

The impact of Specialization in Political Science on Political Awareness among the Students of the University of Mardin



**The impact of Specialization in Political Science on Political Awareness among the
Students of the University of Mardin**

Prepared by: Wan Tahlo

RESEARCH SUMMARY

Universities are considered among the most important educational institutions that work on raising the awareness of students. Universities play a major role in creating a frame work for education and knowledge for the student in accordance with the principles and goals of the society. University specialization also plays a major role, particularly political oriented majors such as political science. These majors increase the the students' interest in their political environment and in understanding the nature of of society and its institutions, and working in this field.

This is what this research is dealing with: identifying the impact of majoring in political science on political awareness among the students of Mardin University (the Arabic Program), which has a majority of Syrian refugees whom the war pushed to leave their country and resort to Turkey. This situation increases the importance of this research because it is important to important to monitor the level of political awareness among students who lived through a war caused by a dictatorial regime, in addition to the intervention of many countries in the conflict. This research seeks to answer the following question. The extent of **the impact of majoring political science on the political awareness of the Political Science Department students who are Syrian refugees in Mardin University?** More specifically, this research tries to detect the effect of the study of this major on the following variables (political participation, following political events, interest in political variables, expression of opinions) among students. These factors constitute in their totality the components of political awareness.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:

This research seeks to recognize the importance of studying political science for refugees to organize and improve their knowledge to follow political changes, and finally determine the type of relationship between the study of political science and the variables of political awareness among the students of the University of Mardin.

In its first part, this research reviews its methodology, and provides a literature review, and reviews the concepts of political awareness, political participation, the factors of developing political awareness, and the role of the university in this.

METHODOLOGY AND STUDY INSTRUMENT

A questionnaire was adopted as a tool for the study. The questionnaire was designed to include the main and secondary variable of the research. The independent variable,

majoring in political science, was measured through a set of questions about the understanding the student of the subjects and interest in lectures, the performance of the teaching staff, and the students' participation in activities at the university.

As for the dependent variable, represented by political awareness which has a number of secondary variables represented by the political participation of students, interest in political affairs, following political news and programs, and the tolerance of criticism when expressing their opinions.

THE RESEARCH SAMPLE

A random sample was selected from the four academic years in the Political Science Department at the University of Mardin Artuklu, a public university in the city of Mardin in the south of Turkey. It was founded in 2007 and is considered one of the most important Turkish public universities. It has about 1000 Arab students, most of them are Syrians, in a program that teaches all subjects in Arabic. This program was established in 2016 and it includes four majors currently: (Business administration, political Science, Sociology, History).

The random sample that was selected surpassed 50% of the research population, amounting to about 187 students.

The study was conducted during the first academic term of the academic year 2019/2020 in the months of December and January. The study used SPSS software to analyze data.

RESEARCH OUTCOMES:

The field research and the analytical results led to a set of findings and conclusions that are trying to answer research questions. The findings can be summarized as follows:

- The research findings demonstrated that the largest majority of political science students are males. First year students' participation was big and it amounted to 32.1%. The opinions of the majority among them were negative. They did not accumulate academic knowledge due to the health situation and the remote learning. They did not feel that majoring in political science has increased their political awareness to a great extent because they were first year students, and because they studied remotely away from the academic atmosphere due to the COVID19 crisis.

- The percentage of older students (above the age of 30) was equal to the young students (twenties). The percentage was 47.6% because the university accepted students of all ages. Therefore, the percentage of married students was very close to the percentage of unmarried students.
- Political participation of the sample before majoring in political science was very weak in terms of participating in political parties, political forums, and elections. However, the percentage of participation in protests and demonstrations was very large. This is because of the situation of the Syrian revolution. Most young people used to participate in demonstrations before leaving Syria. After majoring in political science, the subjects' participation became larger in student unions and political debates. They became more interested in these activities as they understood their importance.
- The sample's interest in participating in student activities within the university was limited. The sample supported this view by stating that the university did not organize activities that benefited students.
- Results confirmed that the lecturers and faculty members were interested in discussing current political issues and discussed with the students moderately.
- The acceptance of criticism when expressing an opinion on political issues is present in the sample, and this was confirmed by the results. This is evidence of a degree of political awareness among the sample.
- The results showed that majoring political science did impact the sample's ability to understand and analyze political events and link them to each other. Students' answers showed that their major increased their ability to think from an analytical and critical perspective, and they were able to analyze things better and understand the relationships within the system of the international community by reading the traditional and modern political theories and projecting them on the ground.
- According to the results, it appeared that the sample was always interested in following local and global news and political issues even before majoring in

political science. They were interested in attending all the lectures, and were well acquainted with all courses.

- Hypothesis testing results showed that there was a significant relationship between majoring in political science and political participation, while the relationship is not significant with variable following of political events. Following political events is not restricted to students of political science. Likewise, interest in political changes is not restricted to students of political science only. There was a significant relationship with the acceptance of other opinions variable, but this is not restricted to students of political science only and the acceptance of the other peoples' opinions can be observed among students of other majors.
- The research found a correlation relationship between majoring in political science and political awareness, but this relationship in its entirety is weak. Thus, political awareness among the study sample was affected by the major in terms of most secondary variables, but there are other variables that affect the political awareness of non-specialists and they can be the subject of further studies.

Based on the findings, the researcher recommends paying more attention to this aspect. The University and teaching staff members can organize training activities that develop the skills of students, and their personalities. These activities can be practical exercises in the field of political participation and political decision making, The University and staff members should be aware that it is necessary to hold political and cultural symposiums regularly to discuss the most recent political events in the world. These events need to be organized for students to gain sufficient skills and to work on enriching the curricula with recent information that increase the knowledge of students, steering away from traditional information that is not useful to student the that students forget after the end of the academic term.

CCSD
Center Of Civil Society And Democracy

 www.ccsd.ngo  [ccsdsyria](https://www.facebook.com/ccsdsyria)  [ccsdsyria](https://twitter.com/ccsdsyria)