

Impact of the Subject of Political Science on Students Awareness in Petra University: A Case of Jordan

Qasem Jamil Ali Al- Thubetat¹

¹ Faculty of Arts, Petra University, Amman, Jordan

Correspondence: Qasem Jamil Ali Al- Thubetat, Faculty of Arts, Petra University, P.O. Box 961343, Amman, Jordan. E-mail: qjamel@yahoo.com

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Abstract

The study aimed at recognizing the impact of the subject of political science on students' awareness at Petra University. There are a grip of questions raised to be answered, and a sample of the study, consisted of (131) students had been chosen. These students were registered at three sections on the commencement of the academic year 2012/2013. A questionnaire had been organized for the sake of collecting information. This questionnaire leaned on (30) items and distributed. Just 87 items were valid and analyzed. The degree of political awareness among students was high at an arithmetic mean of (3.70), added to differences with statistical significance at the degree of the impact of political awareness at students due to their view and the variable of sex, opposite to differences of the faculty variable and its grade average-GPA. In the shadow of the results, the researcher recommends for further more studies on the very subject to disseminate the subject of politics at all universities which do not have this subject in their curriculums.

Keywords: awareness of politics, fundamentals of politics, politics education, participation in politics

1. Introduction

Universities in Jordan are considered the most significant institutions for education. Their role is extremely significant influencing generations to from mentality, education and cognition in harmony with fundamentals of the community. University is a significant instrument that addresses problems and imbalances that may be problematic in the society. The university to practice its role, it should put in mind the appropriate psychological, cognitive and philosophical foundations. As you approaching the development of academic plans and courses, one should not ignore the significance of the social basis on the approach of courses development being effective on tutors, for every society obtains its peculiar habits, values, and traditions in addition to problems they are suffering. The system of education is already responsible for appointing the efficient employees to work at all social institutions for the more attention given to the preparation of education on experts, the best learners and individuals of the society appear. We deduce that curriculums play a prominent role in generations preparation and qualifying in equivalence with the philosophy the population in assisting learners to be familiar with the nature of community and its philosophy, ambitions, and culture. Thereupon, curriculums differ in one society to another and may also differ in the society itself in different times.

The extent of individuals' awareness at any society affects the state from part of development. A human being is a means of development and a goal of it. The more an individual in the community is aware of his competences and capacities, the more contribution is manifested in the domain of development, aiming at creating development on a scientific basis (Moussawi, 1990).

The study perhaps was proved to be a leader to examine the effect of acquiring the political science on students' awareness of the most prominent aspects of the Jordan community, related with university students. It is noticed that the government of Jordan sticks to the constitutional and legal aspects within 'outs and ins' of the process of reform comprising modulation, and amendments of the items of the constitution, in addition to initiation of a new electoral law for the year of 2012 that contained the first time two votes for every citizen at the district and the national levels. Elections had been done in January 2013 covering the rate of 57% of Jordanians. All this took place during the complexity of politics in the Arab surrounding, in addition to adversity of politics and economic conditions. Besides the Arab Spring is extremely affecting Jordan.

1.1 Problem of Study

Preparing citizen to become activists in the service of their homeland and nation, it is obliged to lay a prosperous teaching system, promoting students to obtain a satisfactory level of awareness in politics enabling them grasp reality in an objective way, to accessibly absorb incidents and instability condition in the surroundings affected by the Arab Spring. This situation urges us to concentrate on raising the level of awareness in politics among university students. Within a reforming scheme of curriculums reflected on the society positively. The political, economic and social challenges pave the way to start the process of evaluating the acting study plans in addition to education policy as principles of the political science, laying the basis and foundation in spreading the awareness of politics among university students, enhancing the concept of participation in politics and democracy by students when dealing with such issues reflected on their behavior, especially political participation and national duty. The very study is seriously attempting to pin-point the influence of politics on students when practiced in education that affect awareness of the subject among university students, especially at Petra University of Jordan. The problem of study raises a primary question, it is as follows: what are the effects of bringing the principles of political science on students' awareness of politics put into practice, especially teaching in Petra University?

1.2 Questions of Study

Our study is an attempt of answering two questions:

The first: to what extent does teaching politics in Petra University affect awareness of university students from their own point of view?

The second: do we find significant differences at the level of significance ($=0.05\alpha$) in the extent of effect of teaching politics on the awareness of university students at Petra University from their own point of view, due to sex, faculty, and the grade of average as an academic accomplishment?

1.3 Significance of Study

The study is already considered a perspective of researchers, and a type of few studies that scrutinize the education of politics awareness among university students and researchers, who will let the door wide open before the decision-makers at universities, especially Petra University to attract attention to politics curriculums, students' thoughts and being conscious of politics issues. Petra University is unique among universities in Jordan to confirm studying politics without specialization in the domain of politics. The very study encourages other universities in Jordan to confirm teaching politics optionally or compulsory due to the policy of each university.

1.4 Objectives of Study

Our study aims at achieving the following points:

- 1) Displaying the effect of education in politics on the extent of awareness amongst university students at Petra University.
- 2) Showing differences in the effect of politics education on awareness of politics among university students especially at Petra University due to sex, faculty and GP-A variables.

- Awareness linguistic definition: It is consciousness and cognitive understanding and correct recognition (Jamal Al-Din, 1970).

- Practical definition of awareness: consciousness of politics, recognition of politics and system, in addition to authorities of politics, capacity to evaluate them at the local, Arab, and worldly levels, capacity to absorb and respond and understand events to politics, the effect of politics education and awareness, and students answering the questionnaire measuring the subject of awareness.

The Curriculum of politics: this curriculum is information given to university students as an academic plan and non-prerequisite subject, to recognize students in lectures with credit hours, which grant students with knowledge aiming at increasing awareness of politics.

1.5 Limits of Study

The study is utterly confined to university students of Petra University, who are registered in the subject of political science in the first semester of the university year 2012/2013 at a number of (131) student.

2. Previous Studies

Awareness and consciousness had been used since ancient times. It was used in Latin and philosophy. It is meant by ideas and thoughts passed in the human mind. It had been used in psychology including all sensations, mental images, ideas, thoughts, emotions and desires as a science of consciousness.

The social development resulted in political awareness due to the need of humans, who are preparing instruments to deal with nature. Humans were able to differentiate between the essential and non-essentials, demonstrating the causes of these phenomena and aware of the dealing with the environment (Majid, 1995)

There is a necessity of politics awareness in the life of the Middle East in the present period, in which people live in a state of mental stagnation. They are not fond of participation in politics and decision-making, that is the main concern of politics and awareness of it, meanwhile the great attention is attracted by students to secondary issues like the difficult economic condition, that diverts the attention to priority of songs on the expense of joining associations and institution (Barwari, 2006).

Awareness of politics assists people analyze reality of politics far away from emotional perceptions. A great number of political concepts had been spread among Europeans enhancing democracy within the surviving of the Greek Civilization that had contribution to the philosophy of evolution in thoughts of politics (Ibrahim, 1994).

Philosophy of criticism dissolute awareness with existence. Taking consciousness as equivalent to being, considering people producers of their perceptions and thoughts. Awareness cannot be anything, but consciousness of people and their actual existence, consciousness is commenced by the natural feeling of in completion of man and his looking for cognition (Freir, 1998).

Social awareness comprises three points: the first is a cognitive grip of thoughts and information about political issues that man possesses, the second point is about values, emotions, attitudes towards political issues, practicing the first and the second in behavior, actions and activities. The third point deals with technical skills (Alqani & Al-Jamal, 1996).

Political socialization is basically associated with the theme of study and awareness of students of politics. This concept refers to the process of formation of the political community showing differences in verbal values, norms and models of behavior, as a result of citizen's certain political awareness, and political education system that participates in creating the political legitimacy and achieving development that promotes political participation.

Socialization in politics is a process that makes an individual acquire knowledge, values and feelings about the political system, that in turn, engages the individual in the political life, interacting within the political institutions, such as (family, educational institutions, religious institutions, and media). It contributes to the formation of the image of a citizen (Prewitt & Dawson, 1977).

Al-Omari (1997) discussed the effect of socio-economic variables on teaching politics by university professors of Jordan. The study examined the concept of political education. The primary variables that may affect the formation pattern of political education were basically the academic rank, place of residence, place of graduation, gender, and father's profession. Results showed no significant statistical indication of variables as age, religion, specialization, and university of graduation.

Al-Gharaibeh (1994) studied the prevailing pattern of culture among the students of the university of Yarmouk; variables were studied to test the influence of certain factors on culture. Such as gender, religion, income and profession of the father, place of study and specialization, results indicated that the pattern of political education of university students were mainly of an integrated pattern and that there is a margin of difference imposed by factors as religion, the level and nature of education, though the most important factors that influenced the political education is religion and specialization.

On the other hand, much more specialized studies were conducted in this area in other countries where democracy is in rule.

Some studies tackled this issue, discussing the most important positive factors influencing political participation, where researchers focused on the two sides of the issue: The intellectual and humanitarian. Eliseev (2011) focused on the humanitarian side and the positive impact on political participation; his study displayed relationship between the level of participation and the extent of political tolerance among youths. Zelenicky (2010) focused on the psychological side and the impact of the of alienation among young people on the weakness or lack of political participation.

Quitedier (2008) showed in his study the role of organizations and the volunteer work as associated necessarily with political participation. Volunteer work leads to more political participation among young, and the organization that allow membership of young people encourages an increased degree of political participation of youth. McFarland (2006) discussed the social class impact on political participation, clearing its link with political participation, and how volunteering services would increase the level of youth political participation. Southwel (2003) discussed both cognitive and economic factors as affecting the level of participation, so that the low level of education and income of the individual would lower levels of political participation, so that to live in a climate of poverty, and lack of opportunities and resources will adversely affect political participation. Other studies have also dealt with the factors affecting political participation, and perhaps the most important of which is that study conducted by Walker (2002) showing the relationship between public service and political participation, and that the service is a matter of citizenship.

Stroupe (2002) in this study entitled “The missing link for Civic Education”, evaluating youth political leadership in the United States, aiming at measuring the political knowledge, attitudes, and values of the students at the secondary level in American schools, measuring the degree of their participation in community in both political and non-political activities. Political participation is part of the courses in national education; the study confirmed that the course of Civic Education is missing its core, which implies the existence of training on civil rights in U.S., and that is one of the reasons for the lack of youth participation in civic life; the results of this study indicate the interactive process of civic education and the interaction that occurs in the classroom. Mutch (2002) has shown that the best way to teach citizenship and political participation is through rights education, teaching duties, responsibilities, and citizenship education within groups and different cultures. While Golombek (2002) showed that the best way to teach citizenship and political participation is through intellectual education on applications of values and behaviors of democracy, teaching responsible leadership and values of social justice, showing that positive and decision-making is the best way to promote political participation among young people through positive and decision-making is the best way to promote political participation among young people through positive actions at the local, national and global levels.

Russell (2002) has pointed other forms of participation showing the impact of leaders on the youth, while previous researchers focused on the moral side of leaders, he focused on the communicative side of leaders and its impact on youth participation as increasing the level of political participation, showing the importance of the changing role of the internet in the process of political participation. Soule (2001) also showed the role of some political variables as knowledge as affecting the process of political participation. Stoll (2001) showed the impact of attitudes towards the political participation. While some studies focused on the factors affecting the political participation. Other studies have attempted to address the cognitive aspects as well as psychological aspect and the educational guideline for the values of political participation. Where as Gibson (2001) showed the need to develop multiple methodology and curriculum are as to increase political participation through activities and learning tools and sources of information to be set available for the youth, concentrating on means of communication used by young people more broadly. Carpini (2000) has focused on the form of political participation, where the young people will not vote for their conviction that politicians are corrupted on the other hand, Bedolla (2000) was interested in more social and economic sides for political participation, where the economic situation variable has the weakest effect on political participation, pointing out that social service helps in the academic development of students and increases their sense of civic responsibility.

3. Methods and Procedures

3.1 Methodology

Authors employed the descriptive method, that tackles the phenomenon as it is in reality (Ex-post Factor), in order to elucidate the effect of the principles of the political scientific material on the degree of the political awareness among the students of Petra University.

3.2 Sample and Community of Study

The community of study includes students enrolled in three groups attending the principles of political course, as an elective course for the students of the University (i.e.) Petra University in the first semester of the studying year 2012/2013, and number of students enrolled in these groups was (131).

The questionnaire was distributed and the percentage of recovered questionnaires suitable for the analysis were (87) questionnaires, forming the final sample of study. This study was conducted on the students of Petra University for being the only national university that lays this course without need of specialization in politics.

Science course, as an elective course for the students of the University of Petra in the first quarter of the academic year 2012/2013, and the number of students enrolled in these groups was (131).

The questionnaire was distributed and the percentage of recovered questionnaires suitable for the analysis were (87) questionnaires, forming the final study sample. This study was conducted on the students of the University of Petra for being the only national university that puts this course without the need of specialization in political Science.

Table 1. Distribution of the study sample by gender, college and GPA variables

Variable		Number	Percentage level
Gender	Male	47	54.0%
	Female	40	46.0%
	Total	87	100%
College	Scientific	49	56.3%
	Humanitarian	38	43.7%
	Total	87	100%
GPA	From 2 to less than 2.5	17	19.5%
	2.5 and less than 3	24	27.6%
	3 and less than 3.5	33	37.9%
	From 3.5 to 4	13	14.9%
	Total	87	100%

3.3 Study Tool

To achieve the objectives of the study and the right collection of data in answering the questions, the study tool was developed by following these steps:

- 1) Reviewing the theoretical literature on the degree of political awareness, its importance and its influences on the environment, educational institutions, the political system and the prevailing social systems.
- 2) Developing the questionnaire to include (36) paragraphs, and to ensure the validity and the reliability it was revised by a group of arbitrators. It consists of two parts: first covering the information of the targeted group, such as college, gender and GPA, and the second part covering the measurement tool for the degree of political awareness among students, and consisted of (30) paragraphs, each paragraph included five levels upon the Likert scale quintet to choose one of the following options: strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), NA (3), Disagree (2), strongly disagree (1).

3.4 Validity and Reliability of the Study Tool

To ascertain the reliability of the study tool was revised by ten arbitrators from the Jordanian Universities to verify the validity and reliability of the content of the paragraphs, and to express their comments and views on the paragraphs and its harmony with the theme of the study. After reviewing the comments of the arbitrators the resolution was adopting the paragraph which got a unanimous 8 arbitrators minimum of 80% or higher, and based on the observations of the arbitrators some paragraphs were deleted, modified or added; the finalized questionnaire was consisting of (30) paragraphs, then the internal consistency of the paragraphs and upon the Cronbach's alpha, with a reliability coefficient of (0.89), and this value is acceptable for the purposes of this scientific research.

3.5 Statistical Treatment

The arithmetic means, standard deviations and ranks were used to answer the first question, and to answer the second question the t-test was used for the gender and college variables, and for the GPA variable the variance analysis test was used.

This section includes a presentation of the findings of this study by answering questions, as follows:

First: the results related to the first question, what is the degree of influence of the principles of political science

political awareness among the students of the University of Petra from their point of view? To answer this question the arithmetic means and the standard deviations were calculated for the degree of influence of the principles of political science material on political awareness among the students of the University of Petra from their point of view, in general, and each paragraph of the study tool, as shown in table (2).

Table 2. The arithmetic mean, standard deviations and ranks and level of the effect of the principles of the political science awareness among the students of the University of Petra from their point of view

No.	Paragraph	AM	SD	Rank	Level
5	I accept different views when I am asked about a political issue of interest to my homeland	4.55	0.57	1	High
23	Listen seriously when discussing political issues of concern to the nation during a lecture of political science	4.44	0.74	2	High
9	Watch carefully when dealing with political problems, like the Arab hot spring	4.39	0.78	3	High
12	Listen fully to the new political information that arise during the political science lecture	4.30	0.70	4	High
16	I accept what poses in political science about the concept of democracy	4.25	0.85	5	High
15	I realize the reflection of events of the Arab neighboring countries on my country	4.24	0.88	6	High
24	I accept criticism when expressing my opinion on important political issues after studying political science	4.24	0.86	6	High
27	I am fully aware of the concept policy	4.24	0.75	6	High
4	Seriously listen to a lecture about the concept of the state	4.23	0.83	9	High
28	Expressed a desire to discuss the Arab Spring through the lectures of Political Science	4.23	0.97	9	High
10	I want to continue discussing the Palestinian merits through the political science course or media	4.22	0.93	11	High
30	Everlasting interest in political issues rose through the media after studying political science	4.22	0.89	11	High
8	I understand the political events going on around my country	4.15	0.96	13	High
21	Looking for more discussions in political issues after studying political science	4.14	0.89	14	High
11	Looking to participate in the political dialogue revolves around the King's speech at the United Nations	4.13	0.87	15	High
13	Accepting most of the poses of political ideas after studying political science	4.11	0.81	16	High
19	Interested in the content of the political science theories on the origins of the state	4.10	0.94	17	High
26	Showing interest by comparing democracy in developed countries and the Third World through lectures of political science	4.10	0.86	17	High
18	Respond to the development of the political concept through my studies of political science	4.08	0.85	19	High
14	I'd often discuss more development on the Arab national political scene	4.05	0.90	20	High
20	I understand the concept of foreign policy of the countries as an important	4.00	0.94	21	High

	theme in political science					
22	I want to talk more in the development of political concept thought the study of political science	3.98	0.94	22	High	
29	Completely aware of the role of philosophers and scientists in the development of the science of politics	3.98	1.00	22	High	
25	Showing a great interest in all political topics of the political science course	3.97	0.87	24	High	
17	I understand the concept of international order after studying political science	3.91	1.04	25	High	
7	I accept the contradictory views regarding the current election law	3.87	1.00	26	High	
6	Putting forward ideas about the recent constitutional amendments	3.85	1.07	27	High	
1	I'm interested in the presence of a symposium revolved around the theme of parliamentary elections	3.61	1.09	28	Medium	
3	Expressed a desire to participate in the elections of local councils	3.61	1.15	28	Medium	
2	Fully listen to seminars in the television with the participation of political parties	3.57	0.88	30	Medium	
Total		4.09	0.44		High	

Table (2) shows that the degree of influence of the principles of political science in the political awareness among the students of the University of Petra from their point of view in general was high, with the arithmetic mean reaching (3.70) and standard deviation of (1.10).

The arithmetic mean ranged between (4.55-3.57), and paragraph (5) "I accept different views when I am asked about a political issue of interest to my homeland" came the first in order with the arithmetic mean reaching (4.55) and standard deviation of (0.57), and paragraph (23) "listen seriously when discussing political issues of concern to the nation during a lecture of political science" came in second order with the arithmetic mean reaching (4.44) and standard deviation of (0.74), and paragraph (15) "Fully listen to seminars in the television with the participation of political parties" came at the last level with the arithmetic mean reaching (3.57) and standard deviation of (0.88).

The results of the second question, are there any difference at the level of significance ($\alpha=0.05$) in the degree of influence of the principles of political science at the political awareness among the students of the University of Petra from their point of view upon the variables of gender, college, and GPA came as follows:

3.6 Gender

To answer this question, the arithmetic mean, standard deviations and the (T) test results were calculated for the degree of influence of the principles of political science at the political awareness among the students of the University of Petra, in their point of view upon the gender variable, and are shown in Table (3).

Table 3. Arithmetic means, standard deviations and t-test results upon the gender variable

Gender	Number	AM	SD	T	significance
Male	47	3.98	0.45	0.665	0.009*
Female	40	4.23	0.41		

The results in table (3) are showing the presence of statistically significant differences at the level of ($\alpha \geq 0.05$) in the degree of influence of the principles of political science at the political awareness among the students of the University of Petra, in their point of view, depending on the gender variable, based on the value of (T) calculated reaching (0.665), and with a level of significance reaching (0.009).

3.7 College

The arithmetic mean, standard deviations and the (T) test results were calculated for the degree of influence of the principles of political science at the political awareness among the students of the University of Petra, in their point of view upon the collage variable, and are shown in Table (4).

Table 4. The arithmetic mean, standard deviations and the (T) test result upon the collage variable

College	Number	AM	SD	T	Significance
Scientific	49	4.06	0.39	0.861	0.392
Humanitarian	38	4.14	0.51		

The results in table (4) are showing the no statistically significant differences at the level of ($\alpha \geq 0.05$) in the degree of influence of the principles of political science at the political awareness among the students of the University of Petra, in their point of view, depending on the gender variable, based on the value of (T) calculated reaching (0.861), and with a level of significance reaching (0.392).

3.8 GPA

The arithmetic mean, standard deviations and the (T) test results were calculated for the degree of influence of the principles of political science at the political awareness among the students of the University of Petra, in their point of view upon the GPA variable, and are shown in Table (5).

Table 5. The arithmetic mean, standard deviations and the (T) test results upon the GPA variable

GPA	Number	AM	SD
From 2 to less than 2.5	17	3.97	0.481
2.5 and less than 3	24	4.03	0.511
3 and less than 3.5	33	4.19	0.413
From 3.5 to 4	13	4.12	0.313
Total	87	4.09	0.445

Table (5) is showing the existence of differences apparent between the arithmetical means on the effect of the principles of political science at the political awareness among the students of the University of Petra, in their point of view depending on the GPA variable, as the category of “from 3 and less than 3.5” reached highest arithmetic mean of (4.19), and the category of “from 2 to less than 2.5” came with the less arithmetic mean of (3.97), and to determine whether the differences between the arithmetic mean are statistically significant at the level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$) the variance analysis (One way ANOVA) was applied and the results were analyzed as shown in the table (6).

Table 6. ANOVA differences in the responses of individuals upon the GPA variable

Source of variation	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Average squares	P value	Level of significance
Between groups	0.657	3	0.219	1.114	0.348
Within the groups	16.336	83	0.197		
Total	16.993	86			

The results in table (6) are showing that there is no statistically significant differences at the level ($\alpha = 0.05$) on the degree of the principles of political science at the political awareness among the students of the University of Petra, in their point of view, depending on the GPA variable and based on the (P) value calculated of (1.114), and with the level of significance reaching (0.348).

4. Results Discussion

Findings have revealed certain results using statistical calculations, the (T) for two independent samples, and analysis of variance, the following discussion is for these results analyzed according to the study questions.

Analysis related to the first question, which is stated as: What is the impact of teaching principles of political science on political awareness of students of Petra University?

Results of the first question showed the arithmetical averages of the degree of positive influence of the principles of political science course, presented in all the responses on paragraphs of the questionnaire, where for example, the fifth paragraph that says: "I accept the differing views tackling political issues concerning the homeland and the citizen", this paragraph was the first in rank, and this can be explained by the fact that the course of principles of Political science plays an important role in creating the appropriate environment for dialogue among the students, increasing their ability to express their views freely and their confidence in a healthy environment for dialogue, seeking political science course as a tool to enlighten students and expand their knowledge in the political affairs as on top of priorities, especially issues of national political affairs that have to be tackled through dialogues. This positive result is attributed to the contribution of the course of politics in educating Petra university students politically, seeking their role in political participation, and training them to be leaders in the future, raising their awareness, as the future generation, for Middle East issues, realizing the need to mainstream in curricula, and offering the experience of Petra University as an example for political education in universities.

Results of the second question if there are any significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the degree of impact of teaching the principles of political science on the political awareness Petra University students from their point of view due to the variables of gender, faculty, and GPA?

The results shown in table no.(3) reflect the presence of statistically significant differences at ($\alpha \geq 0.05$) due gender. And this showed different results of Aduwaila study (2007), which indicated no differences due to the variable of gender, as all students, no matter of gender, stated the absence of an influential role of the curriculum in higher education, as negatively affecting the development of political awareness.

As for the results of the second type of variables which is the faculty of students, as (t) test showed for the two separate samples, the lack of statistically significant differences, in terms of the impact of teaching the principles of science course on political awareness of students of Petra University. So that all students participate equally in the class dialogues aiming at recognizing the political issues.

Results of the third variable of GPA. The results showed apparent differences between the arithmetical averages in the degree of political awareness among the students of Petra depending on the GPA. And to determine if there is any significant statistical difference, the (One Way ANOVAs) tool was applied. Results showed no statistically significant differences. So that students study the course of political science as an optional course, assuming increasing the degree of political consciousness.

In conclusion, the course of Political science helped positively in increasing the degree of awareness of Petra University students. So that students of both genders are equally positively affected by this course in raising their political awareness.

5. Recommendations

- convincing other universities to enroll the course of politics adding it to its curricula plans, aiming at raising awareness among students in all Jordanians universities.
- motivating students of both genders for better participation in the classroom discussions to promote their political awareness of political concepts.
- pay more attention to the teaching methods of the politics course seeking positive results in terms of learning outputs.
- better allocation for grater roles of student to identify political issues, preparing them for more political role, making them analyze the current political issues.
- conduct more specialized studies on student political awareness. Especially in term of political consciousness. The civil state, democracy, citizenship, and political participation.

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