

# **Political Attitude as a Determinant of Political Behavior in Local Elections among College of Arts and Sciences Students of Liceo De Cagayan University**

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**Abstract** - This study aimed to assess the attitudes and behavior of Liceo de Cagayan University College of Arts and Sciences toward local elections as determinants of political culture. Employing the descriptive research design, it aimed to determine the (1) respondents' level of political attitude toward local elections in terms of knowledge about electoral process, knowledge about local elections, and the view of self (role) in the local election; (2) respondents' level of political behavior toward local elections in terms of interest in local elections, likelihood of participation in local elections, and likelihood of influence in local elections; and (3) the significant relationship between the respondents' attitude and behavior towards local elections. Through simple non-systematic random sampling, the 15 target sample size was obtained out of 113 students. A researcher-made instrument which was pre-tested to establish validity and reliability was used to gather the needed data. To determine the respondents' level of political attitude and the respondents' level of political culture, the percentage was used. Lastly, to establish the relationship between the respondents' level of political attitude and level of political culture, the Pearson Product Moment

Correlation was applied. The study discovered that respondents have high knowledge about electoral process, and knowledge about local elections. They rated themselves as having a high role (self-role) in the local election. In terms of interest in local elections, the respondents have high likelihood of participation in local election, and likelihood of influence in local elections. From the findings, it can be said that most of the students of the College of Arts and Sciences are highly knowledgeable in terms of the electoral process in the local elections and also consider themselves as important actor who play a significant role in the electoral process. The students would have likely participated in the May 10, 2010 Elections and might have influenced others or the electoral contest. Thus, they are highly political and participative “political man”.

Keywords - Political attitude, political behavior, local elections

## INTRODUCTION

The great political philosopher Aristotle engraved in the minds of mankind the striking notion that they are by nature political animal. Man cannot escape and avoid political systems and processes, albeit must inevitably dwell and deal with them.

In a democratic society, the people are allowed to participate in governance. Through the mechanisms of political consultation, political participation, political equality, and respect for majority and minority rights, the people are given enough chance to get involved in politics and in public affairs.

Central to democratic system is the conduct of elections. It is considered as “a device for filling an office through choices made by a designated body of people: the electorate (Heywood, 1997).

During the 2010 national and local Philippine elections, the young Filipinos all over the country who were qualified to vote were eager to participate in the political exercise. Election is one of the many acts of being political. Through election, the young Filipinos are given the right to express their sentiments and show their relation with the political system and its institutions.

The College of Arts and Sciences of Liceo de Cagayan University has new student voters who participated in the 2010 elections by virtue of age and citizenship. Legally, all eighteen years old Filipinos are eligible to vote and be voted upon. However, questions arise as what kind of voters these students were and what were their political attitude and behavior.

Are students passive, active, or submissive to the prevailing electoral practices, systems, and traditions? How do they view themselves as new participants in the electoral dynamics? Are they apathetic, sympathetic, indifferent, or not really interested in the election?

To find answers to these questions, hence, this study was conducted.

## **FRAMEWORK**

This research was anchored on the concept of political culture by Gabriel A. Almond and Sydney Verba (1980); Gabriel Almond and Powell (1963); and Robert A. Dahl's typology of political men and women in *Modern Political Analysis* (1991).

### **A. Almond's Classifications of Political Culture:**

Gabriel Almond in his book, *The Civic Culture* (1963), defined political culture as about attitudes, beliefs, and values of the people towards politics. Almond stressed more theoretically that political culture is that set of attitudes within which a political system works (1980). Political culture refers to "the specifically political orientations—attitudes towards the political system and its various parts, and attitudes toward the role of the self in the system."

The first major cross-sectional study of political cultures introduced the term participants, parochials, and subjects to characterize citizen differences in awareness of political process and of their potential influence (Almond & Powell, 1963). Participants develop an awareness of the input process of the society, those which facilitate their own involvement in politics. They also develop attitudes that encourage their use of opportunities for participation.

On the other hand, subjects are those citizens who become part of the national political system and perceive its impact, or potential impact, on their lives. But their view of their own role in politics remains that

of subjects, affected by governmental action, but not active in shaping it. Parochials are those citizens who have little or no awareness of the political system. They have no perception of their possible influence or obligation regarding it.

For Almond, there are three components that constitute politics: the Input which refers to demands and supports towards the political system; the Political System, which is referred to as the mechanism that converts the Inputs into authoritative decisions or policies, like the parliament, judiciary, etc.; and the Output, which refers to the decisions and policies.

Almond suggested that political culture couldn't be created overnight but it is molded through a long period of political orientation and socialization. Hence, the major factors that would shape political culture include the countries geographical location, history, economy, society, culture, religion, and politics. Race, tribe, caste, and ethnicity also are influences in the case of certain countries like India where caste is very important and in Africa where race is important.

With this claim, Almond suggested a scheme to make political culture operate. Thus, there are three different types of orientations: cognitive, which refers to knowledge and information about politics; affective, which refers to how individuals hold some feelings and emotions about politics, whether positive or negative; and evaluation, the capacity of the individuals to carefully assess the positive and negative features of the political system.

Likewise, Almond suggested the following typology:

**1. Parochial.** There are no orientations towards all components of politics --- input, output, political system, and self-role. This exists in a traditional society. People are unaware of politics. They do not have a secular understanding of the world, and there are no well differentiated political structures.

**2. Subject.** There are some orientations towards output and political system. People know about decision-making mechanism. There is a political awareness but no confidence to air political views, thus there is an absence of participatory norms. The first priority is obedience --- one must obey the law and submit oneself to the authority of law. Here, certain differentiated political structures emerge. This type exists in

totalitarian states of communist. Almond and Verba (1963) suggested that a 'subject or 'passive' culture fits in an authoritarian regime.

**3. Participant.** There are orientations towards all four components of politics --- input, output, political system, and self-role. Here, emphasis is on the role of the self. This encourages more and more participation, but no guarantee of stability. Participation is the highest value. There is an ability to criticize the authority and hold positive orientation towards action. Almond and Verba (1963) suggested that a participatory political culture fits in a liberal democratic regime.

On the other hand, Dahl stressed the following typology of political man:

**1. Apolitical.** It refers to people who show low interest in political matters. They are less concern and informed about politics. They are seen as not active in public affairs. In the electoral exercise, they do not vote in national elections and/or abstain from other kinds of political activity. They are seen to less likely get involved in politics because of the following:

- a. They place a low value on the rewards expected from political involvement relative to the rewards they expect from other kinds of activity.
- b. They think that there is no significant difference in the alternatives before them and what they do will not matter.
- c. They think that they will do will not matter because they cannot change the outcome anyway.
- d. They believe that the outcome will be relatively satisfactory to them without their involvement.
- e. They think that their knowledge is too limited for them to be effective.
- f. They think that there are great obstacles preventing them to participate.

**2. The Political.** It refers to people who are much more interested, concerned, informed, and active in political affairs. The following are the reasons for their active participation in politics:

- a. They value the rewards that they will gain.

- b. They think that the alternatives are important.
- c. They are confident that they can help to change the outcome.
- d. They believe that the outcome will be unsatisfactory if they will not participate.
- e. They think that they have enough knowledge or skill that bears on the issue at hand.
- f. They believe that they can overcome the fewer obstacles to participation.

**3. The Influence Seekers.** It refers to people who seek to influence the government vigorously than others. They seek to exert influence over the policies, rules, and decisions enforced by the government. They are seen to have more political resources, skills, and incentives than others. They think that participation is easier and less costly. They also perceived that rewards are greater and the penalties fewer. Moreover, the Influence seekers are motivated by the following:

- a. They seek to influence the government for the general good.
- b. They seek to influence the government for their self-interest.
- c. They seek to influence the government because they are driven by needs, wishes, desires, and motives of which they are not fully aware of.

**4. The Powerful.** It refers to people who are different from power seekers because the latter fail to gain power. Thus, the powerful are those who are able to gain power.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study determined (1) the level of political attitude among CAS students towards local elections in terms of knowledge about electoral process; about local elections; and view of self (role) in the local election; (2) the level of political behavior among CAS students towards local elections in terms of interest in local elections, likelihood of participation in local election, and likelihood of influence in local elections; and (3) the significant relationship between political attitude and behavior among CAS students of LDCU towards local elections.

## **METHODS**

This research employed the descriptive research design as it sought to describe the level of political orientation, and awareness of political issues among students of the College of Arts and Sciences. Descriptive research design describes the characteristic of the individual situation when certain phenomena occurred (Padua, 2000). It establishes existing conditions and relationship between two or more variables of observable situations.

### **Respondents**

The respondents consisted of one hundred and thirteen (113) students of the College of Arts and Sciences. They were enrolled in the following courses: (1) Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, (2) Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication, (3) Bachelor of Arts in English, (4) Bachelor of Arts in Economics, (5) Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, (6) Bachelor of Arts in Biology, and (7) Bachelor of Arts in International Studies.

### **Sampling Procedure**

Through simple non-systematic random sampling, the fifteen (15) target sample size was obtained. Using the data and documents available in each of the program department, specifically, the enrollment and student folders used for monitoring them, the researchers collected the names of the students who are 18 years old or above as long as he/she is a college student of the university and is enrolled in the College of Arts and Sciences department. The fifteen (15) names were then randomly picked by the researchers so that all students had the opportunity to be chosen as respondents. After the names were selected, the researchers then requested their participation to be part of the study.

### **Instrumentation**

A researcher-made instrument was used to gather the needed data. The questions in the instrument were based on reviewed literature. The research instrument consisted of two parts. The first part determined

the political behavior of the respondents while second part determined on the political attitude of the students.

### **Validity and Reliability**

The instrument's was pre-tested to establish validity and reliability (see attached appendices for sample). In pre-testing, one class was chosen as pre-test group. The class was composed of twenty three (23) students. The researchers distributed the questionnaires to the students. The students were then asked to answer the questionnaires. The researchers took note of the comments, criticisms, and suggestions of the students. The accomplished questionnaires were then sent to the statistician for the statistical treatment. When the instrument was found valid and reliable, it was finally administered to the actual respondents.

### **Data Gathering Procedure**

During data gathering, the researchers visited classes to identify the respondents who were then given the questionnaires to be accomplished. The questionnaires were then retrieved. The obtained data was submitted to the university statistician for statistical analysis.

### **Statistical Techniques**

To determine the respondents' level of political attitude, the percentage was used. The same statistical tool was also used to determine the respondents' level of political culture. Lastly, to establish the relationship between the respondents' level of political attitude and level of political culture, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation was applied.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

**The level of political attitude among CAS students towards local elections in terms of knowledge about electoral process; about local elections; and view of self (role) in the local election**



Table 1. Level of Political Attitude Among CAS Students towards Local Elections in terms of Knowledge of Electoral Process, Local Elections, and View of Self (Role) in the Local Election

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT ELECTORAL PROCESS	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Average	8	7.1
High	105	92.9
Total	113	100.0
KNOWLEDGE ABOUT LOCAL ELECTIONS	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Average	17	15.0
High	96	85.0
Total	113	100.0
VIEW OF SELF (ROLE) IN THE LOCAL ELECTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Average	1	0.9
High	112	99.1
Total	113	100.0

Table 1 shows the respondents' level of political attitude towards local elections in terms of knowledge about electoral process, and local elections and view of self (role) in the local election.

As shown on the table, the majority of the respondents are highly knowledgeable about electoral process (92.9%) and the local elections (85%). Considering that the respondents are under the College of Arts and Sciences, they are all well-informed about the electoral process and their participation in the local election since it is discussed and also taught in their major subjects.

Colby (2008) attributes the high knowledge of individuals, especially the higher education students, about politics to the claim that education improves political understanding and engagement. Indeed, there is a

positive, reinforcing relationship between educational attainment and political knowledge and information.

In terms of the view of self (role) in the local election, most of the respondents (99.1%) were highly aware of their role in the local election. They consider themselves important actors in the local election, and they are highly influential in local election.

According to Sullivan and Rosin (2008), learning about politics must be made as an integral part of College education. College Liberal Arts students must possess adequate knowledge of politics for them to be considered fully educated.

**The level of political behavior among CAS students towards local elections in terms of interest in local elections; likelihood of participation in local election; and likelihood of influence in local elections.**

Table 2. Level of Political Behavior among CAS Students towards Local Elections in terms of Interest in Local Elections, Likelihood of Participation in Local Election; and Likelihood of Influence in Local Elections

INTEREST IN LOCAL ELECTIONS	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Average	11	9.7
High	102	90.3
Total	113	100.0
LIKELIHOOD OF PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL ELECTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Average	11	9.7
High	102	90.3
Total	113	100.0
LIKELIHOOD OF INFLUENCE IN LOCAL ELECTIONS	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Average	18	15.9
High	95	84.1
Total	113	100.0

Table 2 shows the respondents’ level of political behavior among CAS students towards local elections in terms of interest in local elections, likelihood of participation in local election, and likelihood of influence in local elections.

As shown in the table, most of the respondents were highly interested in local elections (90.3%) and were most likely to participate in the local elections (90.3%). This shows that the respondents are aware of their right to vote and they know that they have a role to play when it comes to choosing their local leaders. In terms of the likelihood of influencing in the local elections, majority of them (84.1%) believed that their participation could influence the local elections.

The respondents of the study probably belong to “low level” community because they tend to have better political participation. According to a study, involving local people within Tambon Administration in Chiang Mai Province, people living in low-level community had better political participation than those in high-level community. However, the people living in low-level community had no intention to actively participate in politics except in local elections.

**The significant relationship between political attitude and behavior among CAS students of LDCU towards local elections**

Table 3. Test of Significant Relationship between Political Attitude and Behavior Among CAS Students of LDCU Towards Local Elections

	Interest In Local Elections				Likelihood Of Participa- tion In Local Elections				Likelihood Of Influence In Local Elections			
	Corr.	Prob.	Rel.	Ho:	Corr.	Prob.	Rel.	Ho:	Corr.	Prob.	Rel.	Ho:
Knowledge about Elec- toral Process	.2585	.006	Low / Slight	R	-.0906	.340	Negl.	NR	.0684	.471	Negl.	NR
Knowledge about Local Elections	.1123	.236	Negli- gible	NR	.1124	.236	Negl.	NR	.2227	.018	Low / Slight	R
View of Self (Role) in the Local Elec- tion	.2897	.002	Low / Slight	R	-.0310	.744	Negl.	NR	.2171	.021	Low / Slight	R

Table 3 shows the test of relationship between the respondents' political attitude and behavior towards local elections.

As shown in the table, among the variables correlated, only the following were shown to have low/slight relationship: knowledge about electoral process and interest in local election, view of self (role) in the local election and interest in local election, knowledge about local election and likelihood of influence in local election, and view of self in local election and likelihood of influence in local election.

The findings disclose that the students are active participants or participative actors in local elections. This trait is highly expected of those were in the Liberal Arts. According to Sullivan and Rosin (2008), a good liberal education should provide students with the intellectual capacity to make sense of their environment and to locate themselves within the complex influences of their time and place. Learning about political institutions, issues, contexts, and practices should be an integral part of that enterprise. College graduates cannot make sense of their environment and their place in it if they are politically ignorant, unskilled, and lacking in a sense of civic agency, the sense that they can work with others to solve problems that concern them – in their communities, workplaces, or elsewhere. In this sense, a basic understanding of the political and policy contexts in which people live and work is an essential dimension of liberal learning, and students are not well educated if they fail to develop that understanding. The knowledge and ideas that would sink into the consciousness of the students would basically influence their likelihood to participate in the local election.

## CONCLUSIONS

The claims of Gabriel Almond (1963) in his book, the Civic Culture seems to be true in this study for this shows that from the findings, it can be said that the majority of the respondents were in the high level and few in the average. The students enrolled in the Liberal Arts are highly knowledgeable and are well educated to develop the understanding needed for local elections and on the electoral process and have high awareness of their significant role in the elections.

Such level of knowledge and awareness will most likely be translated into high level of participation in the local election. They will become

active participants or participative actors in local election which highly expected of them. We also conclude that with this research study we were able to come up with the right data's needed, for us to know the level of participation for new voters. And that this study would help other researchers at enhancing the level of political orientation to and awareness of political issues not only among Political Science students but also from other departments or colleges.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations should be considered:

1. The College of Arts and Science should enrich the syllabus of the Soc. Sci. 3, which deals with the Philippine constitution, to emphasize the importance of participation in local elections.
2. The Commission on Election, to which is mandated to disseminate information on elections should expand its voter's education program.
3. The Student Body Organization, which also has a role in educating the student, should conduct an information drive on election to help the local government and the college in educating the students.

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