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THE EFFECT OF NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND PERSONALITY ON PARTICIPATION IN ELECTION

Abstract

Student elections are considered the only way for democratic practices for Yemeni youth as the democratic process has stopped in Yemen since 2014. The current study aims to investigate the relationship between voting in the election of students and national responsibility. It also seeks to examine the effect of personality factors (extroversion and conscientiousness) on participation in elections. This study was conducted on 157 Yemeni students, 60% male, aged 18-37 (M=23.65, SD= 3.96). Results revealed that extraversion and time distance between the electoral centre and the student's residence were a negative significant predictor of participation in student elections. The results also showed that previous participation in the elections was a good predictor of subsequent participation in the elections. Moreover, the results revealed that personal relationships are an essential factor in students' political decisions. The results showed that the presence of a friend of the voter on the list of candidates was a strong predictor of participation in the elections. Furthermore, the result unveiled positive correlations between national responsibility and both extraversion and conscientiousness. The results were

discussed in light of the literature and the social and cultural context of Yemeni students in Turkey, which enhances the understanding of electoral behavior and the factors affecting it.

Keywords: voting behavior, national responsibility, Yemeni students, student election, personality, extraversion, conscientiousness

THE EFFECT OF NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND PERSONALITY ON PARTICIPATION IN ELECTION

Öz

Yemen'de demokratik sürecin 2014'ten bu yana durması nedeniyle öğrenci seçimleri, Yemenli gençler için demokratik uygulamaların tek yolu olarak görülüyor. Bu çalışma, öğrenci seçiminde oy kullanma ile ulusal sorumluluk arasındaki ilişkiyi araştırmayı amaçlıyor. Aynı zamanda kişilik faktörlerinin (dışa dönüklük ve vicdanlılık) seçimlere katılım üzerindeki etkisini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışma, yaşları 18-37 (M=23.65, SD= 3.96) olan %60'ı erkek 157 Yemenli öğrenci üzerinde gerçekleştirilmiştir. Sonuçlar, dışa dönüklük ve seçim merkezi ile öğrencinin ikamet ettiği yer arasındaki zaman mesafesinin, öğrenci seçimlerine katılımın negatif anlamlı bir yordayıcısı olduğunu ortaya çıkarmıştır. Sonuçlar aynı zamanda seçimlere önceki katılımın daha sonraki seçimlere katılımın iyi bir göstergesi olduğunu göstermiştir. Dahası, sonuçlar kişisel ilişkilerin öğrencilerin siyasi kararlarında önemli bir faktör olduğunu ortaya çıkarmıştır. Sonuçlar, aday listesinde seçmenin bir arkadaşının bulunmasının, seçimlere katılımın güçlü bir göstergesi olduğunu göstermiştir. Ayrıca sonuç, ulusal sorumluluk ile hem dışa dönüklük hem de vicdanlılık arasında pozitif korelasyonları ortaya çıkarmıştır. Sonuçlar, Türkiye'deki Yemenli öğrencilerin literatür ve sosyal ve kültürel bağlamları ışığında tartışıldı; bu, seçmen davranışı ve onu etkileyen faktörlerin anlaşılmasını güçlendirdi.

Anahtar kelimeler: oy verme davranışı, ulusal sorumluluk, Yemenli öğrenciler, öğrenci seçimi

Introduction

The number of Yemeni students in Turkey has seen a significant increase over the past few years. According to the annual report issued by the Council of Higher Education in Turkey (YÖK), the number of Yemeni students in Turkey in the academic year of (2013-2014) was only 327. However, by (2021-2022), this number grew to nearly eight thousand. Istanbul, in particular, witnessed substantial growth, with the student population increasing from 93 to nearly 1600 during the same period. As a result of this influx, Yemeni students in Turkey have formed student unions, with the first three established in Istanbul, Ankara, and Konya. In 2016, the General Union of Yemeni Students in Turkey (YÖDT) was established, comprising over 35 branches across Turkish cities (Kubati, 2021). This unique and rapid formation of student unions presents an intriguing subject for studying election turnout and its connection to national responsibility, with a focus on the Istanbul branch (YÖDT - Istanbul) due to its large membership.

Student organizations, such as unions, associations, and clubs, play a pivotal role in the informal education of youth, nurturing values like democracy, freedom, participation, and

responsibility (Al Harbi, 2016). In our case, Yemeni student union elections offer an opportunity for students to engage in a democratic process akin to national elections. This raises inquiries about the relationship between participation in Yemeni student union elections and national responsibility. However, limited research exists on this topic, particularly among Yemeni students studying abroad.

National Responsibility

National responsibility emanates from collective responsibility and social responsibility. Miller (2007) posits that national responsibility is a manifestation of collective responsibility, reflecting shared beliefs and values (Miller, 2008).

National responsibility serves as the foundation for understanding individuals' attitudes and behaviors towards their homeland, reflecting their sense of collective and social responsibility (Miller, 2007; Qassem, 2008). It encompasses the obligations individuals feel towards themselves, their families, friends, religion, and country. This includes understanding one's role in achieving personal goals, contributing to community problem-solving, and working towards broader objectives (Qassem, 2008; Othman, 1996).

Extraversion and Conscientiousness

In addition to national responsibility, two specific personality traits are incorporated into the framework: extraversion and conscientiousness. Extraversion, as part of the Big Five personality traits, characterizes individuals who are sociable, assertive, and inclined to seek social interactions (John & Srivastava, 1999). Students high in extraversion may demonstrate a greater inclination to engage in student elections due to their outgoing nature and willingness to actively participate in social and political activities. Their sociability facilitates the formation of networks and the ability to garner support for preferred candidates. Extraversion is characterized by sociability, assertiveness, and a tendency to seek social interactions (John & Srivastava, 1999). Students who score high on extraversion are likely to be outgoing and enjoy engaging in social and political activities. This personality trait can contribute to their active participation in student elections, as they may be more inclined to interact with others, form networks, and garner support for preferred candidates.

Conscientiousness, another Big Five personality trait, refers to individuals who exhibit high levels of organization, responsibility, and self-discipline (John & Srivastava, 1999). Students high in conscientiousness approach student elections with a strong sense of duty and commitment, viewing them as important civic responsibilities. Their conscientious nature leads them to thoroughly research candidates, carefully consider their platforms, and make informed voting decisions.

Conscientiousness refers to being organized, responsible, and self-disciplined (John & Srivastava, 1999). Students high in conscientiousness tend to approach their tasks and responsibilities with diligence and reliability. This personality trait can play a role in influencing students' decision to participate in student elections as they may perceive it as a civic duty.

By integrating national responsibility, extraversion, and conscientiousness within the theoretical framework, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing student election participation. National responsibility lays the foundation for a sense of duty towards one's country and community, while extraversion and conscientiousness serve as individual characteristics that can shape students' engagement in the election process. This

framework acknowledges the interplay between sociocultural factors (national responsibility) and individual personality traits (extraversion and conscientiousness), allowing for a more targeted investigation into the determinants of student political engagement. It recognizes the importance of both collective responsibility and individual characteristics in shaping students' decisions to participate in student elections. These traits are important to consider as they can potentially influence students' engagement in student elections.

Current Study

The low turnout in student elections of YÖDT - Istanbul, with only around 250 out of 1228 Yemeni students participating in the October 2020 election, raises questions about democratic practices among Yemeni youth abroad. Furthermore, some studies shed light on national responsibility, social responsibility, and student voter turnout, providing valuable insights into these areas. However, there is a gap in the literature regarding the correlation between national responsibility and student election participation. Addressing this gap and examining the factors influencing student political engagement will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon among university students.

Significance of the Study

The study of voting behavior, particularly among university students, has gained significant importance in democratic countries where elections are regularly held. Previous research has explored the voting behavior of youth in national elections to understand their political tendencies (Alsaleem, 2016; Fox, 2017; Saha & Print, 2010). Additionally, studies have focused on student elections in student governments and the factors influencing voter turnout (Alharbi, 2016; Pearl & Anderson, 2007), as student governments play a crucial role in political upbringing and awareness (Alsaleem, 2016). Furthermore, studies have examined not only voting behavior among university students but also related areas such as social responsibility and national affiliation (Almumini & Almaeani, 2017; Saleh & Salama, 2017; Fares and Taebli, 2017). Given this background, it is compelling to explore this area in a unique context, specifically the Yemeni student union in Turkey, with a focus on voting behavior and national responsibility.

This study fills a gap in the research conducted in a Yemeni context, providing new insights into the voting behavior of Yemeni students, specifically focusing on their affiliation to student unions. By exploring the correlation between student election participation and national responsibility, it sheds light on the political imagination of university students. Additionally, it highlights the historical significance of Yemeni students abroad in shaping political change, such as the independence struggle in the 1960s.

Aims of the Study

This study aims to examine the relationship between national responsibility, and student election participation among Yemeni university students in Istanbul. Also, it aims to examine the correlations between national responsibility, conscientiousness, extroversion, age, and academic achievement. Furthermore, it seeks to examine the prediction of participation in student elections among Yemeni university students in Istanbul based on national responsibility, conscientiousness, extroversion, gender, the presence of a friend on the candidate list, previous participation in elections, and the time distance between the electoral center and the student's

residence. The study also explores differences in national responsibility based on gender, educational level, university type, and study funding.

Questions of Study

1. Can participation in student elections be predicted by factors such as national responsibility, conscientiousness, extroversion, gender, the presence of a friend on the candidate list, previous participation in elections, and the distance between the electoral center and the student's residence?
2. Is there a statistically significant correlation between national responsibility, conscientiousness, extroversion, age, and academic achievement?
3. Are there statistically significant differences in national responsibility based on gender, educational level, university type, and study funding (scholarship or non-scholarship)?

Method

Research Design

The study will follow a quantitative design as a framework using the descriptive approach as it would be most suited for the purpose of the study. Moreover, the study will use a questionnaire as a tool for collecting data from the targeted population.

Participants

In this study, 157 Yemeni university students participated from various universities in Istanbul, whether public or private universities. The age of the participants was 18-37 years (*M*=23.65, *SD*= 3.96). 59.9% of the participants are male and 84.7% are studying in bachelor degree. Table 1 shows the characteristics of the participants.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	94	59.9%
Female	83	40.1%
Education level		
Bachelor	133	84.7%
Master	14	8.9%
PhD	10	6.4%

University Type		
Government university	46	29.3%
Private university	108	68.8%
Study funding		
Personal	117	74.5%
Scholarship	146	16.6%
Participation in Student Elections		
Participated	75	47.8%
Non- participated	81	51.6%

Instruments

Demographic variables form

The demographic variables form contained questions about the demographic variables such as gender, age, and educational level. Also, a yes/no question regarding participating in student elections 2019 and 2020.

Social responsibility scale

The social responsibility scale contained a 30 items scale with 5 options. The scale was drawn from Othman's work (1986) on social responsibility. However, the scale was extensively modified in terms of the number of items and their content of them. Yet the scale maintains the theoretical framework of Othman that views responsibility through three dimensions: concern, understanding, and participation. For validity and reliability, Othman calculated reliability and validity and they were good results. In addition, the value of Cronbach's alpha for the scale in the current study was 0.84, and the reliability by using Spilt-half method was 0.71.

Personality scale

The personality traits scale included two sub-scales that measure conscientiousness and extraversion, two personality traits from the Big Five personality traits. The adopted scale was developed by (John et al., 1991). Conscientiousness scale consisted of 9 items, and extraversion scale consisted of 8 items where both scales included reversed items. Both scales were presented in a Likert scale format, where participants indicated their agreement or disagreement

with each item on a scale ranging from 1 to 5, with 1 representing "strongly disagree" and 5 representing "strongly agree." As the original version of the scales was in English, the scales were translated to Arabic and got checked and reverse translated by a native English speaker.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

The data was collected via a digital questionnaire that was distributed to Yemeni students in Istanbul through social media platforms students use. The digital questionnaire had at first a consent form the students were asked to agree on it, which also assures them anonymity and confidentiality. Regarding the analysis procedure, the data was analysed using the SPSS program version 28. Means and standard deviations of the variables were calculated, in addition to the Pearson correlation coefficient to calculate the correlations between the variables. Also, binary logistic regression was calculated for the prediction of the dependent variable. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was also used to measure the differences in the study variables according to the demographic variables. Level 05 was adopted as the level of statistical significance to accept the results in the current study.

Results

Predicting the Participation in Student Elections

To predict the participation in student elections be predicted by national responsibility, conscientiousness, extroversion, gender, the presence of a friend on the list of candidates, previous participation in the elections, and the time distance between the electoral center and the student's residence, Binary Logistic Regression was conducted. The result of Hosmer and Lemeshow goodness of fit test was not significant statistically, $\chi^2(7) = 5.574$, $p = 0.590$, which means the model adequately fits the data. The model as a whole explained between 39% (Cox and Snell R square) and 52% (Nagelkerke R squared) of the variance of the participation in student elections and correctly classified 79.3% of cases. The result in Table 2 shows that the extraversion was a negative and significant (B=-1.255, S.E. =0.578, *p*=.030) predictor of the participation in student elections. The odds ratio indicates that for every one unit increase on extraversion, the odds of participation in student elections decreased by a factor of 0.285, holding all other independent variables constant.

Result also shows that gender (0 =Female, 1 =Male) was a positive and significant (B=1.036, S.E. =.483, *p*=.032) predictor of the participation in student elections. As Exp(B) values indicated, when the student is male, odds of participation in student elections increased 2.818 times, holding all other independent variables constant. That means that males were 2.818 times more likely to participate in student elections than females.

Moreover, the presence of a friend on the list of candidates (0 =friend's non- candidate, 1 = friend's candidate) was a positive and significant (B=1.066, S.E. =.489, *p*=.029) predictor of the participation in student elections. The Exp(B) values indicated that when the friend of student is the list of candidates, odds of participation in student elections increased 2.902 times, holding all other independent variables constant.

Results also find that previous participation in the student elections (0 = non-participated, 1 = participated) was a positive and significant (B=2.382, S.E. =.472, *p* <.001) predictor of the participation in student elections and Exp(B) values was 10.824. It means that if the student participated in previous student elections in the last year, odds of participation in student elections increased 10.824 times, holding all other independent variables constant.

Furthermore, the time distance between the electoral center and the student's residence (0= 30 minutes) was a significant predictor of the participation in student elections, p <.01. It is shown from Table 2 that if the time distance between the electoral center and the student's residence is greater than an hour, it is a negative predictor of participation in student elections, (for time distance 61-90 minutes B= -1.796, S.E. =.661, p=.007), (for time distance 91-120 minutes B= -1.819, S.E. =.720, p=.012) and (for time distance more than 120 minutes B= -1.616, S.E. =.791, p=.041), holding all other independent variables constant. However, the time distance (hour or less) between the electoral center and the student's residence was not a significant predictor of participation in student elections (B= -.054, S.E. =.639, p=.932). It means that, when the time distance between the electoral center and the student's residence increases than an hour, odds of participation in student elections decrease. Finally, results of regression showed that, national responsibility and conscientiousness were not significant predictors of participation in student elections.

Table 2

Variables in the Equation Regression

Predictors	B	S.E.	Wald	*df*	*p*	Exp(B)
National responsibility	.459	.592	.600	1	.439	1.582
Extraversion	-1.255-	.578	4.720	1	**.030**	.285
Conscientiousness	-.296-	.482	.377	1	.539	.744
Gender	1.036	.483	4.602	1	**.032**	2.818
Friend's as candidate	1.066	.489	4.743	1	**.029**	2.902
Previous participation	2.382	.472	25.424	1	<**.001**	10.824
Time distance			13.815	4	**.008**	
(31-60 minutes)	-.054-	.639	.007	1	.932	.947
(61-90 minutes)	-1.796-	.661	7.388	1	**.007**	.166
(91-120 minutes)	-1.819-	.720	6.384	1	**.012**	.162
more than 120 minutes	-1.616-	.791	4.176	1	**.041**	.199

Correlation between Study Variables

To examine the correlation among national responsibility, conscientiousness, extroversion, age and academic achievement, the Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated. The results in Table 3 show that there is a positive correlation between national responsibility and both of conscientiousness (r = 0.172, p = 0.05) and extraversion (r = 0.285, p = 0.01). Also, there is positive correlation between conscientiousness and both of age (r = 0.299, p = 0.01) and extraversion (r = 0.190, p = 0.05). However, results do not show any correlation between GPA and other variables.

Table 3

Correlation between Study's Variables

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1. GPA	1			
2. Extraversion	-.115-	1		
3. Conscientiousness	.062	**.190***	1	
4. National responsibility	-.106-	**.285****	**.172***	1

Differences on National Responsibility

To exam the differences on national responsibility by demographic variables, factorial ANOVA was used. The results in Table 4 show that there are differences in national responsibility due to gender, F (1,135) = 4.204, p > 0.05, η^2 = 0.030. That means that male students (M= 3.92, SD= 0.469) have a high level of national responsibility than female students (M= 3.81, SD= 0.471). However, there are no differences in national responsibility due to educational level, university type and study funding.

Table 4

ANOVA Result of National Responsibility

Variables	Type III Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*	η^2
Gender	.904	1	.904	4.204	**.042**	.030
Education level	.566	2	.283	1.315	.272	.019
University type	.052	1	.052	.241	.624	.002
Study funding	.001	1	.001	.004	.953	.000

Error	29.024	135	.215
Total	2169.380	141	
Corrected Total	30.433	140	

Discussion

The current study examined the electoral behavior of Yemeni students in Türkiye. The results revealed that participation in student elections can be negatively predicted by extraversion. The more extroverted students were less participated in the elections. This result contradicts the result of Gerber et al., (2011) who found that extraversion is a positive predictor of participation in elections. On the other hand, Schoen and Steinbrecher (2013) indicated that extraversion is a non-significant negative predictor. The effect of extraversion can be understood in the context of educational level, as Mattila et al. (2011) confirmed that extraversion is a good predictor of electoral participation among people with less education. Looking at the participants in the current study, they have high educational levels, which reinforces this hypothesis.

The current study revealed significant differences in participation in elections due to gender. Gender was a statistically significant predictor of participation in the elections. Males are more likely to participate in elections than females. In our opinion, this result seems logical if the Yemeni context is taken into consideration. Women's participation in civic life and institutions is generally low. Therefore, this result represents a natural reflection of the community from which the study sample was taken. Another reason that should be mentioned is the low percentage of Yemeni female students in Turkey, as it does not exceed 18%. Therefore, all these factors make males more involved in the elections than females.

In another context, the current study concluded that the presence of a friend on the list of candidates was a good predictor of student's participation in the elections. This can be explained by the low awareness about student unions. In addition, there is another factor in voting, which is the personal relationship between students and candidates regardless of their electoral program and what the candidate can offer to the institution. Also, many candidates are keen to urge the largest number of students to participate in the elections in the hope of winning, which pays off in the end.

The current result found that the student's participation in the elections for once prompts him to participate more times. The results show that the student's participation in the elections depends positively on his previous experience in participating in the elections. This can be explained in the context of the suspension of the democratic process in Yemen for more than a decade as a result of the political situation in the country. This makes voting in student elections the first experience of democratic voting for most of the study participants. Thus, the student who voted for the first time is prompted by the experience to participate again after being deprived of it for many years.

The current study focused light on a factor that has not been studied in the previous literature - according to the knowledge of researchers - which is the time distance between the

electoral center and the student's residence. The results revealed that the time distance was a negative predictor of participation in the student elections. This seems reasonable in a very big city like Istanbul. Especially considering that there is only one electoral center in a sprawling city. This makes students reluctant to participate in student elections.

Regarding to national responsibility, the current study showed a positive correlation between national responsibility and both extraversion and conscientiousness. This result is consistent with what Barakat and Alenezi (2016) result. They found that extraversion and conscientiousness are positively associated with national responsibility. This means that extroverted individuals are more interactive with community activities, which in turn enhances their national responsibility.

Finally, the current study showed that males are more nationally responsible than females. This result is consistent with the results of Saleh and Salama (2012), which indicated a higher level of national responsibility among males than females. While the current result differs from the results of Almumini and Almaeani (2017), which did not find any differences between males and females in national responsibility.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study delved into the intricacies of Yemeni university students' participation in Istanbul's student elections. Key findings emerged from our research, offering insights into this unique electoral behavior. Surprisingly, extraversion, a personality trait often associated with increased political engagement, emerged as a negative predictor of election participation within this context. This divergence from conventional wisdom may be attributed to the higher educational levels of our participants, suggesting that different factors influence extroverted individuals in such settings. Moreover, our study highlighted distinct gender disparities, with male students displaying a higher propensity for election participation. This aligns with broader societal trends and may be exacerbated by the limited representation of female Yemeni students in Turkey.

The presence of a friend on the candidate list emerged as a powerful motivator for election participation, underscoring the significance of personal connections in shaping students' political decisions. Additionally, the study emphasized the importance of prior electoral experience, revealing that students who had participated in previous elections were more likely to engage in subsequent ones. This underscores the educational value of democratic processes, particularly in contexts where political involvement has been constrained. We also explored the impact of logistical factors, specifically the distance between the electoral center and students' residences, on participation. Longer distances were found to deter participation, particularly pertinent in a sprawling metropolis like Istanbul.

Furthermore, our investigation unveiled positive correlations between national responsibility and both extraversion and conscientiousness. This suggests that extroverted and conscientious individuals tend to exhibit a stronger sense of national responsibility, promoting their engagement in community activities. Lastly, our study identified gender differences in national responsibility, with males demonstrating a higher level of national responsibility compared to females. While this aligns with some existing research, the specific factors driving these differences within the cultural and societal context of Yemeni students in Turkey merit further exploration.

In essence, this study advances our comprehension of Yemeni students' electoral behavior in Istanbul, shedding light on the intricate interplay of personality traits, personal relationships, logistical considerations, and past experiences in influencing their participation in student elections. These insights hold implications for tailoring strategies to foster political engagement in this unique demographic, and they underscore the potential for further research in diverse contexts.

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