

Full Length Research Paper

Identity, political efficacy and expected political participation among nursing students after 25th January revolution

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Received 11 April, 2014; Accepted 12 August, 2014

University students' political participation is of great significance to their own growth and it facilitates a country's democratization process. This study was conducted to investigate the relationship of personal and social identity, political efficacy and expected political participation among nursing students after 25th January 2011 Revolution of Egypt. The study was conducted at the Faculty of Nursing, Alexandria University. A random sample of 50% of nursing students (N = 463) who enrolled in the four academic years of the faculty were included with no exclusion criteria. Data were collected in April- June 2011. The main results of the study showed that majority of nursing students perceived themselves as politically effective and have willingness to be active participants in political activities especially after 25th January revolution. In addition to a significant positive correlation between students' identity and their political efficacy as well as their expected political participation, it is concluded that Nursing Education program should play a positive role in raising awareness through educating students about concepts of citizenship and the importance of political participation as means to achieve growth and development in their country. Furthermore, the atmosphere of the college may contribute to higher levels of political efficacy through enhancing sense of social and political identity among students.

Key words: 25th January Revolution, politics, political efficacy, political participation, university' students.

INTRODUCTION

During the past two decades, Egypt has witnessed an enormous change in the way political affairs are handled. Egypt has a special demographic distribution of the youth bulge-where the youths make up the majority of the population. For this reason, it is important to assess the

actual political participation of youths as a form of civic engagement and to estimate how much of the Egyptian youths today have a "sense of community" and thus how much have the potential to participate if directed to the right track [Mahgoub and Morsi, 2009].

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Egyptian 25th January Revolution (Youth Revolution)

Prior to the big demonstration on 25th January revolution, Mahgoub and Morsi [2009] conducted a survey at American University in Cairo; they found that the majority of students said that they did not participate politically in their country for any election and they did not believe that youths in Egypt can make a change or difference by their political participation or interest. They concluded that there is a huge gap in Egyptian youth political participation and by not participating in their country's political life, a major portion of Egyptian society is not represented politically and are thus more likely to be frustrated or disappointed with overall conditions. Another problem that was revealed by doing this research was the missing voice of youth within the Egyptian society [Mahgoub and Morsi, 2009]. Youths are not provided with the appropriate channels of communication and are not able to voice their ideas and their concerns towards their participation in the civil society. They are also not represented in accordance to their large number, but rather treated as any other faction in the Egyptian society [Mahgoub and Morsi, 2009; Halim, 2004].

On the 25th January, 2011, the whole of Egypt was taken by surprise; the young and the old, the rich and the poor, the civilian and the army and most of all President Hosni Mubarak. Nobody could have really believed that such protests would have gathered such strength. However, the demonstration, which then became the revolution, was started by the Egyptian youths after several years of protesting on social networks like Facebook and Twitter. Throughout the previous years, there were small demonstrations; but especially after the most recent fake parliament elections, it was obvious that corruption had increased and the protest groups became larger, which exploded on 25th January as revolution all over Egypt. This revolution is sometimes named the youth revolution [Ramses, 2012].

Nowadays, the younger generation such as university students is a significant and growing demographic of youths [Mannarini et al., 2008]. Many researchers have focused on the university students and their demographics to assess the civic and political health of the nation's new generations [Long and Meyer, 2011]. University students' political participation is of great significance to their own growth and it facilitates a country's democratization process. Therefore, educators must attach importance to investigate university students' identity, political participation and give them proper guidance [Tao, 2006].

School climate may enhance our sense of belonging in our community and social identity. This can be obtained through storytelling, which gives us an identity, allowing us to exist and function with one another. It is natural for us to communicate through narratives. The process of creating a sense of identity through story-

telling allows us to participate in interpersonal relationships, while developing and maintaining a satisfying self-concept [Horrocks et al., 2006].

Egyptian university students have proven to be one of the most politically active segments of the population in 25th January revolution. Not only did they participated in protests, sit-ins and marches, they also attempted to take the revolution to their respective universities. The students' protest movement has alternated between campus activism and street protests. Many students participated in the mass demonstrations that took place in public spaces such as Cairo's Tahrir Square. These students have the imagination to dream of a better life for themselves, and the energy to achieve it [Eskandar, 2010].

Study variables

A large body of work posits that self interest and positive feeling of personal and social identity are the primal forces for political interest, attitudes, efficacy and behaviors [Fowler and Kam, 2007]. Also, the concept of political efficacy has played a prominent role in studies on political behavior and political socialization. Political efficacy is defined as the "feeling that political and social change is possible and that the individual citizen can play a part in bringing about this change". Acquisition of political efficacy is often seen as crucial for future participation as an active citizen in a democracy [Schulz, 2005].

In particular, there is large consensus that political efficacy comprises two dimensions; internal efficacy and external efficacy. Internal efficacy is an individual's beliefs about his/her ability to understand as well as participate in politics. Alternatively, external efficacy refers to an individual's beliefs about political actors or government institutions' responsiveness to citizens' demands, needs and wishes. External efficacy is more likely to be influenced by experiences with political participation than internal efficacy [Curran, 2008; Morrell, 2005].

Active political participation requires citizens to believe in their own ability to influence the course of politics, in other words, to feel politically efficacious [Eskandar, 2010]. Political participation can be defined as activity that has the intent or effect of influencing government's action either directly by affecting the implementation of public policy or indirectly by influencing the selection of those policies [Verba et al., 2010]. There are mainly different forms of political participation. They include electoral participation, which refers to the expectation of becoming informed voter once being in legal age and including behaviors such as voting, getting informed prior to elections; political activities refer to the actual behaviors of being an active participant in politics as an adult and including behaviors such as writing letters

to newspapers, joining a party, running for office; social movement activities refer to participating in community-based activities such as community volunteer work, collecting signatures, collecting money, participating in protest march/rally; and protest behavior is a form of unconventional but social activities which occur when dissatisfaction with political system occur and could be expressed illegally by spray-painting slogans, blocking traffic, occupying buildings [Schulz, 2005; Reichert, 2010; Torney-Purta et al., 2001].

Ultimately, an updated understanding of the current generation of university and colleges students' views and attitudes on politics and political participation requires more than a literature review; thus, an updated research with college students could be timely and relevant topic for study, contributing an important element to the efforts for democratic revitalization: the voices of the youngest generation [Long and Meyer, 2011]. Little is known about the political attitudes and behaviors of today's university nursing students.

Thus, the present study aims to clarify this issue by investigating the relationship of personal social identity, political efficacy and expected political participation among nursing students after 25 January 2011 Revolution of Egypt.

Research questions

- 1- How do nursing students perceive their identity, political efficacy and political participation?
- 2- Is there a relationship between feeling of identity, political efficacy and expected political participation among nursing students?

METHOD

Research design: a descriptive correlational design was used for the study.

Subject and setting

A sample of 50% nursing students (N = 463), who enrolled at the academic year (2011-2012) in the Faculty of Nursing, Alexandria University participated in this study.

The study instruments

Aspect of Identity Questionnaire (AIQ-IV) developed by Cheek and Tropp (2002) was used. It was used to measure the relative importance that individuals place on various attributes of their identity. The questionnaire consisted of 25 items, which contain two identity dimensions namely; personal identity orientation (10- items) and social identity orientation (15- items). Responses were rated on 5-point likert type scale ranged from (5) Extremely important to (1) Not important.

Political Efficacy and Expected Political Participation Question-

naires Are two parts of Surveys of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA)

Civic Education Study developed by Torney-Purta et al. (2001). It was used to test the civic knowledge and skills among adolescents and students and it is divided into:-

a. Political Efficacy Questionnaire: It includes ten items designed to measure political efficacy. Four items were related to internal efficacy dimension, six items related to the external efficacy dimension. Responses were rated on 5-point likert type scale that ranged from (5) strongly agree to (1) strongly disagree.

b. Political Participation Questionnaire: it is used to test the expected political participation among students as an adult. It included 11- items asking about electoral behaviors (two-items), political activities (three-items), social movement activities (three-items) and protest behaviors (three- items). Responses were rated on 4 -point likert type scale that ranged from (4) I will certainly do this – to- (1) I will certainly not do this [Reichert, 2010].

Socio-demographic data which included age, sex, academic year, previous voting, effect of political participation, and change that occurred after 25 January 2011 revolution of Egypt were also used.

Procedures for data collection

Written approval was obtained from administrative authority in the identified setting to collect the necessary data. Tools 1 and 2 were translated into Arabic and tested for content validity by 6 experts in the field of study, who represent professors, at Department of Psychiatric Nursing, as well as the Department of Nursing Administration. Accordingly, some items were modified. Tools were tested for reliability using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The two tools were reliable ($p = 0.832, 0.787$), respectively.

A pilot study for the questionnaires was conducted on 10% (N = 46) nursing students that were excluded from the study. No changes occurred in the tools. Data were collected from nursing students after obtaining their acceptance through distributing questionnaires to them. Researchers stayed with students during time of data collection; and any clarification was explained. Confidentiality was assured. Data were collected in three months; it started from 1/4/2011 to 30/6/2011.

Data management and analysis

Data were coded by the researchers and statistically analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science) version 16. Descriptive statistics, such as frequency and percentages were used for describing and summarizing qualitative and categorical data. Arithmetic Mean (X) and Standard Deviation (SD) were used as measures of central tendency and dispersion respectively for quantitative data. Analytical statistics was conducted using t test (t) to test difference between two means. Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) was used to measure the degree of association between variables. All tests of significance were done at the 5% level.

RESULT

Regarding the demographic characteristics of nursing students, about one third of the students was enrolled either in third or fourth academic year (34.6-30.5%) respectively. The highest percentages of students were

Table 1. Distribution of nursing students according to their demographic characteristics (N= 463).

Variable	No	%
Academic		
1 st	55	11.9
2 nd	107	23.1
3 rd	141	30.5
4 th	160	34.6
Age:		
< 20 years	120	25.9
20 – 22 years	323	69.8
22 – 25 years	16	3.5
> 25 years	4	0.9
Sex:		
Male	153	33.0
Female	310	67.0
Feeling of identity as a university student:		
Yes	257	55.5
No	206	44.5
Liking voting in election		
Yes	378	81.6
No	85	18.4
Previous voting in election:		
Yes	256	55.3
No	207	44.7
Effect of own political participation on country:		
Yes	398	86.0
No	65	14.0
Change after 25 January revolution:		
Yes	365	78.8
No	98	21.2

in the age group of 20 to less than 22 years old. Also more than half of them were females. Furthermore, 55.5% of students have feeling of identity as university students. The highest percentages of nursing students liking voting, share in previous voting in election as well as feel that their voting and political participation could have a positive effect on their country's politics represented by 81.6, 55.3 and 86.0% respectively; so they participated especially after 25th January Egyptian revolution (25 Jan revolution). In addition, the majority of nursing students (78.8%) perceived that they changed

after 25 January revolution (Table 1).

As regard nursing students' perception of changes after 25 January revolution, all students who felt changes reported that they were proud as Egyptian youths who made a greater change in Egypt, felt more freedom, had the ability for change and expressed opinions with respect and democracy. Also, the highest percentage of students (91.78%) stated that they became more interested in politics and political participation, as well as had increased commitment and loyalty to their country (Egypt) (Table 2a). Moreover, there are statistical significant difference between students who felt change after the revolution and who did not feel change regarding their perception of identity, political efficacy as well as expected political participation ($p=0.006, 0.001, 0.004$) respectively. Students who felt change after the 25 January revolution have the higher mean (Table 2b).

Students' perception of personal and social identity is represented by mean 4.30 ± 0.47 ; their political efficacy is represented by 3.30 ± 0.77 and expected political participation by 2.80 ± 0.46 . In addition, almost all nursing students (99.6%) perceived their identity as important to them with the highest percentage given to their personal identity (99.8%). The majority of students (73.2%) perceived their political efficacy as high especially their internal political efficacy. In addition, 97.0% of nursing students have willingness and expectation for political participation with the highest percentage (99.6%) related to electoral behaviors and social activities (Tables 3a, b).

The results reveal that there is a positive statistical significant correlation between students' feeling of identity and their political efficacy ($r=0.132, p=0.004$). Also, there is a positive statistical significant correlation between students' identity and expected political participation ($r=0.284, p=0.001$). In addition, there is a positive statistical significant correlation between students' political efficacy and expected political participation ($r=0.330, p=0.001$) (Table 4).

DISCUSSION

The preliminary findings of the present study revealed that nursing students who perceived changes occur after 25 January revolution significantly have feeling of personal and social identity, political efficacy as well as willingness for expected political participation higher than those who did not feel changes. This is because the students in this study reported that they feel and believe that Egyptian youths are proud with their revolution and role in this revolution. This revolution causes significant many changes for them such as feeling of proud with their Egyptian nation and as Egyptian citizen, feeling of freedom and democracy and being able to participate in political life and expressing their ideas and voices in what concern them in their country.

Table 2a. Nursing students' perception of the changes that occurred after 25 January revolution (Those students who feel changes N= 365 from total N= 463).

Change after 25 January revolution	No	%
Sense of proud with 25 January revolution and youths' role and being Egyptian citizen.	365	100.0
Feeling of freedom, ability to change.	365	100.0
Expressing my opinions with respect.	365	100.0
Feeling of democracy.	365	100.0
Being interesting in politics and political participation.	335	91.78
Increases my commitment & loyalty to my country Egypt.	335	91.78

Table 2b. Relationship of students' identity, political efficacy and expected political participation with their perception of change after January revolution (N = 463).

Variable	Identity	Political efficacy	Expected political participation
Change after 25 th January Revolution			
Yes (n = 365)	4.33 ± 0.43	3.40 ± 0.75	2.83 ± 0.44
No (n = 98)	4.16 ± 0.56	2.92 ± 0.75	2.68 ± 0.50
P	0.006*	<0.001*	0.004*

P: value for student's t test; *: statistically significant at $p \leq 0.05$.

Table 3a. Mean score of identity, political efficacy and expected political participation as perceived by nursing students (N = 463).

Variable	Mean ± SD
Identity	4.30 ± 0.47
Personal identity	4.34 ± 0.50
Social identity	4.26 ± 0.54
Political efficacy	3.30 ± 0.77
Internal political efficacy	3.42 ± 0.86
External political efficacy	3.23 ± 0.96
Expected Political participation	2.80 ± 0.46
Electoral behaviors	3.69 ± 0.51
Political activities	2.37 ± 0.73
Social movement activities	3.21 ± 0.69
Protest activities	2.22 ± 0.65

Moreover, almost all nursing students perceived the importance of their personal and social identity. This could be because students value their identity as a mean for identifying themselves, their unique attributes, roles, motives and their attitude toward their future and toward socialization with others in their personal life. Moreover social identity is the portion of an individual's self-concept derived from perceived membership in a relevant social group. In this respect, Gaytán (2010) clarified that, an integrated understanding of one's identity is important for the individual's

successful functioning in adolescence and into adulthood [Gaytán, 2010].

The main result of the present study revealed that the majority of nursing students perceived themselves as politically effective especially their feeling of internal political efficacy as well as their willingness to be active participants in political activities. This could be attributed to the changes that occur to these students and to Egyptian youths in general during and after 25 January Egyptian revolution. Students could feel that they have an important role and responsibility in their

Table 3b. Percentage of identity, political efficacy and expected political participation as perceived by nursing students (N = 463).

Variable	Important		Not Important	
	No	%	No	%
Identity	461	99.6	2	0.4
Personal identity	462	99.8	1	0.2
Social identity	458	98.9	5	1.1
Political efficacy	High		Low	
Internal political efficacy	401	86.6	62	13.4
External political efficacy	273	59.0	190	41.0
Political participation	Will do that		Will not do that	
Electoral behaviors	461	99.6	2	0.4
Political activities	371	80.1	92	19.9
Social movement activities	439	94.8	24	5.2
Protest activities	359	77.5	104	22.5

Table 4. Correlation among identity, political efficacy and expected political participation as perceived by nursing students (N = 463).

Variable	Social identity	Identity	Internal political efficacy	External political efficacy	Political efficacy	Electoral behaviors	Political activities	Social movement activities	Protest activities	Political participation
Personal identity	r 0.584*	0.847*	0.111	0.017	0.62	0.141*	0.085	0.188*	0.194*	0.217
	p <0.001	<0.001	0.017	0.719	0.182	0.002	0.067	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Social identity		r 0.926*	0.195*	0.096*	0.158*	0.174*	0.160*	0.229*	0.211*	0.280*
		p <0.001	0.179*	0.040	0.001	<0.001	0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Identity			r <0.001	0.070	0.132*	0.180*	0.145*	0.237*	0.228*	0.284*
			p	0.130	0.004	<0.001	0.002	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Internal political efficacy				r 0.375*	0.726*	0.288*	0.279*	0.161*	0.190*	0.318*
				p <0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	0.001	<0.001	<0.001
External political efficacy					r 0.910*	0.242*	0.240*	0.121*	0.132*	0.253*
					p <0.001	<0.001	<0.001	0.009	0.004	<0.001
Political efficacy						r 0.309*	0.303*	0.161*	0.183*	0.330*
						p <0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Electoral behaviors							r 0.233*	0.224*	0.059	0.416*
							p <0.001	<0.001	0.203	<0.001
Political activities								r 0.280*	0.458*	0.771*
								p <0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Social movement activities									r 0.717*	0.371*
									p <0.001	<0.001
Protest activities										r 0.749*
										p <0.001

r: Pearson coefficient * : Statistically significant at $p \leq 0.05$.

country's politics and civil life in order to make a positive change and improve the Egyptian image. This was supported by Hoigilt (2011) who high-lighted the impor-

tant role of young population and Egyptian youths in 25 January revolution and stated that it is note worthy that one of the most important concepts for the Egyptian

youths in this revolution is “dignity and image of Egypt” abroad; they have a sense of responsibility toward their country. He stated that it is important to describe the uprising of young Egyptian people that began in 25 January as not only just a revolution against a whole generation of political actors corruption but also as a significant change for their political efficacy and their civil life. This may be due to the learning of social roles through personal experience, discussing different experiences through the social networking (Facebook) [Høigilt, 2011].

Moreover, the findings of this study revealed a significant positive correlation among students’ identity and their political efficacy as well as their expected political participation. This is because students perceive that their political efficacy and competency as well as their participative role in political activities are important for their self concept and considered a significant part for their personal and social identity. This is supported by Fowler and Kam (2007) who stated that, self interest and positive feeling of personal and social identity are primal forces for political attitude and behaviors and vice versa. Also, Schulz [2005] stated that, participation in political discussion increases the feeling of political efficacy and self confidence which enhance desire for being active participant in political activities. Therefore, the relationship between efficacy and participation in political discussion and activities certainly be seen as reciprocal one [Schulz, 2005]. This result is consistent with that of Schulz (2010) and Amadeo et al. (2002) who found a significant relationship between political efficacy and expected political participation.

In this respect, Li [2009] suggested that student’ orientation and identification with their identities, values and judgment toward their societal role and civil society play an important role in the process of students’ political socialization including efficacy and participation.

Based on the result of the present study, it can be concluded that the majority of nursing students perceived themselves as politically effective and competent and have willingness to be active participants in political activities especially after 25 January revolution. They become more interested in politics and political participation, as well as increased commitment and loyalty to their country (Egypt) after 25 January revolution. Also, there is a significant positive correlation between students’ identity and their political efficacy as well as their expected political participation. It is recommended that Nursing Education should play a positive role in raising students’ political awareness through providing them with courses for politics and civilization in core nursing curricula. Also, nurse educators should encourage students for practicing their political and civil life in university setting such as conducting the periodical election for students’ parliament and encourage their participation in social and voluntary community activities. This would increase the sense of belonging and identity amongst

students and drive them to participate in a civil society that respects their presence and admits their involvement.

Teachers must aim to build students’ political efficacy by giving them opportunities to feel successful in real or simulated democratic decision-making processes.

Study strength and limitation

There is a paucity of research in the area of identity, political efficacy and expected political participation among university nursing students. Thus, this research could make a unique contribution to the literature by providing insight into Egyptian university nursing students’ political attitude especially after 25th January revolution. However, there is a limitation that, researchers surveyed nursing students only in Alexandria governorate and did not include other students; so, the findings cannot be generalized.

RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDY

Prospective studies may be needed to address stability of the study variables over a period of time to assess stability of young generation beliefs about their political efficacy and participation as well as factor affecting these beliefs.

Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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