

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN DEVELOPING DEMOCRACY OF PAKISTAN

**Dr. Mohammad Shaiq•
Sadia Shaikh**
Dr. Khurram Khan Alwi*****

Abstract

Active Citizenship is an important and basic component of any public strategy, putting the emphasis on political and civic values in any democratic society. The major dimensions of active citizenship are defined through the Active Citizen Composite Index (ACCI). This index covers indicators of political, civic and community dimensions of any society. Since the younger generation in any society is considered to be the future of humanity so, the politico civic training of younger generation to play an active citizenship role in the society cannot be undervalued. Considering the importance of the issue this research tried to explore the extent of active citizenship in the younger generation of Pakistan. For this purpose, a survey was conducted of 200 students studying at three universities in Karachi, the largest cosmopolitan city of Pakistan and 5th largest worldwide. The survey results showed that, in general, the role of iGeneration (age 18 to 25 years) of Pakistan as active citizen is not very encouraging. On the political dimension, this generation is not actively involved with political parties and is mostly limited to casting their vote. On the civic dimension, most of the students were not involved with the activities of civil society, except for little tendency for peaceful demonstrations and protests. On the community dimension a little inclination was found towards cultural activities but any active role or serious effort for community development was not evident. Considering the survey results, there is a strong feeling that this generation is not trained or tuned to play active citizenship role and it becomes the responsibility of the educational and social institutions to encourage and enlighten younger generation about the importance of the active citizenship role.

Keywords: *Active Citizenship, ACCI, iGeneration, Civic Engagement & Politico Civic Training.*

Introduction

The generation born after 1995, usually known and called as “iGeneration” (Rosen, 2010), is expected to be ready soon to take the control of this globe and humanity in general. This generation born and brought up in the era of iPhone, iPod, Wii, iTunes is tuned to have rapid and easy access to world events and so is very prompt to form and express their opinion on national and international issues. Every community and especially young democracies must ensure that their youth are fully aware and actively engaged in the political and civic growth of their country and they must realize the impact of their policies on other countries and vice versa. In early literature on active citizenship, Putnam (2000) and Putnam, Leonardi, Nannetti, (1993) established an important sequential and causal relationship between active citizenship, civic engagement and social capital and stated that active citizenship is strongly related to civic engagement which in turn plays an important role in creating social capital. Social capital is the real civic worth of any developing democracy like Pakistan.

This paper is an effort to see how much this generation is politically and socially involved and engaged with the development and growth of this society which is democratically in its infancy stage. This research following the footprint of Mascherini, Manca, & Hoskins, (2009) used Active Citizenship Composite Indicator (ACCI), with little variations in the selection of indicators based on typical social norms and political culture used which is different to that of Europe. According to Guttman (1993), the community services, social activities and participative role of younger generation help to enhance their interest in understanding public policies and political norms of the country. That is why the emphasis of this paper is to assess the extent of active participation of the iGeneration of Pakistan in its typical social and political set-up.

Literature Review

In earlier literature citizenship is defined by Turner (1997) as a formal legal identity that individual person inherits through a collection of legal human rights and responsibilities, controlling access to limited political activities, economic, and cultural resources of the society. Citizenship is broadly theoretically divided into three types; the political citizenship, civil citizenship, and social citizenship. Political citizenship is all about partaking in the democratic process and political power to elect or to be elected by the members of the community. Civil citizenship mainly relates to the rights required to protect and guard individual liberties like justice, freedom of speech and freedom to get into valid contracts. The social citizenship represents the right and claim of individuals on the community resources which help individuals live a civilized life according to the

prevailing standards and norms of the society (Marshall, 1992 [1950]; cited by Glover, 2004, p. 65).

The concept of political citizenship in democratic setup is a bit confusing as it implies that any individual in the community is present when is represented through another person who is chosen through votes to represent to others, while the actual presence of those individuals is not there (Pitkin, 2004). But the concept of active citizenship and community being the very basis of a democratic community or society is strong in Western democracies and being adopted in other emerging democracies.

Active citizenship as defined by Hoskins (2006) is the peaceful and non-violent active participation in civil, communal, and political life in a democratic environment. As it is evident from the word "active" that it should not be unreceptive and submissive rather it should be participatory activities comprised of political actions, democratic partaking and civil and community support. Emphasizing the active role Mascherini& Hoskins, (2009) stated that participation should be combined with democratic morals, human rights and mutual respect. Many researchers looking at various aspects of active citizenship presented different definitions. Brannan, John, and Stoker, (2006) emphasizing the word 'active' stated that active citizenship implies that participation is not only comprised of passive membership of a political party but that being active is the necessary condition for being an active citizen, So, active citizenship is all about the practical contribution to social actions and involvement in political debates. They further stated that it can be considered active citizenship if someone voluntarily opts to work in the field of public service provision and working for public policy. Golubeva, (2018) analyzing various old and contemporary definitions of active citizenship stated that it is a complex and multidimensional notion and it can only be understood after studying various perspectives from diverse fields such as 'education, intercultural communication, political science, psychology, sociology and other social science'. The above-referred author also emphasized the political, civic and community aspects of active participation.

After the analysis of various definitions of active participation, the next stage is to see how these definitions can help the researcher in devising the operational model for active citizenship. This review of literature and analysis of various definitions will help to build composite indicators for further analysis. Hoskinset al (2006) in their comprehensive work for joint research by Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning (CRELL) and European Commission Joint Research Centre on measuring active citizenship in Europe discussing various definitions and aspects of active citizenship identified some measurable and distinctive elements and they called them the dimensions. These dimensions were further divided into

sub-dimensions which can be called indicators and they named them as Active Citizenship Composite Indicators (ACCI). Since the above-referred study was done in Europe so few of the indicators do not fit into the environment of other regions especially if this model is used in third world countries. However, in the next paragraphs, these dimensions are discussed.

Political Life or Participative Politics

It basically refers to the relation of state and role of citizens in strengthening the democratic base of the society. In this regard, Eriksson (2012) is of the view that active citizenship is the compulsory ingredient of "participative politics". He further states that participative politics is the main tool which helps to formulate new and broadly acceptable policy strategies with a collaboration between government and citizen. That is why active participation is considered the foundation of democracy. Eriksson (2012) argued based on the review of earlier literature that participative politics or active political participation has three main aspects. The first concept is that active citizenship is the precondition of a functional democracy. This concept is not new and is supported by earlier researchers as well (for example, Pateman 1970; Barber 1984). The second concept behind is that the "civil society is the natural environment of active participation and the site for communal self-organization". This idea is also supported in old and contemporary literature (for example, Foley and Martin 2000; Baiocchi 2005); The third attribute is the concept that 'citizen' is the source of assessing and confirming if democratic functions are producing some sort of public services (Alford 2002; Bovaird 2007; Martin 2008)". Hoskins et al (2006) defining the indicators of political life mentioned that political party membership, actively participating in election campaigns, political volunteering, participating in political activities or making donations to political parties are the active roles of a citizen contributing towards the political strength of the society.

Civil Participation or Civic Engagement

Policymaker and people for whom policies are made consider that active social citizenship is where people actively participate to help each other in pursuing their own common goals and interests involving in associations, sports, clubs and religious or faith groups. The more formal aspect of civic engagement is through direct participation in social governance, establishing or being a member of advisory groups, juries and citizen panels. X Brannan, John, and Stoker, (2006) that civic participation is a practical step that might enable the citizen to connect up with the state in productive ways. Golubeva, (2018) stated that social participation and civic engagement are the easily measurable expressions of active citizenship. Further the researcher has claimed that Psychologists give more importance to social and civic participation than any other factor to determine

active participation. Hoskins (2006) establishing the factors determining the civic participation took help from the definition presented by Centre for Civil Society (2006) describes 'referring to the arena of un-coerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values.' They further mentioned that the dimension of active citizenship is described by the sub-dimensions of human rights, environmental issues, trade unions and protests and mentioned 18 indicators.

Community Life

Community symbolizes and signifies the number of people having similar interests, sharing a similar environment living in a defined geographical boundary. The community life includes the participation of public activities which are less towards political activities and government accountability and more to community support mechanism and community-spirited activities. Community life is all about taking part and helping and giving community and citizens the knowledge, skills, and confidence, they need to make a contribution. This should be without any consideration of the background or education of community members. This activity builds the capacity and empowers needy community members based on their needs and aspiration. On more theoretical side the participants in community life as suggested by Shakil (2015) can act in four different capacities; first as teachers and trainers to empower others to help others, second as catalysts to empower and activate people on to solve their own issues, thirdly as facilitators to help people who lack experience or enthusiasm in helping themselves and finally as linking role by bridging any gap between community organizations and its members. Hoskins (2006) again in his in-depth work on active citizenship defined various sub-divisions and indicators of this dimension which include 'unorganized help, religious, business, sport and cultural organizations and others.

Active Citizenship and Education

There is no doubt that active citizenship is an important tool to strengthen the base of the democratic and social structure of any country. Also, the role of youth in this regard cannot be underestimated that is why it is important that society must make all efforts to educate the younger generation about its importance from the very early stages of education. UNESCO is also active to play its role to educate children from early childhood to enlighten students about the importance of active participation in political, civic and community dimensions of any society. Carroll, Child, & Darlington, (2015) referring the draft of GCSE curriculum mentioned that topics like parliamentary democracy, electoral systems used in and beyond the United Kingdom, systems and forms of government, local, regional and international governance, diverse national, regional, religious and ethnic identities

and active participation in the community are included to be taught to the pupils at an early stage of school education.

Research Framework

Based on the literature reviewed and following the renowned model of Active Citizenship Composite Indicators (ACCI) which was originally presented by a team of renowned social scientists and researchers from Institute for the Protection and Security of the Citizen for a joint research by Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning (CRELL) and European Commission Joint Research Centre. This index with little modifications in few indicators of political, civic and community dimensions, considering the typical regional norms, political practices and social values prevailing in Pakistan, is used to assess the extent of active citizenship in the youth of Pakistan. Following indicators are used in this survey.



Political Party:	Helping Human Right Organization	Helping any Religious Organization
Membership	Working with any Pressure Group	Helping any Sport Organization
Participation	Moved and Signed Petitions	Helping any Cultural Organization.
Donation	Boycotted a Product	Helping an Anti-drug Organization
Volunteer work	Working with Trade Union	Helping in any Hospital

Voted Provincial Assembly	Working with Environment Assoc.	Helping any School or Students
Voted National Assembly	Take part in lawful demonstrations	Working with any Seniors Home
Voted for Local Government	Member of Social Organization	Helping Street Children
Worked for a Candidate	Protest Against Unlawful Acts	Working for Rural Development
Active Role in Poling		

These indicators are expected to exhibit the extent of involvement in citizenship activity of the younger generation who are studying at a higher level of education. Based on regional issues and political, civic and community structure, there is a little deviation from the original index of dimensions and indicators designed by Hoskins et al (2006) in their report on Measuring Active Citizenship in Europe. Indicators like immigrants and European and few others are excluded.

Survey Methodology

As mentioned earlier that objective of this exploratory survey is to find out how actively the literate younger generation of Pakistan is involved with activities which are considered as part of active citizenship. Karachi, the port city of Pakistan which is Pakistan's largest cosmopolitan city and 5th largest in the world and is considered as mini Pakistan inhabiting young students from all over Pakistan was targeted for this survey. The Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) were the most suitable place to contact young learners belonging to iGeneration. The students in these HEIs study at undergraduate, Master or at higher education level. For this survey 200 students from three established HEIs of Karachi were randomly selected and a structured questionnaire with closed questions was used as a tool to collect data. A randomly selected sample of students was asked to fill in the questionnaire. Out of 200 students only 160 students filled the questionnaire, out of which four questionnaires were rejected for inappropriate responses.

Golubeva, (2018) in a similar survey mentioned that while surveying respondents for any such survey, the demographics like age, gender, ethnic group, education, income, and attitudinal or individual characteristics are necessary to consider. This survey also captured data on these demographics of the respondents. The profile of the respondents is given in the table below.

Table 1: Respondents Profile

Profile of Respondent		Frequency	% age
Gender			
	Male	94	60%
	Female	62	40%
Education Level			
	Bachelor	58	37%
	Master	95	61%
	Higher	03	02%
Study Stream			
	Business	49	31%
	Media	11	07%
	S. Sciences	40	26%
	Natural Sciences	17	11%
	Language	13	08%
	Computer	20	13%
Domicile			
	Local	72	46%
	Sindh	38	24%
	Other	46	29%
Employment			
	Full Time	42	31%
	Part-Time	38	28%
	Dependent	56	41%
Language			
	Urdu	56	36%
	Sindhi	34	22%
	Punjabi	16	10%
	Pushto	20	13%
	Other	30	19%

Due to non-response in a few cases, the frequency total will not match with the total number of respondents.

Results and Discussion

In this section, the survey results of all three dimensions are discussed.

Political Life Dimensions

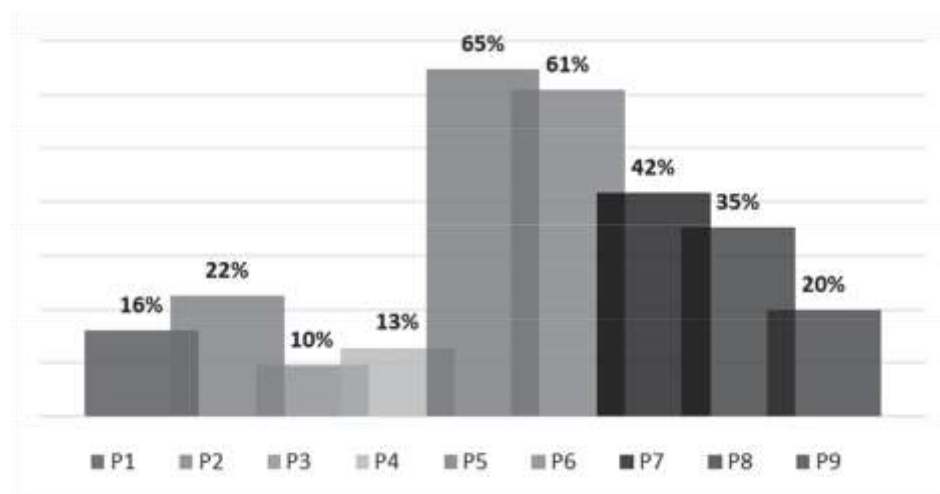
Survey reveals that political party membership (16%) is not very common in university students but majority (65% in National polls and 61% in provincial polls and 42% in city polls) did vote in polls. Some of the respondents who were from other cities could not go to their hometown to cast vote, otherwise this frequency could have been higher. Although Political party membership is low still 35% of respondents said that they worked for their choice candidate during the last election conducted in 2018.

Table 2. Political Life Dimension

Indicator	Political Party Membership	Political Party Participation	Political Party Donation	Political Party Volunteer work	Voted for Provincial Assembly	Voted for National Assembly	Voted for Local Govt.	Worked for a Candidate	Active Role in Poling
	(P1)	(P2)	(P3)	(P4)	(P5)	(P6)	(P7)	(P8)	(P9)
Frequency	25	35	15	20	101	95	65	55	31
Percentage	16%	22%	10%	13%	65%	61%	42%	35%	20%

Percentages will not addup to hundred due to positive answer for more than one options

Political Life Dimensions



P1 = Political Party Membership, P2 = Political Party Participation, P3 = Political Party Donation

P4 = Political Party Volunteer, P5 = Voted Provincial Assembly, P6 = Voted National Assembly

P7 = Voted Local Government, P8 = Worked for Candidate, P9 = Active Role on Poling Day

Civic Society or Social Dimension

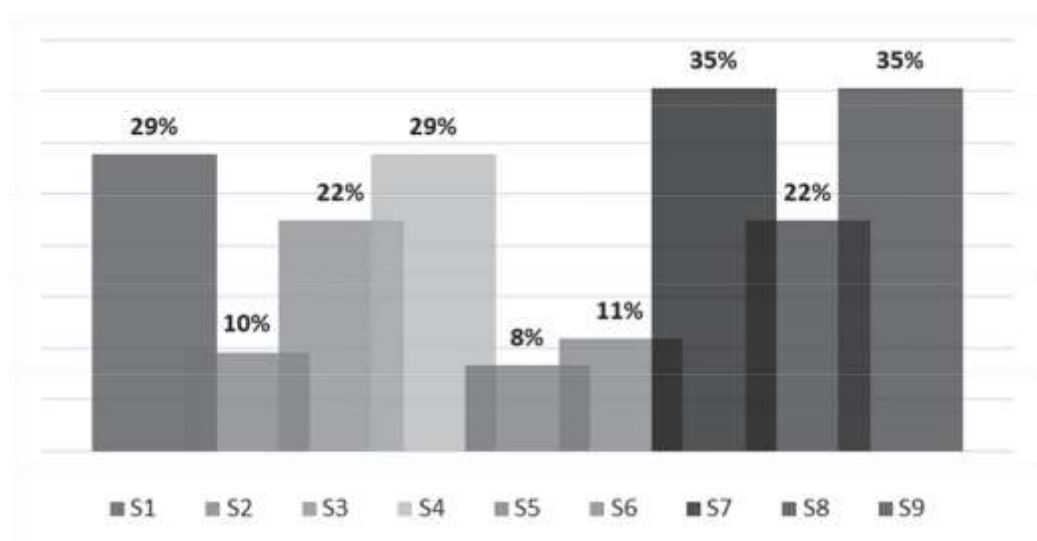
Survey on civic society dimension of active citizenship reveals that overall youth is not very active in civic society. Only 35% of students mentioned that they took part in a lawful protest against any unlawful act. The response for working with any pressure group (10%) and working with any environment association (11%) is very poor. Response for helping any human rights organization (29%) and about boycotting any product (29%) as a sign of protest is also not very significant.

Table 3: Civic Society or Social Dimension

Indicator	Helping Human Right Organization (S1)	Working with any Pressure Group (S2)	Moved and Signed Petitions (S3)	Boycotted a Product (S4)	Working with Trade Union (S5)	Working with Environment Association (S6)	Take part in lawful demonstrations (S7)	Member of Social Organization (S8)	Protest Against Unlawful Acts (S9)
Frequency	45	15	35	45	13	17	55	35	55
Percentage	29%	10%	22%	29%	8%	11%	35%	22%	35%

Percentages will not add up to a hundred, due to positive answer to more than one options.

Civic Society or Social Dimention



S1 = Helping Human Rights Organization, S2 = Working with any Pressure Group, S3 = Moved or Signed Petition, S4 = Boycotted any Product, S5 = Working with Trade Union, S6 = Working with Environment Association, S7 = Take part in Lawful Protest, S8 = Member of Social Organization, S9 = Member of Student Union

Community Help Dimension

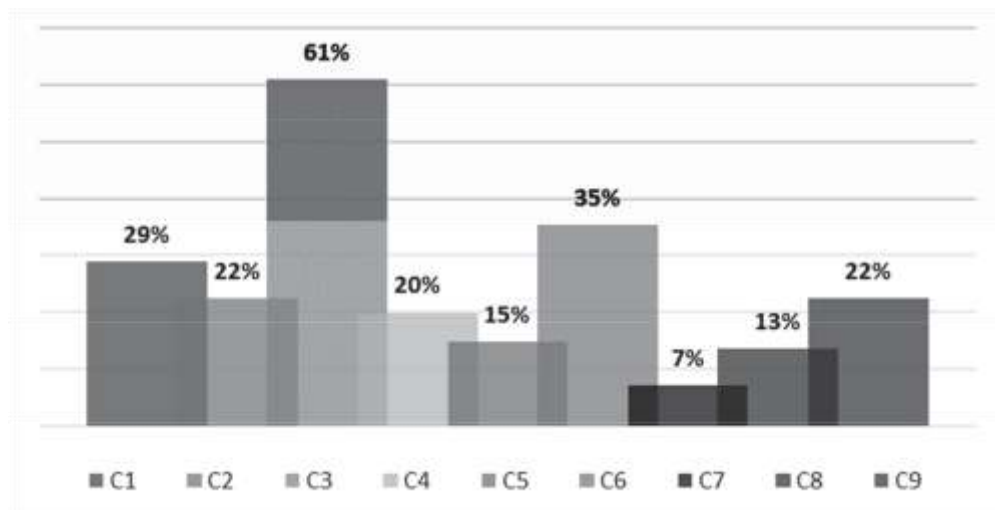
Results on the survey on community help dimension are not much different than the previous two dimensions. A significant percentage (61%) answered yes for the membership of cultural organization while the least number of students (07%) was helping or 'volunteering at seniors' home'. Also, a low percentage (13%) were found 'helping street children'. The second highest response (35%) was for 'helping in schools or students. Although it is not very encouraging still shows some inclination of students towards this community service.

Table 4: Community Help Dimension

Indicator	Helping any Religious Organization (C1)	Helping any Sport Organization (C2)	Helping any Cultural Organization (C3)	Helping an Anti-drug Organization (C4)	Helping in any Hospital (C5)	Helping any School or Students (C6)	Working with any Seniors Home (C7)	Helping Street Children (C8)	Working for Rural Development (C9)
Frequency	45	35	95	31	23	55	11	21	35
Percentage	29%	22%	61%	20%	15%	35%	7%	13%	22%

Percentages will not add up to a hundred, due to the positive answers to more than one options.

Community Help Dimentioins



C1 = Helping any Religious Organization, C2 = Helping any Sport Organization, C3 = Helping any Cultural Organization, C4 = Helping any Anti-Drug Association, C5 = Helping in any Hospital C6 = Helping any School or Students, C7 = Working with any Seniors Home, C8 = Helping Street Children, C9 = Working for Rural Development

Recommendations and Suggestions

The objective of this survey was to explore and determine the extent of the involvement of the iGeneration of Pakistan in citizenship activities. Since students are neither educated in schools nor there is any such social set-up which encourages younger generation towards political, civic and community services. Considering this fact, the researchers were not very optimistic for very encouraging results, but some useful results were obtained which are better than expected. However, based on the responses of this survey following recommendations and suggestions are made.

- Students were found afraid of taking part in mainstream politics due to the fear of violence factor prevailing in Pakistan's political parties.
- HEIs must make some sort of efforts to incline students to take a limited part in positive and non-violent political activities at the local, provincial, and national level.
- Students should be taught for the importance of the vote in a democratic system and must be convinced to cast their vote in favor of their candidate of choice on the polling day.
- On the civic and social dimension, the response for every indicator was very poor. It is important that Pakistan schools from the elementary level must educate students about the importance of social work.
- Some system should be made whereby students are rewarded for their social work.
- HEIs and Higher Education Commission (HEC) must evolve a system to offer at least three credit hour social work and students must be awarded for that social service.
- Hospitals, trade unions, environment agencies and social organization must chalk out some program encourage students to do some social work with them.
- Students must be taught and encouraged to join pressure groups and lawfully protest on any illegal or unethical act or happening in society.

- Alongwith cultural activities and shows students must be taught how to preserve the good and positive values of the society.
- On community work, the students' response was very poor. Concept of community within cosmopolitan cities is very important to keep enhance the sense of mutual help. Our younger generation must be enlightened on this issue.
- Students must be encouraged by the teachers to help street children in making them a responsible citizen of the community.

Since the scope of this research was only to explore how active the younger generation is in their duty as active citizens, so no statistical inference is applied to this data. Researchers feel that a comprehensive study can be done to find out the factors which might help in enhancing active citizenship within the younger generation.

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