

Political Awareness and Political Participation of Northwestern University Students

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Abstract. This study investigated the political awareness and political participation of Northwestern University students. The study participants were students of Northwestern University from all colleges who were enrolled during the first semester of Academic Year 2022-2023, chosen using a stratified proportional random sampling technique to arrive at a sample size of 360 respondents. This study explores the political awareness of the students, political participation of students, and the relationship between the profile of the respondents and the political awareness and political participation of the students. The data was obtained through an online survey utilizing Google Forms and shared through Messenger, and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling. The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to measure the political awareness and political participation of Northwestern University students. The data revealed that the level of political awareness of Northwestern University students is very high, while the level of political participation is high. The findings also revealed in the relationship results that the profile of the respondents and the political awareness and political participation of Northwestern University students are, for the most part, not statistically significant. However, the results revealed a significant relationship between status of students in student organizations and political awareness, and a significant relationship between 2nd year students and political participation.

Introduction

Democracy creates an atmosphere that protects human rights and fundamental freedoms and the exercise of peoples freely expressed will. People have a voice in choices and can hold decision-makers accountable. The democratic power of a nation will only be realized if the people know how the government works and through our involvement in this system (United Nations, 2015).

All of the citizens in a nation are involved in the political system through our knowledge and contribution in the government which makes political awareness not simply concerned with describing or analyzing political institutions and government, but is about being able to have an input and exercise rights and responsibilities (Bochel, 2009). Being politically aware is significant in making citizens think critically and become rational members of the society. If citizens want the government to truly represent their will, they need to make sure that the government is doing its mandate properly, thus, it is necessary for the citizens to become political literate (Galston, 2001).

Further, political awareness can also be attributed to the awareness of the people on the functions and roles of the government wherein the entire amount of an individual's comprehension, knowledge, and judgment of objects is known as awareness (Al-Khaza'leh & Lahiani, 2021). In truth, awareness evolves and develops as the individual's life progresses due to the different cultural elements that influence the individual. To put it another way, the higher an individual's political awareness, the better their political culture is (Abonu, Ogunlade, & Yunusa, 2013).

The political awareness of a person resonates through their actions. It is in this regard that political awareness is related to political participation of an individual. There is a visible connection between political awareness and political participation.

If a person is politically literate, they have the opportunity to participate politically and be aware that what they are doing is political (Ahmad, Alvi, & Ittefaq, 2019).

Political participation is a voluntary rather than compelled participation in political affairs by individuals, such as voting, membership, and activities associated with political groups, parties, and bodies (Jhansi Rani, 2001). Political participation happens everywhere. Sometimes, people think that what they do is not political but in reality, everything is political. As citizens of this nation who have powers to choose leaders democratically, political participation has a vital role in shaping our nation. With this, the youth sector is a trailblazer in political participation in the 21st century as these young people is doing so much to promote awareness on pressing political and social issues across the world (Ace Project, n.d).

During the 2022 elections 56% or 37,015,901 voters belong to the youth sector. The youth will play a vital role in electing the next leaders in the Philippines (COMELEC, 2022). To ensure that essential rights, particularly those of youth, are protected and acknowledged, it is strongly encouraged that they participate actively and meaningfully in our society, including democratic practices and procedures, even at a young age (Council of Europe, 2021). In different academic institutions, there are student leaders who are being elected to lead the students, through this process, students, in their young age, have the opportunity to set a leadership standard that they want for the whole nation. Through student leadership, the importance of political participation is being inculcated to the minds of the students (WKU Herald, 2021).

Aside from that, through student organizations, students have the opportunity to participate democratically in doing forums, rallies, meetings among others that are all political participations. This institution which is created in a school by the students creates a big impact to the development of the constituents and the school in general. It is related to the government of a nation, with a single vote or any political participation, it can make or break a nation (Zaalishvili, 2019).

Participation is a democratic right that must be exercised. Removing current impediments to young political engagement should be a goal in and of itself. For the most part, promoting youth engagement should be aimed at obtaining levels comparable to the rest of the population. Youth political participation can be consultative and youth-led. Through this, young people directly impact decision-making within their youth communities, or it can be youth collaborative, in which young people effectively participate in regular political decision-making processes (United Nations, 2015).

The Philippine educational system requires higher education institutions to teach Philippine history, politics, and governance. The goal is for students to be aware of their fundamental rights and freedoms. From elementary until tertiary, these subjects develop the nationalism and consciousness of the students to the issues that matter. The youth play a vital role in the society and the political institutions agree to this as they ensure that these rights of young people, are protected and acknowledged (Rios et al., 2013).

It is strongly encouraged that they participate actively and meaningfully in their society, including democratic practices and procedures, even at a young age. However, the amount of political awareness and activity among students has not been thoroughly investigated, and as a consequence, some students are still unaware of their roles as citizens (Hermosa, 2021). In Northwestern University, there is a significant low voter turnout percentage every NWU Supreme Student Council election, and this issue is directly relevant to the present study. Moreover, no prior study has examined the level of political awareness and political participation of students at this institution. It is along this line that this study was conceived and carried out.

Specifically, this study sought to: (1) determine the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of sex, college, year level, and status in student organizations; (2) determine the level of political awareness of Northwestern University students in terms of public and university policies, political leaders, political institutions, and political processes; (3) determine the level of political participation of Northwestern University students in terms of voting, political forums and discussions, and political activism; and (4) determine whether a significant relationship exists between the profile of the respondents and their level of political awareness and political participation.

Methodology

This study used a descriptive-correlational design. It was undertaken to determine the relationship between the profile of the respondents and their level of political awareness and level of political participation. The approach is typically

deductive, where most ideas or concepts were reduced into variables and the relationship between or among them was tested.

This study was undertaken in Northwestern University across all colleges where the student-respondents were enrolled. Using the Raosoft sample size calculator with the university's total undergraduate population, a 95% confidence level, and a 5% margin of error, a minimum sample of 360 respondents was determined. A stratified proportional random sampling technique was then used to allocate this sample across the participating colleges in proportion to their respective population sizes, since the colleges have different population sizes.

The study employed a descriptive survey method using a questionnaire adapted from the research of Dioso (2019). The questionnaire was revised to accommodate the needs of the study and is provided in Appendix A of this article. A self-administered survey questionnaire consisting of three (3) sections was employed in this study.

The first section included questions on the demographic profile of respondents such as sex, college, year level, and status in student organizations. The second part consists of 28-item questions for the level of political awareness with the following parameters: public and university policies, political leaders, political institutions, and political processes, having seven (7) questions each. The third part consists of 21-item questions for the level of political participation in terms of voting, political forums and discussions, and political activism, having seven (7) questions each.

The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), estimated using SmartPLS. PLS-SEM is an iterative estimation technique that considers both a measurement model and a structural model. The measurement model estimates the relationship between the latent variables and their corresponding manifest (indicator) variables, evaluated using composite reliability and convergent validity criteria. The structural model investigates the existing relationships between latent variables.

As Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black (1998) recommend, three metric tests are applied to check the convergent validity of the measurement model: the reliability of the indicators, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE) of the latent variables.

In terms of composite reliability, all scores are above the 0.70 threshold recommended in the literature. Concerning Cronbach's alpha, all manifest variables likewise registered scores above the 0.70 threshold, indicating that the indicators used are reliable and valid for the participants of the study. For average variance extracted (AVE), the criterion of a score higher than 0.50 was met for all latent variables. Together, these results support the convergent validity of the measurement model. Discriminant validity (e.g., the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio or the Fornell-Larcker criterion) was not separately assessed in this study, and this is noted as a limitation below.

To generate the needed data, the researcher used a self-administered questionnaire. Since data collection was carried out during a period when face-to-face interaction with respondents was restricted, the questionnaire was distributed through an online Google Form.

The researcher informed and sought permission from the respective deans of the participating colleges to carry out the study, and requested their assistance in distributing the questionnaire to their students.

Upon approval, the researcher provided the concerned deans with the online Google Form link to distribute to their students. Attached to the online Google Form was a consent form for the respondents to read and confirm before answering the questionnaire.

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of Northwestern University. The respondents were provided with complete information regarding the purpose of the research and their specific role in it. Informed consent was obtained from each respondent after the purpose of the investigation was presented and discussed, and the respondents were given the right to withdraw from the study at any time. All questions raised by the respondents were answered honestly and completely. This study was reviewed by the Northwestern University Research Ethics Committee (REC Code: 2022-056U) following an expedited review, with ethical clearance issued upon compliance with the Committee's minor revisions to the research protocol and informed consent form, prior to data collection.

Because online distribution through Google Forms and Messenger may under-represent students without reliable internet or social media access, this is acknowledged as a potential source of coverage bias and is discussed further in the Limitations section.

The profile of the respondents was measured using frequency and percentage. Political awareness and political participation were analyzed through the weighted mean, computed from responses on a 4-to-1 scale, with higher scores corresponding to greater awareness or involvement. The relationship between the profile of the respondents and their political awareness and political participation was tested using Pearson-r.

Results and Discussion

Profile of the Respondents

Demographic Profile	Frequency (n = 360)	Percentage
Sex		
Male	231	64.17
Female	129	35.83
Year Level		
1st year	134	37.22
2nd year	137	38.06
3rd year	56	15.56
4th year	33	9.17
College		
College of Allied Health Sciences	56	15.56
College of Arts and Sciences	41	11.39
College of Business Education	55	15.28
College of Criminal Justice Education	78	21.67
College of Engineering, Architecture, and Technology	70	19.44
College of Maritime Education	40	11.11
College of Teacher Education	18	5.00
College of Law	2	0.56
Status		
Member	306	85.00
Officers	54	15.00

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 reveals that under sex as parameter for the profile of respondents, there are 231 male respondents (64.17%) while there are 129 female respondents (35.83%).

As per the college of the respondents, 56 respondents are from the College of Allied Health Sciences (15.56%), 41 respondents are from College of Arts and Sciences (11.39%), 55 respondents are from College of Business Education (15.28%), 78 respondents are from College of Criminal Justice Education (21.67%), 70 respondents are from College of Engineering, Architecture, and Technology (19.44%), 40 respondents are from College of Maritime Education (11.11%), 18 respondents are from College of Teacher Education (5.00%), and two (2) respondents from the College of Law (0.56%).

In terms of year level, 134 respondents are first year college students (37.22%), 137 respondents are second year college students (38.06%), 56 respondents are third year college students (15.56%), and 33 respondents are fourth year college students (9.17%).

Status of respondents in student organizations reveals that 54 respondents are officers of a student organization (15%) and 306 respondents are members of student organizations (85%).

Level of Political Awareness of NWU Students

To determine the level of political awareness of Northwestern University students, the researchers used indicators such as public and university policies, political leaders, political institutions, and political processes.

Table 2. Level of Political Awareness of Northwestern University Students

A. Public and University Policies

A. Public and University PoliciesIndicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. Laws, ordinances, and/or barangay resolutions are examples of public policies.	3.34	VHA
2. Public policies are expressed in the body of laws, regulations, and decisions and actions of the government.	3.34	VHA
3. Public policies mostly aimed at protecting the rights of individuals.	3.29	VHA
4. It is the Legislative body which creates or formulates public policies.	3.24	VHA
5. The cooperation and participation of the community as well as the private sector is essential in the implementation of public policies.	3.42	VHA
6. Smoking, including e-cigarettes/vapes, is now strictly prohibited and there are no designated areas allocated on campus based on the new NWU student handbook.	3.14	VHA
7. Production, possession, distribution, publication, exhibition and dissemination of the literature, films, prints, plays, shows or similar forms which are offensive to morals, contrary to law, public order, good custom, and NWU policies is not allowed.	3.14	VHA
Sub-Mean	3.26	VHA

B. Political Leaders

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. Political leaders are mostly referred to as politicians or public officers.	3.31	VHA
2. There are political leaders from the national level down to the local level.	3.42	VHA
3. Political leaders are either elected or appointed.	3.44	VHA
4. They are people responsible for making and implementing strategies and policies meant to better serve the interests of the community.	3.32	VHA
5. Elected political leaders are accountable to the people and not to their heads.	3.19	VHA
6. An SSC officer must be of good academic standing and has not obtained a failing grade in the last two (2) semesters prior to filing of his/her candidacy, has no record of dropping (unofficially) for (2) consecutive semesters prior to election, has no incomplete grade before taking his/her oath of office, and that he/she belongs to the upper 10% of the class.	3.14	VHA
7. An SSC officer should possess good moral character and should not have violated any of the existing rules, regulations and policies, or committed acts inimical to the interest of the University.	3.12	VHA
Sub-Mean	3.28	VHA

C. Political Institutions

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. The Congress of the Philippines where legislative power is vested, consists of the Senate and a House of Representatives.	3.25	VHA
2. It is in the Executive branch where cabinet members and their respective departments can be found.	3.3	VHA
3. The Local Government is given non-sovereign communities with subordinate status, governments which are below the National government.	3.27	VHA
4. Constitutional Commissions such as COMELEC and Civil Service Commission are established by Constitution and are independent to exercise fiscal autonomy.	3.09	VHA
5. Judicial power is vested in the Supreme Court and in lower courts.	3.33	VHA
6. Northwestern University recognizes the right of the students to organize a free student government that can administer its approved constitution, legislate student policies, adjudicate student's concerns which do not require institutional intervention and seek redress of grievances of students.	3.23	VHA
7. The University recognizes, according to democratic principles, the Supreme Student Council as the only legitimate representative of the student body to the administration, to the academe and to the non-academe of Northwestern University.	3.15	VHA
Sub-Mean	3.23	VHA

D. Political Processes

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. Lawmaking is a process wherein it needs the approval of both houses before the approval of the President.	3.28	VHA
2. Department secretaries are appointed by the President and approved by the Commission on Appointments.	3.39	VHA
3. Local government units may be created, abolished, divided, merged, or boundaries altered only after the approval of the majority of the votes cast in a plebiscite in the units affected.	3.13	VHA
4. President, Vice President, and other government officials with the highest position enumerated in the Section 2, Article XI of the Philippine Constitution may be removed through impeachment.	3.29	VHA
5. Politicians are elected in a popular vote directly by the people	3.39	VHA
6. A committee is formed and organized to formulate guidelines for the NWU Supreme Student Council Elections; to supervise the conduct of the election; and to perform all acts necessary to ensure an orderly, peaceful and honest elections.	3.26	VHA
7. The NWU Dean of Student Affairs submits a request for the creation of the COMELEC for the election of the officers of the Supreme Student Council, endorsed by the DSA, duly approved by the President through the recommendation of the VPAA.	3.08	VHA
SUB-MEAN	3.26	VHA
OVERALL MEAN	3.26	VHA

Legend: 4-very highly aware (VHA), 3-highly aware (HA), 2 – slightly aware (SA), 1 – not aware at all (NAA), N=360

Table 3. Level of Political Participation of Northwestern University Students

The table above reveals that the respondents are "very highly aware" in terms of the level of political awareness with an overall mean of 3.26.

Public and University policies shows that the item "The cooperation and the participation of the community as well as the private sector is essential in the implementation of the public policies" got the highest mean of 3.42 interpreted as "very highly aware". Both items pertaining to university policies, "Smoking, including e-cigarettes/vapes, is now made strictly prohibited and there are no designated areas allocated on campus based on the new NWU student handbook" and "Production, possession, distribution, publication, exhibition and dissemination of the literature, films, prints, plays, shows or similar forms which are offensive to morals, contrary to law, public order, good custom, and NWU policies is not allowed" got the lowest mean of 3.14 but interpreted as "very highly aware".

Overall, public and university policies got a total mean of 3.26 and interpreted as "very highly aware".

In terms of public political leaders, "Political leaders are either elected or appointed" got the highest mean of 3.44 and is interpreted as "very highly aware". Both items pertaining to university political leaders, "An SSC officer should possess good moral character and should not have violated any of the existing rules, regulations and policies, or committed acts inimical to the interest of the University" and "An SSC officer must be of good academic standing and has not obtained a failing grade in the last two (2) semesters prior to filing of his/her candidacy, has no record of dropping (unofficially) for (2) consecutive semesters prior to election, has no incomplete grade before taking his/her oath of office, and that he/she belongs to the upper 10% of the class" got the lowest mean of 3.12 and 3.14 but interpreted as "very highly aware". Overall, political leaders got a total mean of 3.28 and interpreted as "very highly aware".

On the other hand, political institutions show that "Judicial power is vested in the Supreme Court and in lower courts" has the highest mean of 3.33 and is interpreted as "very highly aware". The item "Constitutional Commissions such as COMELEC and Civil Service Commission are established by Constitution and are independent to exercise fiscal autonomy" got the lowest mean of 3.09 but interpreted as "very highly aware".

Overall, political institutions got a total mean of 3.23 and interpreted as "very highly aware".

The political processes' part reveals that "Department secretaries are appointed by the President and approved by the Commission on Appointments" and "Politicians are elected in a popular vote directly by the people" got the highest mean of 3.39 and is interpreted as "very highly aware". The item on university political processes, "The NWU Dean of Student

Affairs submits a request for the creation of the COMELEC for the election of the officers of the Supreme Student Council, endorsed by the DSA, duly approved by the President through the recommendation of the VPAA" got the lowest mean of 3.08 but interpreted as "very highly aware".

Overall, political processes got a total mean of 3.26 and interpreted as "very highly aware".

Level of Political Participation of NWU Students

To determine the level of political participation of Northwestern University students, the researchers used indicators such as voting, political forums and discussions, and political activism.

A. Voting

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. Served as a watcher during elections	2.46	HI
2. Voted for barangay posts aside from SK positions.	2.76	HI
3. Reported prohibited activities during elections.	2.26	HI
4. Shared feedback, thoughts, or opinions about the outcome of elections.	2.78	HI
5. Campaigned actively for my chosen candidates during national or local elections.	2.63	HI
6. Voted during the previous NWU Supreme Student Council Election	2.99	HI
7. Campaigned for a student candidate during the previous NWU Supreme Student Council Election.	2.61	HI
Sub-Mean	2.64	HI

B. Political Forums and Discussions

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. Participated in Barangay General Assembly	2.64	HI
2. Participated in Public forums and debates of candidates during the campaign period.	2.48	HI
3. Attended public forums on municipal/city/provincial ordinances.	2.30	HI
4. Attended public consultations on pressing issues in the community.	2.27	HI
5. Actively participate in public forums and discussions in social media.	2.63	HI
6. Attended all the Town Hall meetings organized by the Supreme Student Council.	2.47	HI
7. Attended all activities organized by the Supreme Student Council.	2.95	HI
Sub-Mean	2.54	HI

C. Political Activism

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. Conveyed my political opinions in social media such as Facebook and Twitter.	2.41	HI
2. Aired my sentiments and grievances through mass media such as radio.	2.15	HI
3. Actively engaged in political activities in our institution such as rallies, resistance, etc.	2.13	HI
4. Expressed activism by not participating with government activities/events.	2.18	HI
5. Expressed activism through different forms of arts such as using pen, lens, brush, the voice, the body, and the imagination.	2.4	HI
6. Posted, shared, or commented opinion about school-related problems or concerns.	2.70	HI
7. Submitted complaints to the University offices regarding problems encountered inside the school.	2.36	HI
Sub Mean	2.33	HI
OVER-ALL MEAN	2.50	HI

Legend: 4-very highly involved (VHI), 3-highly involved (HI), 2 – slightly involved (SI), 1 – not involved at all (NIA), N=360

Table 3 reveals that the respondents are "highly involved" in terms of the overall level of political participation, with an overall mean of 2.50.

With regards to voting, "Voted during the previous NWU Supreme Student Council Election" got the highest mean of 2.99 and is interpreted as "highly involved". The item "Served as a watcher during elections" got the lowest mean of 2.46, which falls just below the 2.50 cut-off and is accordingly interpreted as "slightly involved".

Overall, voting got a total mean of 2.64 and was interpreted as "highly involved".

Political forums and discussions reveal that "Attended all activities organized by the Supreme Student Council" got the highest mean of 2.95 and is interpreted as "highly involved". The item "Attended public consultations on pressing issues in the community" got the lowest mean of 2.27 and is interpreted as "slightly involved".

Overall, political forums and discussions got a total mean of 2.54 and interpreted as "highly involved".

Under political activism, "Posted, shared, or commented opinion about school-related problems or concern" got the highest mean of 2.70 and is interpreted as "highly involved". The item "Actively engaged in political activities in our institution such as rally, resistance, etc." got the lowest mean of 2.13 and is interpreted as "slightly involved".

Overall, political activism got a total mean of 2.33, which falls below the 2.50 cut-off for "highly involved" and is therefore interpreted as "slightly involved". This indicates that, unlike voting and political forums and discussions, political activism is comparatively the weakest area of student political participation.

Relationship between the Profile of the Respondents towards Political Awareness and Participation

Hypothesis	β (p-Value)	SE	f2	Conclusion
SEX AWA	-0.004 (p=0.469)	0.053	0.000	Not Significant
YL AWA	-0.044 (p=0.199)	0.052	0.002	Not Significant
COL AWA	-0.063 (p=0.115)	0.052	0.007	Not Significant
STA AWA	0.174 (p<0.001)	0.051	0.032	Significant
SEX PAR	0.016 (p=0.379)	0.053	0.001	Not Significant
YL PAR	0.232 (p<0.001)	0.051	0.060	Significant
COL PAR	-0.119 (p=0.011)	0.052	0.021	Not Significant
STA PAR	-0.063 (p=0.114)	0.052	0.000	Not Significant

Legend: YL=year level; COL = college; STA = status in students' organization; AWA = political awareness; PAR = political participation; β = standardized path coefficient, SE = standard error, f2 is the Cohen's (1988) effect size: >0.02 (small effect), >0.15 (medium effect), >0.35 (Large effect).

Table 4. Relationship between the Profile of the Respondents towards Political Awareness and Participation

According to Figure 1, most of the relationships were not statistically significant, so based on the direct effects, it can be concluded that most of the relationships established as hypotheses were not supported at the 95% level of confidence.

Table 4 summarizes the standardized path coefficients, the effect size (f2) as a measure of variance explained, and the conclusions for each hypothesis. Two relationships were statistically significant at $p < 0.001$: status in student organizations with political awareness, and year level with political participation, both with a small Cohen's effect size. This implies that, for the remaining paths, the dependent variables were not meaningfully influenced by the profile variables tested.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

The model was generated with the final variables and items after the validation process. The efficiency indices for the evaluated model are illustrated below. The model met the established cut-off values, indicating sufficient predictive validity and no evident collinearity problems among the indicators. The evaluated model is illustrated in Figure 1.

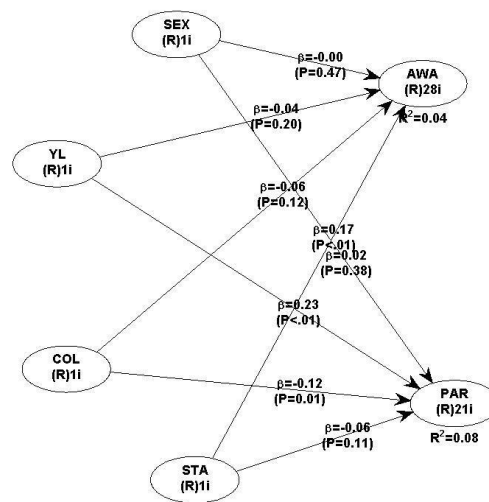


Figure 1. Research Model

It can be observed in the sex profile of the respondents that males have the higher percentage comparing to females. The college of the respondents reveals that the College of Criminal Justice Education have the highest number of respondents, followed by College of Engineering, Architecture, and Technology; College of Allied Health Sciences; College of Business Education; College of Maritime Education; College of Arts and Sciences; College of Teacher Education; and College of Law. For the year level, 2nd year students have the highest number of respondents followed by 1st year students, 3rd year students, 4th year students. In terms of status in student organization, respondents who are members got the highest number than respondents who are officers.

Respondents showed a high level of political awareness. All items relevant to public political awareness got the highest means, these results might be attributed to the general education subjects on social sciences which are being taught at Senior High School and College Levels. This confirms the study of Al-Khaza'leh and Lahiani (2021) which revealed a high level of political awareness among students. However, it is visible that the items pertaining to political awareness on university rules and the Supreme Student Council got a lower mean than the public policies. The items came from the official student handbook of Northwestern University students which means that there is a gap on the information dissemination of school policies. The student handbook is an important source of information for students. If the students know the public policies, they must also know the policies being implemented by the university. It is important to inform the students regarding school policies since students might come from different educational institutions (high schools for college-level studies, other universities for master's level studies, etc.) and can have diverse experiences, it appears more crucial to inform and educate them before they begin studying at any level (Anohina-Naumeca, Alla, et al., 2020).

Aside from that, the results showed that alongside the high level of political awareness, the respondents also appear to show a degree of political conscience. This is related to the discussion of Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Pahang (n.d.), which states that learners must be aware that they are the nation's future leaders and that it is their duty to support the nation and do their best for it. Cultivating this awareness may support students' maturity as future leaders. It is worth noting, however, that this is an association observed in the data rather than a demonstrated causal effect of awareness on civic maturity.

Furthermore, alongside the high level of political awareness, the results also showed a high level of political participation, consistent with the study of Soulé and Warrick (2015), that people who are politically aware tend to be more motivated to be involved in political participation. Also, people who are more interested in politics and feel more politically effective are more likely to engage in political activity, and these two mindsets appear to complement one another (Levy and Akiva,

2019). As this study's design is correlational, these results indicate an association between awareness and participation rather than a confirmed causal pathway.

Respondents also showed high level of political participation. It is visible with the results that participation of respondents in political functions outside school got lower mean than the items which pertains to the political participation of students inside school. Since the respondents are already inside the school, they participate frequently with the activities conducted by the school. The high-level political participation of the students inside the school it is relevant as this is their stepping stone in their political participation or civic engagement outside the school. This result agrees with the study of Morrison, K. A. (2008), that it is possible to assert that what happens in schools matters for future involvement when considering the significance of activities that take place there, such as the dissemination of civic information and a democratic classroom environment. The projected participation of students was significantly influenced by both the students' civic understanding and the classroom. The findings also point to a potential route via which an open classroom environment might encourage the development of civic information, which in turn promotes future participation.

Based on the results, most of the relationships were not statistically significant with regards to the relationship of the profile of respondents and their political awareness and political participation. Despite most of the relationships being not significant, the results showed a relationship between the status of the respondents in student organizations and political awareness. Respondents who are officers have a higher level of political awareness than the members, which suggests that officers may be more attuned to the political situation inside and outside the school. This result is consistent with the study of Cress et al. (2001), that student leadership is intended to help students become more capable leaders. These leadership activities have a significant impact on students' civic responsibility, multicultural and political awareness, personal, and societal values in addition to significantly increasing their leadership skills. Aside from that, results showed a relationship between 2nd year respondents and political participation. 2nd year respondents participate more in political activities than respondents in other year levels. With this result, the researcher suggests that 2nd year respondents may be more adjusted in their studies, as 1st year students are still adjusting to the new education climate, while 3rd and 4th year students are typically occupied with major subjects, internships, and research work; together, this may indicate that 2nd year is a relatively favorable year level for political participation. This result is consistent with the study of Sterling (2018), that these 2nd year students' growth was characterized by a rise in self-assurance in their ability to select their course of action and comprehend their intended aim. They saw themselves as becoming adults who were adapting as best they could to the responsibilities of the second year. They had to make adaptations to their lives and academic paths in order to meet new criteria for interpersonal and intellectual competence. In order to do this, they started to pay attention to forming deeper friendships, finding their purpose, and stepping up their academic responsibilities. As these are correlational findings, they should be read as associations rather than causal explanations.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In light of the findings, the following conclusions were drawn on the result of the study:

1. Majority of the respondents were male students. Also, the College of Criminal Justice Education got the highest number of respondents in terms of college. Aside from that, second year students dominate the year level of respondents. Finally, members of student organizations got the highest number of respondents in terms of status in student organizations.
2. The study shows that, the students of Northwestern University have a high level of political awareness. Also, the respondents are more aware of the political situations outside the school than the regulations being imposed by the university and the information about the NWU Supreme Student Council.
3. Aside from that, the study shows that Northwestern University students have a high level of political participation. It is visible in the results that political participation of respondents inside school is higher than the political participation of the respondents outside the school.
4. The relationship of profile of the respondents to the political awareness and political participation of students showed only two significant relationships. A significant relationship between status of students in student organizations and political awareness and 2nd year level respondents and political participation were found.

Limitations of the Study

This study is subject to several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the sample was drawn from a single institution (Northwestern University), which limits the generalizability of the results to other universities or contexts. Second, the study relied on a self-administered online survey, which is subject to self-report and social-desirability bias, particularly for items concerning civic and political behavior. Third, data were collected during the first semester of Academic Year 2022-2023, several years prior to publication; readers should consider that student political attitudes and behaviors may have shifted since then. Fourth, because the questionnaire was distributed only through Google Forms and Messenger, students without reliable internet or social media access may have been under-represented, introducing a potential coverage bias. Finally, the sample skewed male (64.17%), which may limit the extent to which the findings represent the experiences of female students. Future studies should consider multi-institution sampling, mixed-mode data collection, and methods to assess and control for common method bias (e.g., Harman's single-factor test).

Recommendations

1. Northwestern University, through the Office of Student Affairs, may consider strengthening the dissemination of the student handbook and university policies, since awareness of university-specific rules and the Supreme Student Council was consistently lower than awareness of public political matters.
2. The university may explore targeted civic-education programming and initiatives designed to encourage political activism and off-campus civic engagement, since these areas registered comparatively lower levels of participation than voting and on-campus political forums.
3. Given the significant relationship found between officer status in student organizations and political awareness, the university may consider expanding leadership opportunities and student-organization involvement as a channel for building political awareness among the broader student body.
4. Future researchers are encouraged to replicate this study across multiple institutions and over multiple academic years to assess the generalizability and stability of these findings, and to incorporate discriminant validity assessment and common method bias testing into the PLS-SEM analysis.

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Competing Interests Statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this article.

Data Availability Statement

Data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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Appendices

No appendices are attached to this study.