



**“Paksitani Youth and Political Awareness: A Review of Pakistani Universities”**

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**KEY WORDS**

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Politics Education,  
Fundamental  
Rights.**

**ABSTRACT**

*In an era of rapid political change, education can be critical in shaping young people's political perspectives. Pakistani universities play a key role in training the minds of future leaders in particular. This study attempts to provide a comprehensive assessment of political awareness among youth and the impact of political education in universities. An attempt was made to understand how various factors affect the political knowledge of Pakistani university students. It also assessed how Pakistani universities are developing politically conscious youth, from curriculum design and faculty influence to student-led activities. In this study, students of various public and private universities in Pakistan were surveyed regarding curriculum content, faculty influence, and student-led political activities and analyzed using the percentage method. Research has shown that students in higher education can learn about their basic rights as a result of political awareness, increase their political awareness, and develop the skills necessary to engage in constructive dialogue. Education, especially political education, enables young people to actively participate in decision-making, advocate for their rights, and play a positive role in society.*

## INTRODUCTION

Political awareness among youths is critical to the growth of any democratic society. Raising political consciousness is essential for long-term stability and progress in Pakistan, where young people form a sizable proportion of the population. Political awareness is required for any democratic society to flourish and function properly. It enables citizens to participate in politics actively, make educated decisions, and improve the country's welfare. It allows people to judge the political realities of society and voting. This awareness can come from various sources including "campaigns by political parties or political leaders, information shared by peers and family, and educational institutions including religious institutions in some countries (Ghani, 2020)." These universities play an important role in molding the political ideas and knowledge of the students. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to examine the level of political awareness among male and female students of Pakistani universities and to see this aspect of political education in these institutions to see how it affects their understanding and engagement with the political process.

## IMPORTANCE OF POLITICAL AWARENESS

Political awareness empowers the people with the knowledge and skills required for active participation in the democratic process. "Political consciousness is indeed not a part but a totality of political systems by focusing on all formal objects of the process, such as decision-making processes, political institutions, or elites, including social movements, protests, and informal objects such as debates." This relationship also talks between formal and informal political objects parallels

the categorization of political participation in traditional and non-traditional practices." (Kristensen, 2022) Awareness of political dynamics and citizens' rights is critical for university students seeking to contribute to national progress. Higher education institutions must cultivate politically aware and engaged individuals who can advocate for constructive change.

## LITERATURE REVIEW ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES IN PROMOTING POLITICAL AWARENESS Curriculum and Educational Programs

Universities play an important role in raising political awareness among students by incorporating comprehensive political education into their curricula. Universities provide students with the knowledge they need to understand and engage with political systems by offering courses on a variety of political theories, governance models, and current political challenges. "These form a curriculum that, with the inclusion of political science and civics courses, exposes students to diverse perspectives and essential political insights and concepts. A key focus on critical thinking enables them to form well-informed opinions while developing the ability to properly analyze political events (Yusra S. Alkhalailah, Feb 2024 )." These academic programs are intended not just to transmit theoretical knowledge, but to foster critical thinking and analytical skills, and enable students to analyze political facts and views.

## Extracurricular Activities

Aside from official teaching, universities foster political awareness through a variety of extracurricular activities. These include student-led organizations, debating groups, and seminars that allow students to explore and interact with political issues. “Beyond the classroom, extracurricular activities such as political clubs and debate teams provide practical experiences, while community engagement initiatives and internships connect students with real-world political processes.” (Yusra S. Alkhalaileh, Feb, 2024 ) Such programs promote active engagement and enable students to use their academic knowledge in real-world situations. Students acquire practical experience in political advocacy, leadership, and communication by organizing and participating in these forums, which strengthens their awareness and participation in political processes.

### **Media & Technology**

The importance of media and technology in developing political awareness cannot be underestimated. Students can stay up to speed on political events and concerns by accessing information via digital media, social networks, and news sites. Social media and traditional mass media such as television and newspapers have a big impact on young people's political knowledge and participation. While social media provides a platform for dynamic and interactive involvement, traditional media is still an important source of thorough and complete political information. “It has been argued that social media in particular can forge new relationships between political actors and youth at this time. It

can make social connections more active on various political issues, connect people, increase political opinion formation and expression, level engagement. It also increases voter turnout by promoting general participation and can contribute to social activities(Emmanuel Jibb Adams, Feb, 2024).”Therefore, through it we can easily do things that were previously very difficult and time-consuming to process. Universities that incorporate media literacy into their programs teach students how to critically analyze information sources and engage in informed political discourse.

## **CHALLENGES IN PAKISTAN'S UNIVERSITIES: INCREASING POLITICAL AWARENESS**

### **1. INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES**

- **Curriculum Limitations**

The curriculum does not usually address current political issues, which limits its relevance and influence. Political education is frequently limited and lacks integration across disciplines. Education has many purposes but it should be more important than just enabling a person to collect information in every test or interview. A review of history shows that one of the main reasons behind the improvement and development of any society is the improvement in the educational process of that society, and what is lacking in this status quo is political consciousness. Along with basics like voting rights, political awareness covers all sorts of civic rights and duties. One of the many reasons why we don't allow oppression to fester in our societies and don't speak out against it and challenge

wrongdoing in society is that people are simply incapable of knowing how to do so (Ahmed, 2017).

- **Administrative Policies**

Some institutions have strict rules that prevent political activity on campus. This inhibits free dialogue and interaction, which are critical for developing political understanding.

- **Ban Student Unions**

The ban on student unions in Pakistan’s universities is a complex topic with major implications for political knowledge and student participation. They provide a platform for students to express their issues, engage in meaningful dialogue, and participate in democratic processes at the university level. However, such restrictions may inhibit students’ critical thinking and political engagement by denying them the opportunity to learn about and practice democratic ideas in a controlled environment. “It is quite clear that the continuation of student unions would have benefited the democratic process in the country. Politics is really about society running its own affairs, and student associations and unions really play a nursery role in the democratic education and learning of our youth. Along with issues such as privatization of education, unjustified increase in fees, non-availability of hostels, digital divide, incidents of sexual harassment and crackdown on dissent, the students of Pakistani universities are reviving politics in educational institutions. There is a dire need, which makes the student aware of all these. Students should be part of any

accountability mechanisms established in their educational institutions as they are the most important stakeholders in the future of their country and in the learning and teaching process.” (Board, 2022).

- **Faculty Constraints**

Faculty members may need to gain the appropriate skills or resources to effectively teach political education adequately. Furthermore, political prejudices and affiliations could affect the distribution of political content, resulting in partial or biased perspectives. On the other hand, students and academics face many and many pressures from the government regarding their academic freedom and the ability of the university to operate in a free, open and inclusive manner. Professors who seek to promote free-thinking and progressive values are always in fear of targeted violence and dismissal.

- **Lack of Research and Resources**

Universities face a lack of funds and resources and, therefore not enough focus on studies into political awareness and engagement.

## 2. **SOCIETAL CHALLENGES**

- **Cultural Norms**

Traditional cultural values may limit political engagement, especially for women. These conventions create barriers to political participation and awareness “Like most developing societies, family, friends, caste, feudal pressures, etc. are considered the traditional rules of voting in Pakistan.

In the social setup of Pakistan, a society is divided into different social groups based on caste, class and religion” (Zeib, Jan 2022). Similarly, along with religious matters, language, region, media's motivation, lack of awareness due to lack of education and the oppression of various institutions of the establishment for years also affect the psychology of the voters.

- **Family Influence**

Family opinions and political ties can have a strong influence on pupils' political views, limiting independent thinking and critical analysis. “Family is an important pillar of Pakistani culture and family is considered a strong factor in Pakistani culture. Most people live in a joint family system and that is why family members have a strong influence on any decision or matter” (Mahmood, Nov 2014).

- **Socioeconomic Factors**

Economic concerns and the necessity to find work frequently take precedence over political participation for many students. This limits their time and energy for political engagement. “The World Health Organization (WHO) has identified a large number of young people between the ages of 15 and 34. The official age of youth in Pakistan is 15-29 years which constitutes 27% of the country's population. The gender ratio is equal to 50% each while 63% of the youth are literate, 49% are employed and 51% are unemployed. (National Youth Policy, [Citation2008](#)).” (Saud, 2020)

### 3. **POLITICAL CHALLENGES**

- **Political Instability**

Pakistan's turbulent political atmosphere, marked by frequent changes in governments and political upheaval, can lead to disappointment and discourage political participation among students. “Lack of confidence in government favors corruption. Many common people do not trust politicians in Pakistan due to some reasons. Because politicians always make promises and claims to improve the condition of roads, schools, governance, and economy, but after being elected, they do not remember any of their promises and claims, so why should people vote for them.” (Mahmood, Nov 2014).

- **Fear of Repercussions**

Students are discouraged from participating in political activities because they are afraid of the implications, such as violence, arrest, or scholastic consequences. "Pakistanis deserve to exercise their fundamental right to choose their future leaders in free and fair elections without fear, violence or intimidation," Vedant Patel, the US State Department's principal deputy spokesman, told reporters in Washington. And finally, the people of Pakistan have to make decisions about their political future.” (Gul, 2024).

- **Polarization**

The highly polarised political environment in Pakistan can cause student splits, making it difficult to encourage open and productive debate on politics. “A major reason for polarization in Pakistan is the lack of

political consensus among national parties. Due to mutual deadlock, it becomes impossible to resolve even national security issues between the government and the opposition. Similarly, various state institutions do not agree with political parties on essential concerns. A prime example of this is during the annual budget when the process of presenting the economic policy in Parliament for the next year is usually not peaceful” (Dr. Raja Amir Hanif, 2024).

### RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

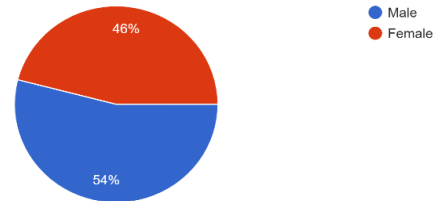
1. Assessing the current state of political awareness among students in Pakistani universities.
2. To identify the factors influencing this political awareness in Pakistani universities.
3. To suggest recommendations for the process of raising this political consciousness in Pakistani universities.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is based on quantitative data. In which the survey of students was conducted in different public and private universities in Pakistan. The study also examined curriculum content, faculty influence, and student-led political activities to see how these influence political awareness. Similarly, the survey was analyzed by percentage method and the results were derived from it.

### FINDINGS

The study found that political awareness among Pakistani university students varies widely based on several factors.

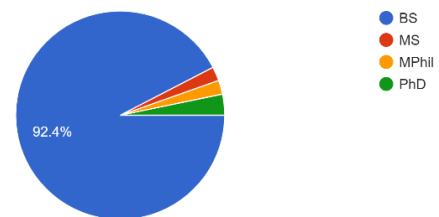


The pie chart provided represents the gender distribution in a given population. Here is a detailed description of the data:

**Male:** 54% of the population (represented in blue).

**Female:** 46% of the population (represented in red).

This chart visually shows that the male population is slightly higher than the female population in the given dataset.



The second pie chart provided represents the distribution of students across different educational levels. Here is a detailed description of the data:

**BS (Bachelor of Science):** 92.4% of the students (represented in blue).

**MS (Master of Science):** A small percentage of the students (represented in red).

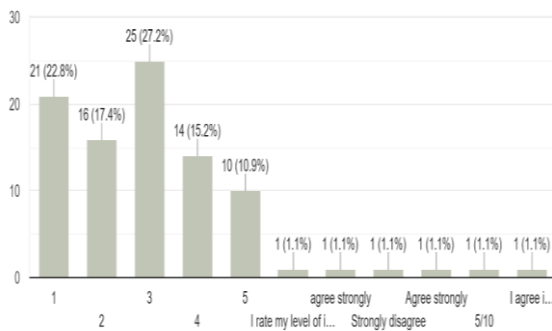
**MPhil (Master of Philosophy):** A smaller percentage of the students (represented in orange).

**PhD (Doctor of Philosophy):** A small percentage of the students (represented in green).

The chart shows that the majority of the students are at the BS level, with the remaining students distributed among MS, MPhil, and PhD levels.

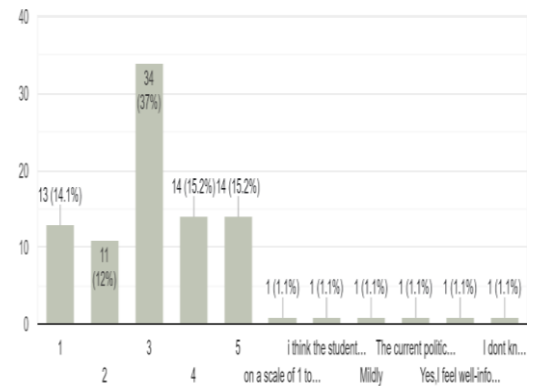
**Obj 1. Assessing the Current State of Political Awareness**

1.2 Please rate your level of interest in participating in political discussions or

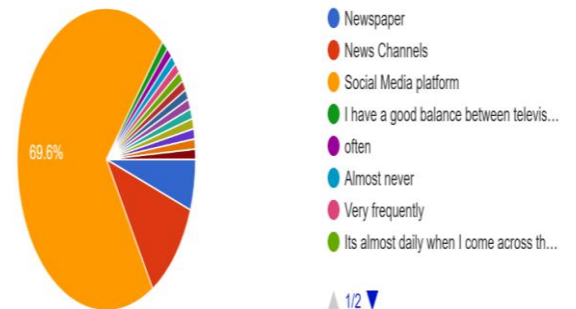


1.3 How frequently do you engage with political news and information through various media channels (e.g., newspapers, television, online platforms)?

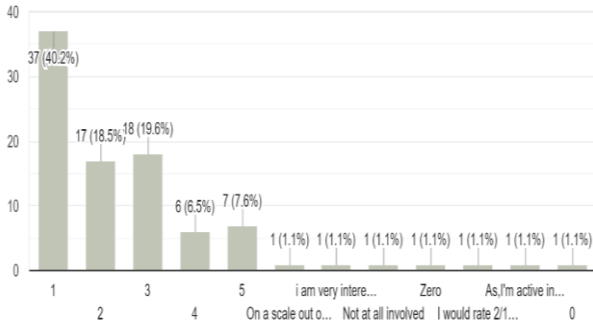
1.1 To what extent do you feel well-informed about current political issues in Pakistan?



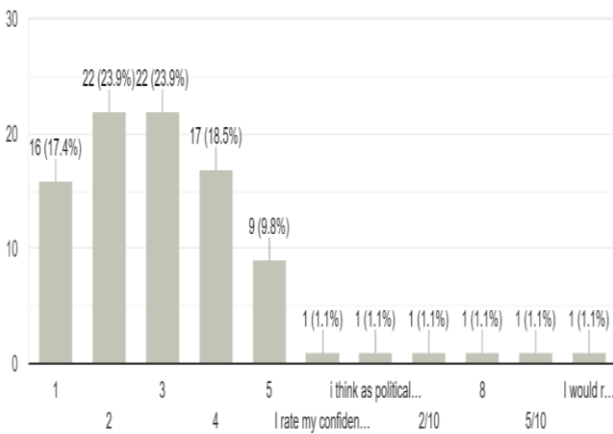
activities on a scale from strongly disagree to agree strongly.



1.4 On a scale from not at all involved to extremely involved, how active are you in participating in campus political events or initiatives?



1.5 Rate your confidence in understanding the political structure and processes of Pakistan.

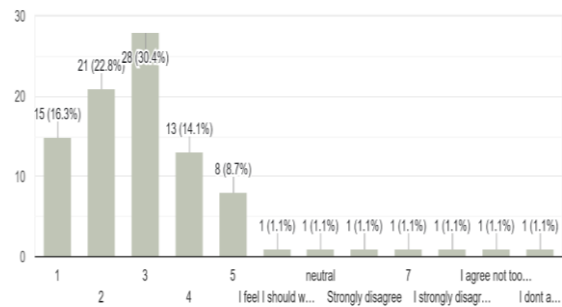


1.6 To what extent do you believe your university encourages and facilitates political awareness among students?

The extent to which Pakistani universities promote and facilitate political awareness among students varies greatly. Some institutions, such as SZABIST, aggressively foster political awareness through required courses like Pakistan Studies and knowledgeable lecturers. These universities also organize events to help students understand and

participate in political processes. Other students, however, believe that their universities do not prioritize or encourage political understanding, giving low ratings of 2/10. Some argue that, while their university attempts to keep students up to date on current events, the influence of political parties and a lack of official support impede political education. Furthermore, certain universities avoid debating political matters entirely, which results in low student participation. Despite these limitations, certain departments, particularly those focused on political science, actively encourage conversations and seminars to foster a political awareness environment. Overall, the level of encouragement for political awareness in Pakistani universities varies from strong to weak, with significant opportunities for development in many universities.

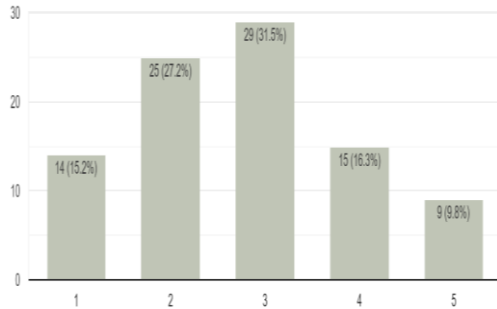
1.7 Please indicate your level of agreement with the statement: "I feel adequately prepared to contribute to civic and political activities after completing my university education."



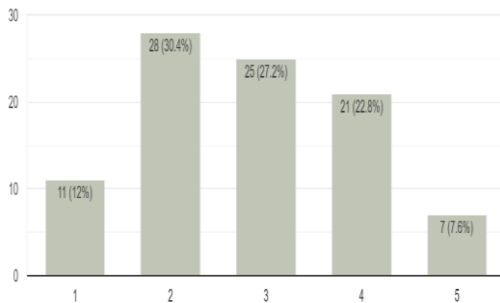


**Obj 2. Identifying Factors Influencing Political Awareness:**

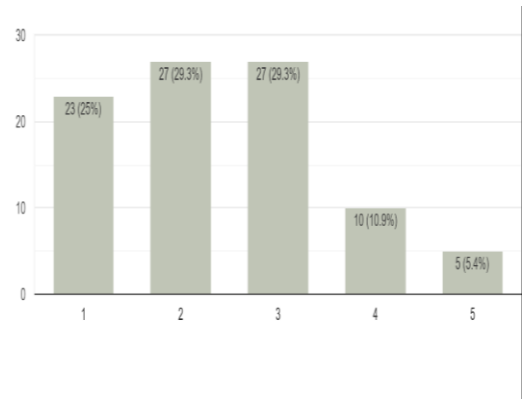
2.1 Rate the effectiveness of your university's curriculum in promoting political awareness on a scale from very ineffective to very effective.



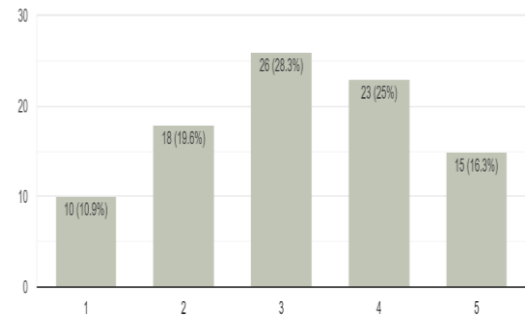
2.2 How influential do you think the teaching methods employed in your university are in enhancing your understanding of political issues? (Scale: Not influential to Extremely influential)



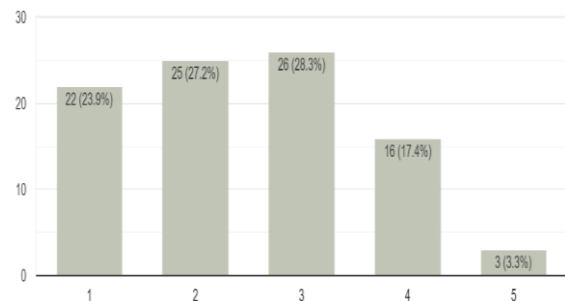
2.3 To what extent do campus cultural activities contribute to your political awareness? (Scale: Not at all to Very much)



2.4 Rate the impact of external factors such as family discussions on politics in shaping your political beliefs. (Scale: No impact to Significant impact)

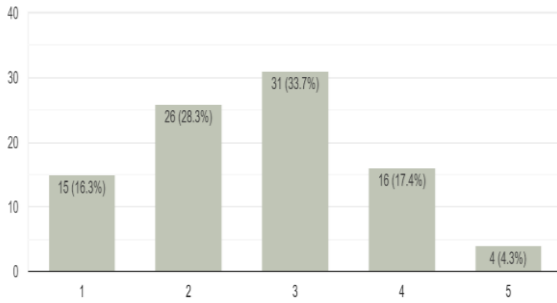


2.5 Indicate your level of agreement with the statement: "Faculty members in my university actively encourage discussions on political topics."

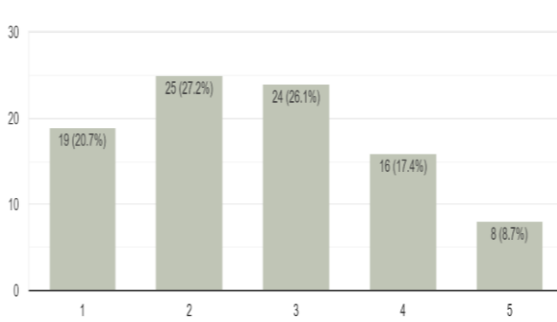


2.6 Rate your level of exposure to diverse political ideologies and perspectives during

your university education. (Scale: Very limited to Extremely diverse)

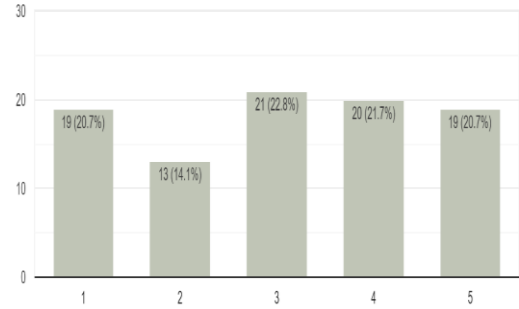


2.7 How supportive is the campus environment in fostering open dialogue and debate on political issues? (Scale: Not supportive at all to Extremely supportive)

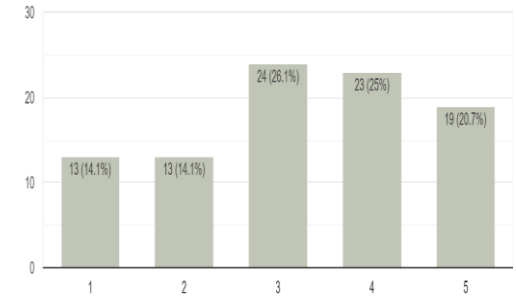


**Obj 3. Proposing Recommendations for Enhancing Political Awareness:**

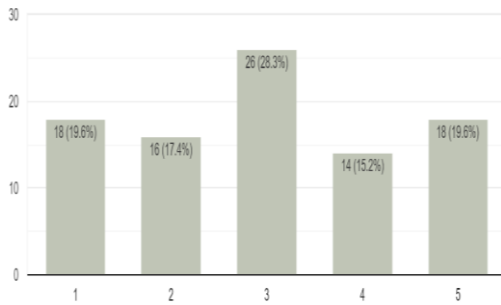
3.1 Please rate the importance of incorporating mandatory political education courses in the university curriculum. (Scale: Not important to Extremely important)



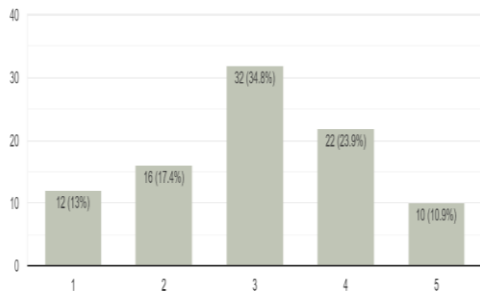
3.2 Indicate your agreement with the statement: "Faculty members should receive training on innovative teaching methods to enhance political education." (Scale: Strongly disagree to agree Strongly)



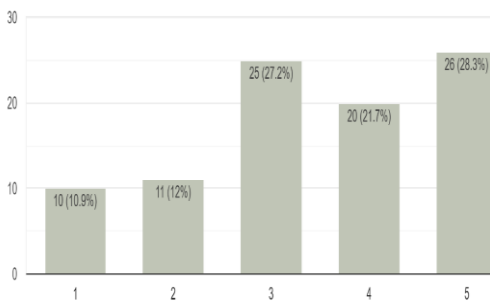
3.3 Rate the effectiveness of campus engagement initiatives, such as student organizations and political events, in promoting political awareness. (Scale: Ineffective to Extremely effective)



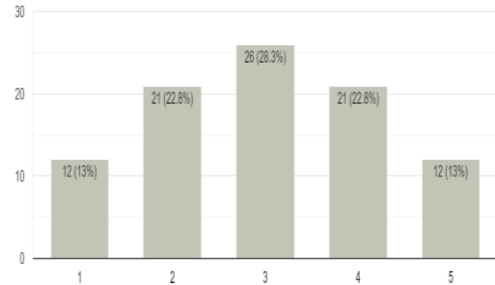
3.4 How important do you think collaborations with political leaders and experts are in enriching political education on campus? (Scale: Not important to Extremely important)



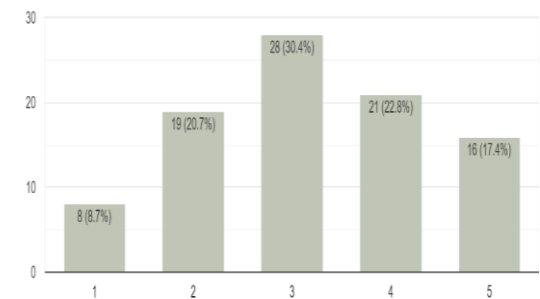
3.5 Please indicate your agreement with the statement: "Integrating technology, such as online platforms, can enhance political awareness among students." (Scale: Strongly disagree to agree Strongly)



3.6 Rate the importance of fostering a campus culture that encourages students to critically analyze and discuss political issues. (Scale: Not important to Extremely important)



3.7 To what extent do you believe that recommendations developed based on research findings can positively impact political awareness in universities? (Scale: Not at all to Very much)



## DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis reveals several characteristics of political awareness among Pakistani university students. Following the survey, a considerable portion of students believe they are well-informed about current political issues in the country, yet a significant percentage believe they are not. Despite this, there is a moderate level of enthusiasm for joining in political conversations or activities. Social

media has emerged as the primary source of political news consumption, signalling a shift in traditional media choices. However, engagement in campus political events or initiatives is minimal, indicating a gap between interest and active participation. Confidence in knowing Pakistan's political framework varies, with a large proportion indicating lower levels of confidence. The success of the university curriculum and teaching methods in creating political awareness has received mixed assessments, with opportunities for improvement identified. Furthermore, the importance of external variables such as family discussions in shaping political opinions is recognized. Comprehensive political education courses, innovative teaching methods, and cultivating a campus culture that encourages critical analysis of political topics are all suggested as ways to increase political awareness. Overall, it is acknowledged that research-based recommendations can improve political awareness in universities, highlighting the need for evidence-based interventions in this arena.

## CONCLUSION

A healthy democracy relies on improved electoral options and effective public information dissemination. The stability of the political environment is inextricably linked to independent and developed media. A stable and healthy democracy guarantees citizens' rights, fair and free elections, the preservation of individual liberties, and the freedom

of the press. “Participation in politics is based on the involvement of common people. Pakistan's political culture is complicated by ethnic and gender discrimination. Democracy has been derailed many times in the country. Weak democratic traditions, an authoritarian, entrenched and feudal political culture, and the absence of a nationwide consensus on many issues have significantly affected the country's voting policy. Electoral rigging, lack of transparency, manipulation of dominant results and strong parties in politics, rioting and exploitation of government and media machinery have contributed to making general elections inconclusive. The lack of transparency in the electoral process has led to a loss of confidence in the Pakistani community” (Saima Razzaq Khan, 2021).

Along with this, where the military dictatorship actually took part in power on many occasions, in the same way, on the occasions when they are not apparently in front, but in fact they are in front. The popularity and power of social media, especially in the last two elections of 2018 and 2024, has exposed this situation of the military regime in front of everyone. Political awareness among Pakistani university students is influenced by a variety of factors, including curriculum and teaching techniques, familial influences, and media consumption. Although some students believe they are well-informed, there is a significant gap between political interest and participation. Universities play an important role in forming

political consciousness, but many face substantial hurdles, such as curriculum constraints, administrative restrictions, and cultural expectations. “According to UNESCO (2007), many studies in Pakistan have revealed that the political knowledge and insight of students in Pakistani universities is very low and these universities have no role in performing and developing critical and political skills among students. Not paying. There may be many factors behind this situation but the role of education is prominent in all of them. In this case the role of the teacher and the available degree of content cannot be ignored” (Muhammad Muzaffar, Dec, 2017).

Enhancing political awareness necessitates a diversified strategy, including expanding the curriculum to incorporate comprehensive political education, encouraging faculty participation in political discussions, supporting student political activity, and assuring freedom of expression. Furthermore, embracing media literacy and technology can improve students' engagement and comprehension of political processes. Addressing these challenges can help to develop politically aware and active youth who can contribute to democratic processes and national progress. By applying the recommended measures, Pakistani institutions can better prepare their students for civic and political participation, resulting in a more informed and active citizenry.

In this whole situation, it should be said that if Pakistani universities do not create political awareness among students by conducting elections of student unions, at least for the better

future of the country, it should be done in any other way like elections of societies etc. Try to achieve minimum standards.

The professors of universities should make legislation in this regard within the university and also force their assemblies to make legislation in this regard.

Nuclear change in the curriculum is the most important in this regard and this work is mainly the responsibility of university teachers.

### **POLICY SUGGESTIONS & RECOMMENDATION**

- ***Enhancing Curriculum***

Universities should improve their curricula by adding more courses in political science, governance, and public policy. This will give pupils a better grasp of political processes and promote critical thinking.

- ***Promoting Faculty Engagement***

Institutions should encourage faculty members to actively engage students in political conversations and include current political events in their instructional materials. Faculty development programs can assist educators stay current on political problems and educational methods.

- ***Supporting Student Political Activities***

Universities promote activating Student Unions to educate youth about Pakistan's political landscape. Emphasizing the significance of their vote in the political process is critical, especially given that youth represent a sizable proportion of Pakistan's

voter population. Implementing full election training programs in higher education institutions may engage students and instill a sense of responsibility for the country's future. Introducing events such as "Politician for a Day" can help youth understand the perks and obligations of political positions. We recommend that schools foster the development and election of Student Councils so that students can learn leadership qualities from an early age. Platforms such as the Youth Parliament should be expanded beyond national to provincial levels to increase youth political engagement. Moreover, Political parties, through their youth wings, should actively engage in training the youth of Pakistan on political matters to educate future leaders.

- **Ensuring Freedom of Expression**

Universities should ensure that students can freely express their political beliefs and participate in political activities without fear of consequences. Policies that encourage academic freedom while still protecting students' right to political expression are vital.

- **Bridging Media and Technology**

Universities should incorporate media literacy into their curriculum to assist students in critically evaluating information sources. Encouraging the use of digital media and technology in political education can help students stay informed and engaged with current events. Media and Civil Society should educate youth about Pakistan's political processes to encourage active participation. Encourage youngsters to engage in political talk programs and share their perspectives on current events.

- **Addressing Political Instability**

Universities may contribute to solving political instability by encouraging students to communicate and understand one another. Initiatives that promote civic duty and democratic principles might help students overcome political difficulties and stay involved in the political process.

These strategies aim to bridge the gap in political knowledge and involvement among Pakistan's youth by utilizing both traditional and digital events to promote a more politically engaged and educated citizenry.

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