



Factors Influencing Political Opinions and Voting Behavior Among University Students

1. Objective of the Survey

This survey has two main objectives. First, it aims to explore the individual, socio-cultural, and political factors that shape political opinions and voting behavior among university students Sri Lanka. Second, it seeks to assess the role of social consultations with family and friends, as well as media influence, on students' political decisions. Overall, the research will provide insights into youth civic engagement and how relationships and media consumption impact the formation of political views and behaviors among students.

2. Target Population and Sample

Population: This survey targets undergraduate university students who are eligible to vote and whose political opinions may be influenced by personal, social, and environmental factors.

Sample: A diverse sample of undergraduate students selected from universities, reached through social media user groups and university networks.

3. Data Collection Method

The survey will be conducted through an online questionnaire to maximize accessibility and convenience for students in Sri Lanka. The questionnaire link will be distributed to students via university social media pages, online student forums, and university email newsletters. Designed to be brief and engaging, the survey is expected to take 5-7 minutes to complete, encouraging high participation.

4. Survey Questionnaire

The questionnaire is organized into sections to capture data on demographics, individual characteristics, socio-cultural influences, political preferences, and social interactions related to political decisions. Each section includes a mix of multiple-choice and close-ended questions to collect quantitative data.

Key Areas Covered:

Demographics: Basic information such as age, gender, academic major, and university to contextualize responses.

Individual Characteristics:

- Income: Background and perceived influence of financial status on political preferences.
 - Political Ideology: Self-identified position on the political spectrum (e.g., Progressive, Traditional, Moderate, Apolitical).

- Gender and Emotional Intelligence: Exploring how gender identity and emotional intelligence affect political perspectives.
- Healthcare Experiences: Personal or family healthcare experiences and their impact on political views.

Socio-Cultural Influences:

- Ethnicity and Race: Examining the influence of cultural background on political opinions.
- Religion: The role of religious beliefs in shaping political values.
- Media Influence: Assessing the impact of traditional, digital, and social media on political opinions.
- Social Networks: Influence of peer groups and online communities on political decisions.

Political Factors:

- Party Identification: Preferences for specific political parties or ideologies.
- Candidate Characteristics: Importance of candidate traits such as honesty, experience, or relatability.
- Policy Positions: Key issues that resonate with students, including climate change, economic policies, or social justice.
- Campaign Strategies and Economic Conditions: Influence of campaign messaging and the current economic climate on political views.
- Trust in Political Information: Level of trust in sources like news outlets, political leaders, and online resources.

Social Consultation and Peer Influence:

- Frequency and importance of discussions with family and friends on political matters, and how these discussions align with their own voting behavior.
- Similarity in Voting: Trends in voting alignment with family or social groups.
- Voting in Groups: Likelihood of voting with family or friends and how this affects decisions.

5. Expected Outcomes

The survey is expected to provide insights into:

1. Key Influences: Primary factors affecting political opinions and voting behavior among university students.
2. Social Influence: The impact of family, friends, and social media on students' political decisions.
3. Political Trust and Engagement: Levels of trust in political information sources and the overall engagement of students in political processes.

6. Conclusion

By understanding the role of individual, socio-cultural, and political factors, along with social consultation patterns, this research will contribute to a deeper knowledge of political engagement among undergraduate university students in Sri Lanka, providing valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and youth organizations.