working status, and .629 p-value in family monthly income, respectively. This means that based from respondents' profile, they may have varied perception towards influence of political opinion in academic perception and motivation in learning.

Burger, Pfattheicher and Jauch (2020) suggests that the link between political ideological orientations and cognitive task performance may be due to explicit epistemic biases and low motivation to do well in such tasks, rather than inferior ability alone.

Online Political Engagement

Table 7 showcases the Difference in the Influence of Political Opinion in Academic Perception in terms of Online Political Engagement Among University Students when grouped according to Profile Variables.

In the table, it exhibits the significant difference in the influence of political opinion in academic perception in terms of online political engagement among university students when grouped to profile variables. It revealed that there is significant difference in the perception towards the influence of political opinion in academic perception in terms of online political engagement among university students according to profile variables evident from the p-value .000 in year level and .007 in religion. However, there is no significant difference profile variables in sex evident in .060 p-value, .494 in working status, and .848 p-value in family monthly income, respectively. This means that based from respondents' profile, they may have varied perception towards influence of political opinion in academic perception and online political engagement.

According to Aghazadeh, Mahmoudoghli, and Ha (2017), revealed that there is a clear correlation between political behavior and religious observance. These findings suggest that persons in religious communities may exhibit higher levels of political behavior. However, Omelichiva and Ahmed (2017) argued that religion does affect our lives, but not always in the ways we think it would. Regardless of theological differences, religiosity by itself often keeps people from getting involved in politics instead of inspiring them to do so. People who are part of religious groups and other volunteer groups that are not related to religion are more likely to get involved in politics.

Table 7. Significant Difference in the Influence of Political Opinion in Academic Perception in terms of Online Political Engagement Among University Students when grouped according to Profile Variables

| Profile | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Decision |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|------|------------------------|
| Sex | Between Groups | .531 | 1 | .531 | 3.568 | .060 | Accept Not Significant |
| | Within Groups | 33.600 | 226 | .149 | | | |
| | Total | 34.131 | 227 | | | | |
| Year Level | Between Groups | 4.151 | 3 | 1.384 | 10.337 | .000 | Reject Significant |
| | Within Groups | 29.980 | 224 | .134 | | | |
| | Total | 34.131 | 227 | | | | |
| Religion | Between Groups | 3.521 | 10 | .352 | 2.496 | .007 | Reject Significant |
| | Within Groups | 30.610 | 217 | .141 | | | |
| | Total | 34.131 | 227 | | | | |
| Working Status | Between Groups | .213 | 2 | .107 | .708 | .494 | Accept Not Significant |
| | Within Groups | 33.917 | 225 | .151 | | | |
| | Total | 34.131 | 227 | | | | |
| Family Monthly Income | Between Groups | .209 | 4 | .052 | .344 | .848 | Accept Not Significant |
| | Within Groups | 33.921 | 223 | .152 | | | |
| | Total | 34.131 | 227 | | | | |

Also, based from the findings, year level significantly influences political engagement. According to Garand, Myers, and Renegar (2016), that there are strong, constant impacts of seniority and political experience. More senior members and people with a lot of political experience support the cause more than others. Further, in America, engagement in climate protests is more strongly predicted by age group identity (Trachtman, Anzia, & Hill, 2023).

CONCLUSION

1. The student respondents are typically first year female full-time student with a below 10,000php family monthly income and Catholic.
2. The student respondents agreed in the influence of political opinion in academic perception in terms of motivation for learning and online political engagement and slightly agreed on the perceived bias among university students.
3. There is a significant difference when grouped according to religion, sex and family monthly income and year level while no significant difference when group according to year level, sex, working status and family monthly income as to perceived bias and online political engagement respectively.
4. There is significant difference when grouped according to religion. However, there is no significant difference when grouped according to sex, year level, working status, and family monthly income, respectively.

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