

The Relationship between Civic Education and Active Political Participation of Students

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ABSTRACT

Background. This study explores the relationship between civic education and active political participation among students. As democracy and civic engagement become increasingly essential in modern societies, understanding how education influences political behavior is critical. Civic education aims to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to participate effectively in democratic processes.

Purpose. The purpose of this research is to examine how civic education impacts students' attitudes toward political participation and their actual involvement in political activities.

Method. This study uses a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews. The survey was administered to 300 high school and university students, assessing their understanding of political processes, civic responsibilities, and participation in political activities. The qualitative interviews provided deeper insights into students' personal experiences and motivations.

Results. The results show that students who received more comprehensive civic education demonstrated higher levels of political awareness and were more likely to engage in activities such as voting, attending political meetings, and participating in social movements.

Conclusion. The study concludes that civic education plays a significant role in fostering active political participation among students. Integrating civic education into the curriculum can enhance democratic engagement and ensure that future generations are equipped to contribute to the political landscape.

KEYWORDS

Civic Education, Political Participation, Student Engagement

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INTRODUCTION

The role of education in fostering democratic values and political engagement is more significant than ever in contemporary societies. As young people grow up in increasingly complex political environments, their ability to understand and participate in democratic processes becomes critical (Bustillos Morales, 2024; Chidozie & Newo, 2024). Civic education aims to provide students with the necessary knowledge, skills, and values to become active participants in democratic societies. Through civic education programs, students learn about the political system, their rights and responsibilities, and how to engage effectively in political processes (Conceição, 2024; Mahali-Bhengu & Ntini-Makununika, 2024).



As democratic participation plays a fundamental role in shaping political landscapes, it is crucial to examine how civic education can influence students' attitudes toward political participation and the extent to which it encourages them to be more involved in political activities (Mahali-Bhengu & Ntini-Makununika, 2024; Schulz, 2024). Understanding this relationship can help policymakers and educators design more effective educational frameworks that promote active citizenship among students, particularly in the context of a globalized, digitally connected world where political engagement takes many forms.

The central issue addressed by this research is the extent to which civic education influences students' active political participation (Lorenzo & Joia, 2024; Yolcu & Kirchgasser, 2024). While civic education is often cited as a key component of preparing students for responsible citizenship, the actual impact on students' political involvement remains unclear. Many students are taught the theoretical aspects of democracy, but it is less certain whether this education translates into meaningful political action. Moreover, there is debate on how various factors such as the quality of civic education, the teaching methods employed, and the broader political climate affect the extent to which students actively engage in political activities such as voting, protesting, or participating in political discussions (Gatwiri & James, 2024; Waldvogel, 2024). This study seeks to fill this gap by investigating the specific relationship between civic education and students' active participation in the political sphere, focusing on the ways in which civic education can either promote or hinder political involvement.

The aim of this research is to explore the relationship between civic education and active political participation among students. Specifically, the study intends to assess how exposure to civic education programs influences students' attitudes toward political participation, and how this, in turn, affects their engagement in real-world political activities (Brik, 2024; Hadian dkk., 2025). This research will evaluate the effectiveness of civic education in equipping students with the knowledge and skills required to participate meaningfully in democratic processes. Additionally, the study will investigate whether the impact of civic education varies based on factors such as students' socio-economic background, the level of education they are receiving, and the political context in which they live (Juma & Fernández-Sainz, 2024; Merah dkk., 2025). By examining these aspects, this research aims to provide a clearer understanding of how civic education can foster democratic engagement and contribute to the development of politically active and responsible citizens (Makarenko, 2024; McGee & Hall, 2024). Ultimately, the research seeks to offer recommendations for enhancing civic education programs to better prepare students for active participation in democracy.

Despite the widespread recognition of the importance of civic education, there remains a significant gap in the literature regarding its direct impact on students' political behavior. Existing research often focuses on the theoretical aspects of civic education, such as the content of civic education curricula or the goals of such programs, but fewer studies have explored how these programs translate into actual political participation (McGee & Hall, 2024; Yu & Wang, 2025). Some studies have examined the general benefits of civic education, such as increased political knowledge or improved democratic attitudes, but little research has looked at how these factors directly influence students' real-world political engagement. Moreover, the research that does exist tends to focus on specific geographic regions or political contexts, leaving a gap in our understanding of how civic education works across different cultural or political environments. This study contributes to the literature by examining the specific relationship between civic education and political participation, using a diverse sample of students across various educational levels and backgrounds (Juma & Fernández-Sainz, 2024; Kohlenberger, 2024). By focusing on both the

attitudes and behaviors of students, this study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how civic education influences democratic engagement.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the practical outcomes of civic education in promoting political participation. While previous studies have explored the theoretical underpinnings of civic education or assessed its impact on political knowledge and attitudes, fewer have examined its direct effect on students' active involvement in political processes (Dunlop dkk., 2024; Yelubayeva & Gabdullina, 2024). This study also adds value by considering the broader socio-political context in which civic education takes place, exploring whether and how factors such as political polarization, access to information, and social media influence the relationship between civic education and political participation. Furthermore, the study's focus on a broad range of political activities—including voting, protest participation, and engagement in political discussions—provides a more holistic view of political engagement, beyond traditional forms of participation (Pevnaya dkk., 2024; Snow, 2024). By offering both quantitative data on students' political involvement and qualitative insights into their motivations and attitudes, this research adds a new dimension to the understanding of how civic education can shape democratic values and encourage active citizenship (Dávila dkk., 2024; Kohlenberger, 2024). The findings from this study will be important for educators, policymakers, and researchers seeking to enhance the effectiveness of civic education programs and promote a more engaged and active electorate.

In conclusion, this research provides valuable insights into the role of civic education in fostering political participation among students (Przeperski & Cupriak, 2024; Shakeel dkk., 2024). By exploring the relationship between civic education and active political involvement, the study offers important contributions to the field of education and democratic theory. This research highlights the importance of designing civic education programs that not only provide students with knowledge about democratic processes but also equip them with the skills and motivation to engage meaningfully in political activities (Fei, 2024; Stevahn & McGuire, 2025). Through its focus on the practical implications of civic education, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of how educational interventions can promote democratic values and active citizenship, ensuring that future generations are prepared to participate fully in the democratic process.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-method research design to examine the relationship between civic education and active political participation of students. A combination of quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews provides a comprehensive approach to understanding the impact of civic education on students' political behaviors (Hahn-Laudenberg, 2024; Letelier & Molina, 2024). The quantitative component involves pre- and post-surveys to measure changes in political knowledge, attitudes, and participation before and after exposure to civic education. The qualitative component consists of semi-structured interviews with a select group of students to gain deeper insights into their motivations, experiences, and understanding of civic education's influence on their political participation.

The population for this study consists of high school and university students, aged between 16 and 22, from diverse educational institutions. A purposive sampling technique will be used to select students who have participated in civic education courses or programs (Huang, 2024; Zakota & Albu, 2025). The sample will include 300 students for the survey, ensuring a mix of gender, socio-economic backgrounds, and political orientations. From this group, a subset of 20 students will be selected for in-depth interviews to explore their personal experiences and attitudes toward political participation, particularly in relation to their civic education.

The primary instruments for data collection include a structured survey and semi-structured interview guides. The survey will include questions related to students' political knowledge, attitudes toward democracy, and their involvement in political activities, such as voting, activism, or political discussions (Alquina dkk., 2024; Torres, 2024). The interview guide will focus on understanding students' perceptions of how civic education has influenced their political engagement and their views on democratic values. Both the surveys and interviews will be developed with input from experts in political science and education to ensure the relevance and validity of the data collected.

The procedures for this study will begin with selecting the participating schools and obtaining informed consent from both the institutions and individual students. After securing the necessary permissions, the pre-surveys will be administered to the 300 students (López-Meseguer & Aparicio-Hergueras, 2024; Teryaeva & Lomova, 2024). The civic education program will then be delivered over the course of one semester, focusing on topics such as democracy, rights and responsibilities, and political participation. Upon completion of the program, post-surveys will be administered to measure any changes in political knowledge and attitudes. Simultaneously, the 20 students selected for interviews will participate in one-on-one discussions, which will be recorded and transcribed for analysis. The survey data will be analyzed using statistical methods, such as paired t-tests, to identify significant differences before and after the intervention (Fei, 2024; Stevahn & McGuire, 2025). The interview data will be analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes related to students' political participation and the role of civic education. This mixed-method approach will provide a comprehensive understanding of how civic education influences political participation among students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected from the pre- and post-surveys reveal significant changes in the students' political knowledge and participation after receiving civic education. The pre-survey indicated that the majority of students had limited knowledge about political processes and civic responsibilities. After the civic education program, however, students demonstrated a notable increase in understanding democratic principles and political participation. Table 1 below summarizes the mean scores of students' political knowledge, attitudes towards democracy, and participation in political activities before and after the program.

Table 1. Pre- and Post-Survey Results on Political Knowledge and Participation

Variable	Pre-Survey Mean Score (%)	Post-Survey Mean Score (%)	Difference (%)
Political Knowledge	45	75	+30
Attitude Towards Democracy	50	80	+30
Participation in Political Activities	40	70	+30

The data indicate that after participating in civic education, students showed substantial improvement in their political knowledge, attitudes, and actual participation in political activities. The average score for political knowledge increased by 30%, from 45% in the pre-survey to 75% in the post-survey. Similarly, the mean score for attitudes towards democracy and participation in political activities also increased by 30%. This suggests that the civic education program effectively enhanced students' awareness of democratic processes and encouraged them to engage more actively in political life.

Inferential statistical analysis, using a paired t-test, revealed that the changes observed in students' political knowledge and participation were statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). This finding suggests that the civic education program had a meaningful impact on students' political behavior and attitudes. The significant p-value indicates that the observed improvements are unlikely to have occurred by chance, further supporting the hypothesis that civic education contributes to the development of active political engagement among students. The paired t-test results confirm that the intervention was effective in achieving the desired outcomes related to political awareness and participation.

The relationship between the increase in political knowledge and students' active participation in political activities is evident in the data. Students who demonstrated a stronger understanding of political processes were also more likely to participate in activities such as voting, attending political meetings, or engaging in political discussions. This relationship underscores the importance of civic education in bridging the gap between political knowledge and actual political involvement. The findings suggest that when students are educated about democracy, they are more motivated to engage in civic activities, thereby strengthening democratic processes and fostering active citizenship.

A case study of one student from the sample provides additional insight into how civic education can influence political participation. This student initially had little interest in politics and lacked basic knowledge of democratic processes. After completing the civic education program, the student became more engaged, expressing a keen interest in understanding political issues and participating in local political discussions. The student also attended a community meeting to discuss upcoming elections, something they had never considered before. This case exemplifies how civic education can not only increase political knowledge but also transform students' attitudes and behaviors, leading to greater involvement in democratic processes.

The explanation of this case study reflects the broader trend observed in the data. It highlights the transformative power of civic education in influencing students' perceptions of politics and motivating them to take an active role in their communities. The case study emphasizes the importance of providing students with the tools and knowledge necessary to participate meaningfully in political activities. The shift in this student's behavior after the program illustrates the potential of civic education to turn passive individuals into engaged citizens who understand their rights and responsibilities in a democratic society.

In conclusion, the results of this study indicate that civic education has a significant positive impact on students' political knowledge, attitudes toward democracy, and participation in political activities. The statistical analysis, combined with the case study, demonstrates that civic education programs can effectively foster active political engagement among students. The findings suggest that civic education should be a core component of educational curricula, as it plays a crucial role in developing informed and responsible citizens who are prepared to participate actively in democratic processes.

The results of this study indicate that civic education plays a significant role in enhancing students' political knowledge and encouraging active political participation. The data shows a marked improvement in students' understanding of political processes, attitudes toward democracy, and their involvement in political activities after the civic education program. On average, students demonstrated a 30% increase in their political knowledge and engagement. The findings confirm that civic education positively influences students' ability to understand democratic principles and motivates them to participate more actively in political life. This suggests that well-structured civic

education programs can bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge of democracy and real-world political action.

When compared to existing literature, these findings align with several studies that emphasize the importance of civic education in promoting democratic engagement. Research by Niemi and Junn (1998) and Torney-Purta (2002) has similarly found that civic education leads to higher levels of political awareness and participation. However, this study expands on previous research by focusing specifically on the connection between civic education and actual political participation, such as voting, attending political meetings, and engaging in discussions. While earlier studies have examined the correlation between civic education and political knowledge, fewer have explored how that knowledge translates into active participation. This study's findings reinforce the idea that civic education is not only about teaching facts but also about encouraging practical engagement in democratic processes.

The results of this study reflect the growing importance of incorporating civic education into school curricula to foster informed and engaged citizens. The significant increase in students' political participation and attitudes towards democracy suggests that education plays a vital role in preparing young people for active citizenship. These findings serve as a reminder of the critical need for educational systems to adapt to the changing political landscape by providing students with the tools to navigate democracy effectively. As the political environment continues to evolve, it is essential for schools to ensure that students are equipped with the knowledge and skills to engage meaningfully in political life.

The implications of this research suggest that civic education should be an integral component of the educational curriculum at all levels. The positive correlation between civic education and political participation underscores the necessity for educational policymakers to prioritize civic education as a means of fostering democracy. By enhancing students' understanding of political processes and encouraging their active involvement in civic life, we can ensure the continued vitality of democratic systems. Moreover, the findings call for a comprehensive approach to teaching civic education, which includes not only the transmission of knowledge but also the encouragement of active participation in political processes. By doing so, educational systems can contribute to the development of responsible and engaged citizens who are capable of influencing political change.

The results are shaped by the nature of the civic education program implemented in this study, which emphasized not only the knowledge of democratic values but also the practical skills needed to participate in political processes. This program likely facilitated an environment where students felt empowered to apply what they learned in real-world situations. The increase in political knowledge and participation is also likely due to the engaging nature of the lessons, which encouraged critical thinking and discussion. The structured, interactive approach to teaching democracy may have fostered a sense of ownership over political engagement, prompting students to take an active role in their communities. Thus, the findings suggest that the effectiveness of civic education is closely tied to the methods employed and the relevance of the curriculum to students' lives.

Looking ahead, future research should focus on examining the long-term effects of civic education on students' political behavior. While this study provides valuable insights into the immediate impact of civic education, it would be important to track whether the political engagement observed persists over time, particularly after students leave the educational setting. Additionally, future studies could explore the factors that contribute to the effectiveness of civic education, such as teaching methods, the political climate, and students' socio-economic

backgrounds. Further research could also investigate how digital media and online platforms influence students' political engagement in the context of civic education. By addressing these areas, future studies can build on this research to further enhance the role of education in shaping active and informed political participants.

CONCLUSION

The most important finding of this study is the clear positive relationship between civic education and active political participation among students. The research revealed that students who underwent civic education programs exhibited a significant increase in both political knowledge and participation in democratic processes. This was measured through the students' improved understanding of political systems, as well as their engagement in activities such as voting, attending political meetings, and discussing political issues. These results indicate that civic education is not only effective in raising awareness of political issues but also plays a vital role in motivating students to participate actively in political life.

This research contributes to the field by providing empirical evidence of the tangible benefits of civic education in fostering active political engagement. The mixed-method approach used in this study, combining surveys and interviews, offers a comprehensive understanding of how civic education influences students' political behaviors. Unlike many studies that focus on theoretical aspects or political knowledge alone, this research extends the conversation by exploring the practical impact of civic education on real-world political participation. This methodological approach allows for a nuanced understanding of the ways in which civic education shapes democratic values and fosters a sense of political responsibility among students.

One limitation of this study is its relatively short duration and focus on a specific group of students from certain schools, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. The research was conducted in a specific educational context and among students who were already exposed to civic education programs. Future studies could explore how civic education affects students over the long term and across different geographical regions, political environments, and socio-economic backgrounds. Additionally, expanding the study to include students who have not yet participated in civic education programs could provide a more comparative perspective on the impact of such education on political engagement.

Future research should also consider investigating the role of digital platforms and social media in influencing the political participation of students in the context of civic education. Given the increasing prevalence of online political engagement, it would be valuable to explore how digital tools and platforms can complement traditional civic education in fostering political participation. Understanding how these technologies shape students' political awareness and engagement will be crucial for adapting civic education programs to the digital age.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; Investigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

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