

## **Political Efficacy among Adolescents in Relation to Their Gender and Type of School**

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### **Abstract**

School also provides experiences that prepare the students to function in their political system. Political efficacy is the feeling that an individual's political action can influence the political process. This research article briefly describes the political efficacy of secondary school students with regard to gender and their type of schools. In order to study the problem, the survey method was used to collect the data. The sample for the study was collected from three government and three non-government secondary schools of Rohtak city (Haryana). 120 students ( 60 male and 60 female) were randomly selected. 'POLITICAL EFFICACY SCALE' developed by Washington S. and Rastogi M. R. was administered to the selected sample to measure the political efficacy of students. The data so collected was analyzed statistically by employing mean, SD and t-test. The research reveals that there is no significant difference between male and female students in their political efficacy but there is significant difference with regards to their schools.

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### **Introduction**

It is believed that education is an effective instrument for socializing the young through promotion of desirable socio cultural values, creation of political awareness which prepares the youth to perform their function to the nation effectively as they grows up. The schools have traditionally been seen as providing young people, especially secondary school students, with the tools needed to assume the responsibilities of active citizenship, including the skills required to follow and understand the workings of government and to make informed choices in elections (Comber, 2005). Developing and understanding one's political ideology is not an easy task, and usually does not occur overnight. For many students, that development may vary often and change with his or her environment, teachers and friends. The school functions as a formal organization whose objectives also include imparting cultural tradition and providing knowledge about the political structure, institutions and processes of the society (Heater & Gillespie, 1981). In so far as it resembles a political organization more than the family, the school also provides experiences that prepare the students to function in their political system.

The history of political efficacy as a model for general political attitudes started in the 1950s. In the 1970s, political efficacy was decidedly split into two components (Niemi, Craig and Matte, (1991). One of these components is known as internal efficacy and addresses one's own belief about their ability to understand and participate effectively in politics. External efficacy is the other factor referring instead to the responsiveness of governmental institutions to the demands of its citizens (Conway, (2000). Political efficacy was originally defined as "the feeling that individual political action does have, or can have, an impact upon the political process" (Stewart and Kornberg,(1992)). Political efficacy, or "the feeling that one is capable of influencing the decision- making process" (Goel, 1980, p. 127), has long been considered a fundamental political attitude

(e.g. Almond & Verba, 1963; Lerner, 2004, p. 126). Political scientists have consistently found that one of the strongest predictors of political participation is *political efficacy* – the feeling that an individual’s political action can influence the political process (Becker, 2005; Cohen, Vigoda, & Samorly, 2001; Paulsen, 1991). Indeed, confidence in one’s ability to influence the political process is consistently associated with actual political participation (Almond & Verba, 1963; 1960; A. Campbell et al., 1954; Finkel, 1985, 1987; Niemi et al., 1991; Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993; Verba & Nie, 1972; Verba et al., 1995). Evidence indicates that certain experiences, such as politically-oriented group work and discussing political issues, can have a positive influence on political efficacy. Political efficacy is strongly associated with political participation, the acquisition of political knowledge, and the discussion of political issues. It is very well known that the “social milieu” (Pierce and Carey, (1971)) within which a person exists greatly affects their sense of political efficacy. Therefore, one expects that as an individual gains in social or economic status, they view themselves as increasingly more effective in political matters.

In addition to the home and family, the classroom can serve as an important socializing agent by encouraging young people to develop and practice civic skills, offering opportunities for open discussions about political and social issues, and providing training grounds for civic involvement (Comber, 2005; Gimbel, Lay, & Schuknecht, 2003). Although there is controversy among social scientists about the extent of school’s influence on students’ political attitudes, in general, they agree that the school fulfills the role of a political socialization agent (e.g., Almond & Verba, 1963; Dawson, Prewitt, & Dawson, 1977; Ehman, 1980; Heater & Gillespie, 1981). Many students believe political awareness and being politically active as an adult duty. When an individual has high levels of political efficacy, she or he is more likely to vote (Cohen, Vigoda, & Samorly, 2001; Pollack, 1983; Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960), contact public officials about issues of concern (Hirlinger, 1992; Pollack, 1983; Sharp, 1982), become involved in political activism (Paulsen, 1991; Tygart, 1977), use informational news media (Newhagen, 1994; Tan, 1981), and become psychologically involved in politics (Cohen et al., 2001; Bell, 1969). Present study is an effort to explore how place of study and gender affects students experience and ability regarding political efficacy.

### **Objectives**

1. To compare the political efficacy of students studying in government and non-government secondary schools.
2. To compare the political efficacy of male and female students studying in secondary schools.
3. To compare the political efficacy of male students studying in government and non- government secondary schools.
4. To compare the political efficacy of female students studying in government and non-government secondary schools.

### **Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant difference between political efficacy of students studying in government and non- government secondary schools.
2. There is no significant difference between political efficacy of male and female students studying in secondary schools.
3. There is no significant difference in political efficacy of male students studying in

government and non- government secondary schools.

4. There is no significant difference between political efficacy of female students studying in government and non- government secondary schools.

### Methodology

#### Sample of the study

Sample of the present study consisted of 60 male and 60 female respondents of the age group 14 to 16 years, studying in Secondary Schools of District Rohtak, Haryana. The selective sample of male and female students from government (30 boys and 30 girls) and non- government (30 boys and 30 girls) schools from the total cluster of students studying in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> classes at Secondary Schools between 14 to 16 years of age were selected by using random sampling.

#### Tools used

'POLITICAL EFFICACY SCALE' developed by Washington S. and Rastogi M. R. was used to measure the political efficacy of students.

#### Procedure

Descriptive survey method of research was employed for the present study. The tools employed in the study were administered on the secondary school students of the age group 14 to 16 years. The data for the present research was collected by the investigator from different schools included in the sample.

#### Data Analysis and Interpretation

The response received was analyzed through statistical applications using t-test for comparison of the political efficacy of students studying in government and non-government schools in the light of objectives.

#### Table 1: Shows the mean, standard deviation and t- ratio for testing and comparing the political efficacy of students studying in government and non- government schools

It is inferred from the above table that there is significant difference between students in

| Students       | N  | Mean | S.D. | S.Ed | 't'-test | Level of significance at 0.05 |
|----------------|----|------|------|------|----------|-------------------------------|
| Government     | 60 | 9.16 | 1.26 | 0.28 | 2.25     | Sig                           |
| Non-Government | 60 | 8.53 | 1.72 |      |          |                               |

their political efficacy with regard to government and non- government schools. A close look of table clearly reveals that mean value of government students is higher than the students of non- government schools with regards to their political efficacy. The t value is 2.25 which is significant at 0.05 level of significance so the hypothesis, "There is no significant difference between political efficacy of students studying in government and non- government secondary schools" is rejected.

**Table 2:Shows the mean, standard deviation and t- ratio for testing and comparing the political efficacy of male and female students.**

| Students | N  | Mean | S.D. | S.Ed | t-value | Level of significance at 0.05 |
|----------|----|------|------|------|---------|-------------------------------|
| Male     | 60 | 9.03 | 1.34 | 0.26 | 0.77    | Not Sig                       |
| Female   | 60 | 8.83 | 1.63 |      |         |                               |

The second hypothesis was that there is no significant difference between political efficacy of male and female students studying in secondary schools. Table 2 shows that male students are better than female students in regards to political efficacy as the mean values are 9.037 and 8.83 respectively but the difference is insignificant so the hypothesis second is accepted.

**Table 3:Shows the mean, standard deviation and t- ratio for testing and comparing the political efficacy of male students studying in government and non- government schools.**

| Male students  | N  | Mean | S.D. | S.Ed | t-value | Level of significance at 0.05 |
|----------------|----|------|------|------|---------|-------------------------------|
| Government     | 30 | 8.90 | 1.24 | 0.34 | 0.41    | Not Sig                       |
| Non-government | 30 | 8.76 | 1.45 |      |         |                               |

Table-3 shows that there is no significant differences between male students of government and non- government schools regarding their political efficacy as the obtained t-value- 0.41, is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. The mean value of the male from government schools (8.90) is higher than male students of non-government schools (8.76) but it is not significant. Hence the hypotheses three, i.e., "There is no significant difference in political efficacy of male students studying in government and non- government secondary schools" is retained.

**Table 4:Shows the mean, standard deviation and t- ratio for testing and comparing the political efficacy of female students studying in government and non-government schools.**

It is evident from the Table 4 that the mean scores of female students of government and

| Female Students        | N  | Mean | S.D. | S.Ed | t-value | Level of significance at 0.05 |
|------------------------|----|------|------|------|---------|-------------------------------|
| Government schools     | 30 | 9.43 | 1.25 | 0.42 | 2.69    | Sig                           |
| Non-government schools | 30 | 8.30 | 1.95 |      |         |                               |

non- government schools on political efficacy are 9.43 and 8.30 respectively. The t-ratio is 2.69, which is significant at 0.05 level of significant. It indicates that female students of government schools have better political efficacy than female students of non-government schools. Thus hypothesis 4 that there is no significant difference between political efficacy of female students studying in government and non- government secondary schools is rejected.

### Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is revealed that students in reference to political efficacy do affected by their place of study as significant deference was found between students studying in government and non- government schools. The students of government schools are found much aware on political issues. No significant difference was found in students in relation to their gender regarding political efficacy. In growing society male and female students both are more or less same regarding their political efficacy. Research evidence shows that no significant difference was found among male students on political efficacy; no matter they are from government schools or from non-government schools. But in case of female students clear difference was found. Girls of government schools have higher political efficacy.

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