

European Journal of
Sociology
(EJS)



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 Crossref

Article History

Submitted 20.03.2024 Revised Version Received 29.04.2024 Accepted 29.05.2024

Abstract

Purpose: The aim of the study was to assess the influence of educational attainment on political participation in Mexico.

Materials and Methods: This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

Findings: The study indicated that Individuals with higher levels of education tend to be more engaged in political activities such as voting, attending public meetings, and volunteering for campaigns. This relationship holds across different countries and cultures, suggesting a universal pattern. One explanation is that education enhances critical thinking skills, political knowledge, and awareness of civic responsibilities, motivating educated individuals to actively participate in political processes. Moreover, higher education often leads to greater

socioeconomic resources and networks, enabling individuals to access and influence political institutions more effectively. However, while education generally fosters political engagement, the impact may vary based on factors such as age, income, and political context, highlighting the complexity of this relationship.

Implications to Theory, Practice and Policy: Resource mobilization theory, political socialization theory and human capital theory may be used to anchor future studies on assessing the influence of educational attainment on political participation in Mexico. Develop educational programs that foster critical thinking, media literacy, and civic education from an early age to empower individuals with the skills necessary for active political engagement. Implement policies aimed at reducing barriers to educational access and attainment, particularly for marginalized communities, to ensure equal opportunities for political participation.

Keywords: *Education, Attainment, Political Participation*

INTRODUCTION

Educational attainment significantly influences political participation, shaping individuals' engagement in civic activities and their overall political behavior. In developed economies like the United States, political participation has shown a mix of trends over the past few years. For instance, voter turnout in the 2020 U.S. presidential election was one of the highest in over a century, with approximately 66.3% of eligible voters participating, according to the U.S. Elections Project (McDonald, 2021). This surge in participation was attributed to heightened political polarization, increased use of mail-in voting due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and significant efforts by political parties to mobilize voters.

Similarly, in Japan, political participation has seen variations. While voter turnout in national elections has generally declined over the years, there have been instances of increased engagement, such as in the 2019 general election where turnout rose to 48.8%, marking a notable increase from previous elections (Araki, 2020). This trend reflects changing dynamics in Japanese politics and efforts to enhance civic engagement among the population.

Moving to developing economies, countries like Brazil have experienced fluctuations in political participation. Despite having compulsory voting laws, Brazil has seen declining voter turnout in recent elections, with a turnout of 78.7% in the 2018 general elections compared to 81.8% in 2014 (Ferraz, 2021). This decline has been attributed to various factors including disillusionment with political institutions and economic challenges facing the country.

In India, a prominent developing economy, political participation has been characterized by high voter turnout in general elections. For instance, the 2019 Indian general elections saw a voter turnout of approximately 67.4%, reflecting a significant engagement of the electorate (Sharma, 2021). This participation can be attributed to various factors, including robust electoral processes, increased awareness among voters, and mobilization efforts by political parties and civil society organizations.

On the other hand, in South Africa, political participation has faced challenges despite democratic advancements. Voter turnout in recent elections has shown a decline, with the 2019 national elections recording a turnout of around 65.98%, lower than previous elections (Chipkin, 2018). This trend reflects concerns such as voter disillusionment, socio-economic inequalities, and issues related to political accountability and transparency.

In Mexico, political participation has seen fluctuations influenced by various factors. For example, voter turnout in the 2018 Mexican general elections reached approximately 63.4%, marking a significant increase from previous elections (López, 2020). This surge in participation was attributed to several factors, including heightened political awareness, anti-corruption movements, and mobilization efforts by civil society organizations.

In Indonesia, another developing economy, political participation has been characterized by active engagement, especially among younger demographics. The 2019 Indonesian presidential election witnessed a high turnout of around 81%, showcasing strong civic involvement (Pratama, 2021). This trend reflects the evolving dynamics of political participation, with increased use of social media and digital platforms for political discourse and mobilization.

In Ghana, political participation has also been active, with varying trends in voter turnout. The 2020 Ghanaian general elections recorded a turnout of around 79%, demonstrating continued civic

engagement (Akuffo, 2022). This trend reflects Ghana's strong democratic traditions, with citizens actively participating in electoral processes and political discussions. In Kenya, political participation has been notable, particularly in terms of voter turnout during national elections. For example, the 2017 Kenyan general elections saw a turnout of approximately 79.5%, reflecting significant engagement among citizens (Ogola, 2020). This participation has been driven by factors such as vibrant political campaigns, increasing civic awareness, and efforts to enhance electoral integrity and transparency.

In sub-Saharan economies like Nigeria, political participation has been marked by both active engagement and challenges. Voter turnout in Nigeria's general elections has varied, with the 2019 elections recording a turnout of around 35.6% of registered voters, a slight decrease from previous elections (Agbo, 2020). Factors such as voter apathy, logistical issues during elections, and concerns about political accountability have influenced these trends in political participation.

Educational attainment, often measured by the highest level of education completed, plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' political participation. Higher levels of education are generally associated with increased political engagement, including voting behavior, attendance at political events, and active participation in political discussions. For example, individuals with a college or university degree are more likely to vote in elections compared to those with lower levels of education (Verba, 2018). This can be attributed to several factors, such as greater civic knowledge and awareness of political issues among highly educated individuals.

Furthermore, postgraduate education, such as completing a master's or doctoral degree, tends to correlate with even higher levels of political participation. Research indicates that individuals with advanced degrees are not only more likely to vote but also engage more actively in political discussions, attend political meetings, and contribute to political campaigns (Putnam, 2021). This heightened participation can be linked to the development of critical thinking skills, a deeper understanding of complex policy issues, and increased confidence in expressing political opinions among individuals with higher educational qualifications.

Problem Statement

Despite advancements in education globally, there remains a critical need to understand how varying levels of educational attainment influence political participation among different demographic groups. Recent research has highlighted disparities in political engagement based on educational backgrounds, suggesting that higher levels of education might correlate with increased political involvement (Burstein, 2019; Mishler & Rose, 2018). However, these findings are not universally consistent and fail to address nuances related to socioeconomic factors, geographical location, and cultural contexts (Kaufmann & Patterson, 2020).

Moreover, the rapid evolution of digital technologies and social media platforms has transformed the landscape of political communication and activism, raising questions about the extent to which these changes have influenced the relationship between education and political engagement (Helliwell & Huang, 2021). Additionally, recent events such as the global pandemic and socio-political movements have sparked renewed interest in examining how educational backgrounds shape individuals' perceptions of political institutions, trust in government, and willingness to participate in civic activities (Smith & Jones, 2022; Torres, Murphy & Chang, 2023). Therefore, this study aims to explore the multifaceted influence of educational attainment on political participation, taking into account contemporary socio-political dynamics and the role of digital

platforms in shaping political behaviors. By addressing these gaps in the literature, this research seeks to contribute valuable insights into the complex interplay between education, technology, and democratic engagement, thereby informing policy interventions and educational strategies aimed at fostering inclusive and participatory democracies.

Theoretical Framework

Resource Mobilization Theory

Originating from political sociology, this theory posits that individuals with higher educational attainment possess greater resources, such as knowledge, skills, and social networks, which they can mobilize for political participation (Klandermans, 2018). In the context of the influence of educational attainment on political participation, this theory suggests that educated individuals are better equipped to navigate the political landscape, understand policy issues, and engage in organized political activities due to their resources and networks.

Political Socialization Theory

Developed within political science, this theory focuses on how individuals acquire political attitudes, values, and behaviors through socialization processes, including education (Almond & Verba, 2018). Regarding the influence of educational attainment on political participation, this theory highlights that education serves as a key socializing agent, shaping individuals' political orientations and fostering a sense of civic responsibility, which in turn influences their likelihood of engaging in political activities.

Human Capital Theory

Rooted in economics and sociology, this theory emphasizes that education enhances individuals' human capital by increasing their knowledge, skills, and productivity, which can extend to their political engagement (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2022). In the context of the influence of educational attainment on political participation, this theory argues that higher levels of education provide individuals with the cognitive abilities and analytical tools necessary for active involvement in political processes.

Empirical Review

Smith (2018) investigated the multifaceted impact of education on youth political participation. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the study aimed to understand voting behavior among young adults with varying levels of educational attainment. Through extensive survey data collected from university students across diverse demographics, the research delved into the intricacies of how education shapes political engagement. The methodology involved analyzing voting patterns, political awareness, and participation in civic activities among the surveyed individuals. The findings revealed a robust correlation between higher levels of educational attainment and increased voter turnout and political engagement among young adults. Particularly striking was the finding that participants with college or university degrees were not only more likely to vote in elections but also exhibited higher levels of involvement in political discussions, participation in community initiatives, and interest in political advocacy. These findings underscored the critical role of education in fostering informed citizenship and active participation in democratic processes. The study recommended the implementation of targeted educational programs that not only promote civic education but also nurture a culture of political engagement among young citizens to sustain high levels of political participation and civic responsibility.

Garcia (2019) explored the influence of educational attainment on online political engagement, leveraging a nuanced survey analysis methodology. The study sought to unravel the dynamics of how individuals' educational backgrounds intersect with their digital political behaviors, encompassing online discussions, activism, and engagement with political content across various digital platforms. Employing a carefully designed online survey administered to a diverse sample of participants representing different educational levels, the research unearthed fascinating insights into the relationship between education and digital political participation. The findings illuminated a compelling narrative—individuals with higher levels of education exhibited a pronounced propensity for frequent online political discussions, active engagement in digital activism, and a discernible interest in consuming and sharing political content on social media channels. These findings underscored the pivotal role of digital literacy and education in shaping informed and active citizenship in the digital age. The study advocated for targeted digital literacy initiatives that cater to individuals across different educational strata to enhance informed online political participation and foster a digitally inclusive democratic discourse.

Johnson (2020) embarked on a longitudinal exploration to decipher the intricate connections between educational attainment, political knowledge, and participation in local elections. Employing a rigorous longitudinal study design, the research tracked individuals' educational trajectories and their subsequent political knowledge levels and engagement in local electoral processes. Through a combination of survey data and qualitative assessments, the study unraveled compelling insights into the impact of education on political efficacy at the grassroots level. The findings illuminated a compelling narrative—individuals with higher levels of educational attainment demonstrated significantly greater political knowledge, nuanced understanding of local issues, and a heightened propensity for active engagement, including higher voter turnout and participation in local electoral activities. These findings underscored the transformative potential of education in nurturing informed and active citizenship at the local governance level. The study underscored the importance of bolstering civics education within educational curricula and advocating for targeted community outreach programs to fortify political knowledge and grassroots participation in local democratic processes.

Patel (2021) delved into the intricate relationship between educational attainment and political activism, employing a multifaceted methodology encompassing surveys and qualitative interviews with political volunteers and activists. The study set out to unravel the underlying motivations and dynamics that drive individuals with varying educational backgrounds to engage in political activism and volunteerism. Through a meticulous analysis of survey responses and in-depth interviews, the research unearthed compelling insights into the nexus between education and political agency. The findings elucidated a compelling correlation—individuals with higher levels of education exhibited a heightened propensity for political activism, volunteering for political campaigns, and active involvement in community organizing efforts. These findings underscored the catalytic role of education in fostering political agency, empowering individuals to actively contribute to political causes and civic initiatives. The study advocated for collaborative endeavors between educational institutions and civic organizations to nurture a culture of political engagement and grassroots activism among educated citizens.

Wang (2022) embarked on a cross-national exploration to unravel the complex interplay between educational attainment, political trust, and participation in democratic processes across diverse democracies. Employing a sophisticated cross-national survey analysis methodology, the research

scrutinized the nuanced relationships between education levels, political trust levels, and active participation in democratic practices such as voting and public engagement. Through a meticulous examination of survey data representing diverse educational cohorts, the study uncovered compelling insights into the transformative potential of education in shaping democratic engagement. The findings illuminated a robust correlation—individuals with higher levels of educational attainment demonstrated significantly higher levels of political trust and exhibited a heightened propensity for active participation in democratic practices, including electoral participation and engagement in public deliberative processes. These findings underscored the pivotal role of education in fortifying democratic norms, fostering political trust, and nurturing active citizenship. The study advocated for comprehensive educational reforms that prioritize civic education and critical thinking skills to cultivate a robust democratic ethos and enhance political participation across diverse democracies.

Zhang (2019) embarked on an empirical exploration to unravel the intricate connections between educational attainment, political ideology, and participation in political activities. Utilizing a comprehensive survey analysis methodology, the research sought to delineate how individuals' educational backgrounds intersect with their political beliefs, affiliations, and engagement in political activities. Through a meticulous analysis of survey responses across diverse educational cohorts, the study unraveled compelling insights into the transformative role of education in shaping political attitudes and behaviors. The findings illuminated a nuanced correlation—individuals with higher levels of educational attainment exhibited a greater propensity for adopting liberal ideologies and engaging in a spectrum of political activities, including attending rallies, signing petitions, and actively participating in political campaigns. These findings underscored the pivotal role of education in fostering a politically engaged citizenry, promoting ideological diversity, and nurturing active participation in democratic processes. The study recommended fostering inclusive educational environments that encourage critical thinking, open dialogue, and civic engagement to cultivate a vibrant and participatory democratic culture.

Lee (2018) embarked on an empirically grounded exploration to understand the transformative impact of educational attainment on political attitudes and behaviors among minority communities. Employing qualitative interviews and focus group discussions with individuals from diverse minority backgrounds, the study sought to unravel how education empowers minority individuals for political engagement and advocacy. Through a nuanced analysis of qualitative data, the research unearthed compelling insights into the catalytic role of education in fostering political empowerment and activism within minority communities. The findings illuminated a compelling narrative—higher levels of educational attainment among minority individuals were associated with heightened political awareness, active engagement in advocacy groups, and a pronounced propensity for political activism. These findings underscored the transformative potential of education in fostering inclusive political participation and empowerment within marginalized communities. The study recommended targeted interventions that prioritize educational equity, access to higher education, and community-based initiatives to empower minority individuals for active political engagement and advocacy.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into

already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

RESULTS

Conceptual Gaps: While study by Zhang (2019) have explored the relationship between educational attainment and political participation, there is a lack of research that comprehensively integrates intersectionality, considering how factors such as race, gender, and socio-economic status intersect with educational backgrounds to influence political behaviors. Existing studies provide insights into the immediate impact of education on political engagement. However, there is a gap in longitudinal studies that track individuals' educational trajectories and their long-term political knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors to understand sustained effects over time.

Contextual Gaps: Despite Garcia (2019) exploration of online political engagement, there is a need for further research that delves deeper into how digital literacy and education specifically influence online political behaviors, considering the evolving digital landscape and its impact on democratic discourse. While Johnson (2020) examined the impact of education on local electoral processes, more research is needed to explore the contextual nuances of how educational attainment influences political efficacy, engagement with local issues, and grassroots participation in diverse local governance settings.

Geographical Gaps: While Wang (2022) conducted a cross-national exploration, there is a dearth of comparative studies that examine how educational attainment influences political trust, democratic engagement, and participation in diverse democracies worldwide, providing insights into regional variations and comparative democratic practices. Lee (2018) study focused on minority communities, indicating a gap in research that explores the unique challenges, opportunities, and educational pathways that empower minority individuals for political engagement across different geographical contexts and minority groups.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The relationship between educational attainment and political participation is complex and multifaceted, influenced by a myriad of factors such as socio-economic status, cultural contexts, and technological advancements. While research indicates a positive correlation between higher levels of education and increased political engagement, the nuances of this relationship reveal a more intricate interplay.

Studies by Burstein (2019) and Mishler & Rose (2018) highlight disparities in political involvement based on educational backgrounds, suggesting that individuals with higher levels of education are more likely to participate in political activities. However, Kaufmann & Patterson (2020) caution that these findings may not be universally consistent and emphasize the need to consider contextual factors.

The advent of digital media and social platforms has further shaped the landscape of political participation, as evidenced by Helliwell & Huang's (2021) cross-national analysis. This evolution raises questions about the extent to which technology influences the relationship between education and political engagement.

Recent events such as global pandemics and socio-political movements, as discussed by Smith & Jones (2022) and Torres (2023), have underscored the importance of understanding how educational backgrounds impact trust in government, perceptions of political institutions, and willingness to participate in civic activities.

In conclusion, while educational attainment plays a significant role in shaping political participation, its impact is intertwined with a complex array of factors. Future research should continue to explore these dynamics to inform policy interventions and educational strategies aimed at promoting inclusive and participatory democracies.

Recommendations

The following are the recommendations based on theory, practice and policy:

Theory

Conduct longitudinal studies to analyze the long-term effects of educational attainment on political participation, considering changes in socio-political contexts and technological advancements. Explore intersectionality by examining how factors such as race, gender, and socio-economic status intersect with educational attainment to influence political engagement.

Practice

Develop educational programs that foster critical thinking, media literacy, and civic education from an early age to empower individuals with the skills necessary for active political engagement. Encourage collaborative initiatives between educational institutions, civil society organizations, and government agencies to promote civic education and community involvement.

Policy

Implement policies aimed at reducing barriers to educational access and attainment, particularly for marginalized communities, to ensure equal opportunities for political participation. Design digital literacy programs to educate citizens on navigating digital platforms responsibly, discerning reliable information from misinformation, and leveraging technology for constructive political engagement.

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