



PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS ACTIVISM

AND ITS IMPACTS ON THE POLITICAL BEHAVIOR OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT ACTIVISTS

Karl Aidan L. Nepomuceno, Cheyanne Aryani A. Niesta, Marie Joanna A. Paguirigan, & Rigel Ruel E. Portales

ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to study student activism by focusing on how parents' perception of their activism affects their children's political actions and decisions. Six students from three undergraduate student activist organizations across Metro Manila were purposively sampled to participate individually in a semi-structured interview developed around the concept of attitudes categorized into three components: the behavioral, cognitive, and affective. Thematic analysis reveals that parents generally tend to have a negative perception towards activism, which does not necessarily affect students' decision to continue activism despite accompanying emotional burdens. The findings ascertain that parents employ a variety of parenting styles from rational to authoritarian and emotions such as worry and rage in reaction to their child's activism. Moreover, the participants were found to apply values such as tireless persuasion and discretion to negotiate conflicting perceptions of their activism with their parents.

INTRODUCTION

Socialization has piqued the youth's interest in political activism and led to significant contributions to the country's independence (Palafox, 2012). In the 21st century, there has been substantial growth in the number of youth political activists; however, due to a heating political climate, the parents of youth political activists have second thoughts on this uprising (Madarang, 2019; Pedrajas, 2021). This study clarifies the research gaps between the political socialization and behavior of Filipino student activists and their relationship with their parents; thus the following research questions:

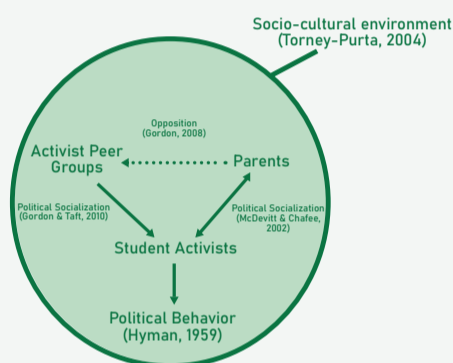


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

- R1.1: How do parents of undergraduate student activists perceive "activism"?
- R1.2: How do these perceptions impact the decisions of undergraduate student activists?
- R1.3: How do undergraduate student activists negotiate conflicting perceptions with parents?

METHODS

Data was gathered in a semi-structured interview format with purposive sampling targeting the population of members of undergraduate activist organizations in Manila with n = 6 participants interviewed individually. Four participants were from Anakbayan PLM, one from Akbayan Youth – UP Diliman, and one from SALiGAN sa CSSP. Thematic analysis was used to identify common themes. The said themes consist of the cognitive, affective, and behavioral components of parents' attitudes (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1977) and their impacts on the political behavior of their children.



Figure 2. Undergraduate Activist Organizations in Manila

RESULTS

Cognitive. Almost all of the interviewees mentioned their parents' immediate negative perception of activism. Due to parents' having a limited understanding of activism, they mainly believe that there is an underground movement that creates terrorists, so they develop a weariness for their children to join rallies.

Affective. Parents whose feelings are generally positive concerning the participants' activism typically respond with passive acceptance. Parents' feelings were also in the form of curiosity. As time progressed, parents became accepting of their children's activism and acquired a sense of inquiry regarding their children's specific activities.

Behavioral. Parents who have a "rational parenting style" try to listen and give feedback towards their child's political beliefs, even if they have contrasting ideologies. An authoritarian parenting style is judged negatively by respondents as parents warn their children not to join activist organizations.

Impacts on Political Behavior. Participants mentioned mental health as a concern due to their experiences of fear and emotional breakdowns when introducing themselves as activists to their parents. Some activists talked about how parents hold control over their movement and about how they have practiced being discreet about their activism. In response, participants pursued tireless persuasion as a response wherein they progressively explain their organization, activities, and political ideology to their parents over a long period of time.

Perceptions of Parents Attitudes			Impacts on Political Behavior
Cognitive	Affective	Behavioral	
Acknowledgement of Red Tagging of NDMOs	Passive Acceptance of Children's Activism	Conditional Recognition of Children's Activism	Risks on Mental Health
Limited Understanding/ Experience of Activism	Developing Sense of Inquiry and Curiosity to Activism	Emotionally Detached Parenting Style	Tireless Persuasion
Perception of Activism as "Brainwashing"	Fear for Children's Safety	Rational Parenting Style	Activism as Fulfillment of Parents' Teachings
Activism as a Public Nuisance	Rage over Children's Decisions	Authoritarian Parenting Style and Emotional Blackmail	Discretion and Lying to Parents
			Family having little to no impact on Political Decisions

Table 1. Summary of Themes Gathered

CONCLUSIONS



An overview of the results and discussions show the conflicting nature of parents' attitudes towards activism. The researchers conclude that even as the conflict may further separate activists from their parents due to restrictions in movement and generalized worries, the intentions of activists through discretion and tireless persuasion are rooted in mending this conflict rather than exacerbating it with their love and respect for their parents underlying their actions.

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