

## Political Knowledge and Political Behavior among Highly Educated Muslims in Indonesia

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### Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to describe the influence of political knowledge on the political behavior of highly educated Muslim society in addressing political issues. This research used cohort-based quantitative method through data collection, interviews, and documentation. To collect information from respondents, this research used questionnaire to reveal their political knowledge levels and behaviors. Interviews towards respondents were also conducted to directly confirm the information in the questionnaire. This paper presents information that highly educated Muslims cannot always be invited to dialogue-based solely on political knowledge in understanding and responding to political issues but must be invited to understand through thinking channels outside of knowledge. There is another dimension that shapes the political attitudes of highly educated Muslims in Indonesia, in this case, the religious doctrine which is more dominant than knowledge. Thus, knowledge is not the main factor in controlling people's actions and attitudes, but only a small part of the accumulation of factors.

**Key words:** *political knowledge; political attitudes; religious doctrine; highly educated Muslim; political behavior*

### Introduction

Highly educated people seem to have high interest in public affairs and have a maturity level of attitude in response to various situations and realities. Their educational exposure is a substantial factor in shaping their social insights and attitudes (Ančić et al., 2019). Political knowledge learned by students in a university is thought to influence their attitudes and insights on everything related to the political dimension and the reality associated with it. However, on the other hand, some researchers conclude that studying political sciences help shape students' negative perceptions on everything related to politics (Oleg & Negrove, 2019).

The debate about the relationship between human knowledge and behavior continues (Agerberg, 2019; Graham, 2020; Henderson, 2014; Nashir et al., 2019; Sanbonmatsu, 2003). The theory of “planned behavior” shows that behavior is influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and control

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of perceived behavior, not by knowledge. According to this theory, there are indications that context-specific local factors have a greater influence on behavioral preference than the knowledge learned (Payne, 2016). The theory of “epigenetic rules” mentions that human behavior is formed programmatically by a genetic factor, not by knowledge. These genetic factors affect the human choice to perform or abandon certain actions (Caputo, 1998; Dupras et al., 2019; Squier, 2017; Yigit, 2018).

It is in line with the socio-psychological theory that the social process forms a particular person's character, behavior, and even level of wealth (Zhao et al., 2019). Some components of one individual are formed slowly but surely by the social process (Beharie et al., 2017; Dassonneville et al., 2012). Three social components form the self of human: affective components, cognitive components, and conative components. Affective is an emotional component; cognitive is an intellectual component, and is a conative component of habit.

The relation between knowledge and behavior, especially in political sciences, is the concern of many researchers (Jerit & Barabas, 2017; Pérez, 2015). It is assumed that political education will help prepare the students for their future roles as citizens in the community. Political education aims to reverse the wave of declining political participation rates among young age groups, and at the same time nurtures the development of democratic attitudes and behaviors. Dassonneville et al. (2012) study the relation of civic knowledge with the political attitude and behavior among students in Belgium. The conclusion of the study suggests that generally, the civic education have a positive effect on the political attitude and behavior among adolescents and young adults in Belgium. Dassonneville distinguishes between formal civic education, open-classroom climate, and active learning strategies, and their relationship to participation. Formal civic education (in the form of class instruction) and active learning strategies have a positive relationship with political attitudes and behavior.

Meanwhile, an open class climate, on the other hand, is significantly related to political belief (Persson, 2013). Persson examines the correlation between the number of voters involved in political activity and the level of education. In most Western countries, the level of education does not cause an increase in the number of voters at the aggregate level. Based on a review of the relative (non-formal) education model, it was found that education is only a proxy for social status and has no direct causal effect. Meanwhile, relative education has a greater effect on the number of voters than absolute (formal) education (Esaiasson & Persson, 2014).

A study by Esaiasson et al. (2014) reveals that there is a positive relationship between political knowledge and students' actions, especially among students in political sciences (Longo et al., 2006). This research denies the planned behavioral theory claiming that knowledge does not correlate with behavior. Besides, the study concludes that political science students' political behavior tends to change compared to students of law and communication. The relation of political knowledge and political attitudes is the focus a research by Longo et al. (2006). From extensive interviews Longo discovers that students argue that they can only gain the best political competence by practicing democracy. Longo's research recommends the expansion of the understanding of non-electoral politics to attract young people to be more politically involved.

A study by Dominguez et al. (2017) focuses on the relation of students' majoring in political sciences and their interests in political competition. The research was based on the hypothesis that students who major in political sciences have more interest in political competition than others and are more willing to engage in political action than those in other majors. Through the study of 1,083 students in two universities, Loyola Marymount and San Diego University, Casey et al. find that senior students of political sciences have a higher interest than new students and higher willingness to join organized groups.

Previous studies indicate that, in general, political knowledge has a positive relationship with the involvement of those who study political issues and activities. Students who study politics are seemed to be more interested in political affairs than those in other fields. This assumption is confirmed otherwise in this article that political knowledge has no positive relationship with political behavior and attitudes. There are other factors beyond the political knowledge that affect the political behavior other than having knowledge of it.

Many researchers assume that there is a close connection between political knowledge and people's behavior (Braun et al., 2020; Hagelin, 2019; Lamprianou & Antonis, 2019; Mnguni et al., 2016; Nezlek & Catherine, 2019). The relation of knowledge and behavior, especially in political discipline, is of concern to many researchers. Dassonneville (2012), investigated the relation between citizenship knowledge and political attitudes and behavior of students in Belgium. The conclusion of the study shows that in general, the citizenship education effort has a positive effect on the political attitudes and behavior of adolescents and young adults in Belgium. Dassonneville (2012) distinguishes between formal civil education, an open-classroom climate, and active learning strategies, and their relationship to participation. Formal citizenship education

(in the form of classroom instruction) and active learning strategies have a positive relationship with political attitudes and behavior. Meanwhile, an open classroom climate, on the other hand, is significantly related to political trust.

Mancosu (2009) examined the correlation between the number of voters involved in political activity and the level of education. In most Western countries, the level of education does not cause an increase in the number of voters at the aggregate level. Based on a review of the relative education model, it explains that education is only a proxy for social status and has no direct causal effect. Meanwhile, education has a relatively more significant effect on the number of voters than absolute education (Koçak, 2020; Lau et al., 2018; Su-Hie & Ahmad, 2018).

Another study concludes that there is a positive relationship between political knowledge and the actions of students who study it, especially for political science students. This research directly contradicts the theory of planned behavior, which assumes that knowledge does not correlate with behavior. Also, the study concludes that students who study political science are more affected in their political behavior than law and communication students (Dominguez et al., 2017).

Dominguez et al. examines the connection of political sciences majors to the interests of political competition among the students. The research is based on the hypothesis that students majoring in political sciences have superior interest in political competition than others and stronger willingness to engage in political action than other groups who have not yet studied the field. Through a study of 1,083 scholars at two different universities (Layola Marymount University and San Diego), Dominguez et al. find that more senior political science students have higher interests than new student groups and are more willing to join organized groups (Porter, 2020).

From some previous studies, it is concluded that general political knowledge has a positive relation with the political involvement. The students majoring in political sciences conclude that they were more interested in political matters than those who are from the same field.

The Indonesian Public Islamic Universities in Indonesia is a chain university with some distinguishes among them. It is estimated that there are visible differences between students who study political sciences, law, and communication in relation to their attitudes and interests towards politics. A research need to pinpoint these claimed differences to portray the actual data in regards of the civil implications of political knowledge among students of diverse disciplinary backgrounds.

This paper contributes to shorten the current research gap about political behaviors in the society in which knowledge is often considered as the dominant determinant of the attitudes and behaviors of the highly educated. However, even when Muslim students study political knowledge and master it, knowledge still cannot determine their political attitudes and behaviors. Other factors determine the attitudes and behaviors among highly educated Muslims, such as religious doctrines. This paper confirms the validity of the planned behavior theory which states that it is not knowledge but subject norms which influence an individual's behaviors.

This paper also identifies the struggle Muslim students face in evaluating political issues objectively because of their belief bias, such as in responding towards democracy issues (Bhat, 2019; Silalahi & Yuwono, 2018). Muslim students neither understand democracy objectively nor use the parameter of political knowledge in evaluating democracy. Instead, they use religious doctrines. This paper aids politicians and researchers in understanding the reason why political identities among Muslim society are strengthening, namely because knowledge is not more dominant than religious doctrines.

### **Research Questions**

Based on the background study, four research questions were developed to guide the research process, they are:

- 1) How is participation in political science perceived by the lecturer to see the role of educated muslim in political involvement?
- 2) How are political issues and religious doctrine perceived to view the role of educated muslim in political involvement?
- 3) How is the role of political science for life perceived to see the educated muslim in political involvement?
- 4) How is sensitivity to political development perceived to see the role of educated muslim in political involvement?

### **Methods**

#### **Design**

This study used a descriptive design to which quantitative approach is applied to analyze the data. The purpose of this study is to see level of perception on political knowledge and behavior of educated Muslims in politic involvement. As a survey design, this study performs the perceptions in terms of the rate percentage to show the tendency of the respondents in the political evidences.

This study took place in UIN Bandung, UIN Jakarta, and UIN Yogyakarta, for six months, from February to July 2020 (during one active lecture interval in the Indonesian education calendar).

### Sample

The sample population of this research were 1440 students from Political Sciences, Law, and Communication Sciences departments at Islamic state universities in Bandung, Jakarta, and Yogyakarta in the academic year of 2018/2019. The random sampling technique determined the research sample. The random sampling technique is a method of collecting samples randomly without considering the levels within the population (Sugiyono, 2017).

The respondents have similar characteristics that they are all students educated and trained at state Islamic universities. The political science curriculum at all state Islamic universities in Indonesia have similar content because they are all managed by the same ministry, namely the Ministry of Religion Affairs (MORA).

Therefore, this research determined the sample by calculating the number of population and then determining the samples randomly from the population (Baidi, 2019). The calculation used Isaac and Michael's table and the result based on the population of 1440 students, with the error rate below 1%, determined 450 students as the number of samples.

**Table 1**

*Distribution of Sample Members*

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	230	51,1
	Female	225	49,9
	Sum :	450	100
University	UIN Bandung	169	37,5
	UIN Jakarta	138	30,8
	UIN Yogyakarta	143	31,7
	Sum:	450	100
Department	Political Science	175	38,2
	Law Science	112	24,6
	Communication Science	163	36,2
	Sum :	450	100

Regarding the gender variable, the frequency for males was 230 with a percentage of 51.1%, while the frequency for females was 225 with a percentage of 49.9%. Regarding university variables, the frequency of UIN Bandung 169 with a percentage of 37,5%, the frequency of UIN Jakarta 138 with a percentage of 30,8%, and the frequency of UIN Yogyakarta 143 with a percentage 31,7%. Regarding department variables, the frequency of political science is 175 with a percentage of

38.2%, the frequency of law science is 112 with a percentage of 24.6%, and the frequency of communication science is 163 with a percentage of 36.2%.

### **Instrument**

The instrument of this study is a survey questionnaire, which is a written questionnaire in the form of a question or statement that gives respondents the freedom to provide answers and opinions according to their wishes. There are three forms of research questionnaire, namely an open, closed, and semi-open questionnaire. For each questionnaire, five-question items were made multiple. The questionnaire mentioned the profile of the respondents and instructions for filling in. The technique of measuring data through this questionnaire uses a Likert scale (appear in table 2). The Likert scale is used to measure the attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of a person or group of people about a social phenomenon (Sugiyono, 2017).

**Table 2**  
*Score Table*

Statements	Score	
	Positive (+)	Negative (-)
Always	5	1
Often	4	2
Sometimes	3	3
Almost never	2	4
Never	1	5

### **Data Collection Techniques**

To collect the research questionnaire, the researcher did this through the respondents' WhatsApp groups, which had been previously formed and used to send out research questionnaires. This data collection was carried out for fifteen days. Six days for collection at UIN Jakarta, six days for collection at UIN Yogyakarta, while at UIN Bandung it is held for five days. At UIN Jakarta and Yogyakarta, researchers appointed volunteers from the lecturers of the two universities to distribute and collect questionnaires again. Meanwhile, at UIN Bandung, researchers directly coordinated sending and returning questionnaires. All respondents sent back the questionnaire that was sent, even though not all respondents filled in the answers in the questionnaire, namely two respondents from UIN Yogyakarta who did not fill in the answers.

### **Data analysis techniques**

This research used descriptive statistics to describe the basic features of the data in a study. Furthermore, the questionnaire received by the researcher was sorted based on university data,

study program, and gender. In particular, the answer data collected from the questionnaire was tabulated for percentage based on each question for description and conclusion. In tabulating, linear statistical analysis was not used but used descriptive statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics allow a researcher to quantify and describe the basic characteristics of a data set. As such, descriptive statistics serve as a starting point for data analysis, allowing researchers to organize, simplify, and summarize data. A crosstab or two-way tabulation is used in this research. It shows the proportions of units with distinct values for each of two variables, or cell proportions that represented the characteristic of respondents in Muslim students' political knowledge, Muslim students' political attitudes and behaviors.

## Results and Discussion

### Participation in Political Science Lectures

Participation on politic by lecturers appear in table 3. The table suggests that participation of the lecturer in political science is 100%, law sciences 63%, and communication sciences 72%.

**Table 3**

#### *Lecture Participation*

Number	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Political Sciences	175	100
2	Law Sciences	70	63
3	Communication Sciences	117	72
<b>Sum :</b>		<b>362</b>	<b>80,4</b>

In majority, respondents in this study attend political science lectures, both students of political science, law, and communication science students. Significant data was found among respondents from UIN Jakarta: the lecture participation of communication students was higher than that of the law students. The results of the poll showed that 72% of communication students attended political sciences lectures, while the respondents surveyed from among law students were below that of the communication sciences students, which was 63%. The result shows that the law students consider political science as inconsistent with reality, namely political irregularities. Some respondents of law students see some ironies in political science, so it affects their involvement in attending political science lectures.

The same trend occurs among UIN Bandung's Law Sciences students, only 24% of respondents who attended political science lectures. It differs significantly from communication students who all take political science lecture. This is similar as the participation of the law students in UIN

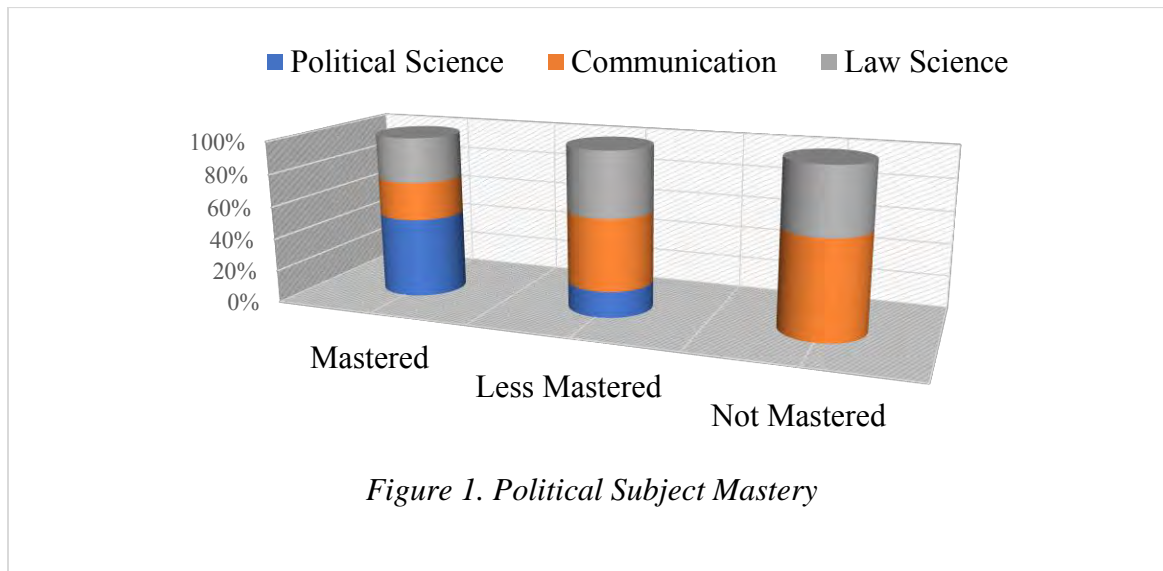


Yogyakarta, whose rate is even lower than that from UIN Bandung. This result shows a very low level of interest in political science among Law Science students.

Meanwhile, communication students have a higher percentage than those from law students, because they view politics from the viewpoint of communication, so political activities are considered as communication engagements (Gemeda & Lee, 2020; Papakyriakopoulos, et al., 2020; VanDyke & Lee, 2020). Students of Communication Studies view that political communication is the highest appeal of any kinds of public communication. The majority of respondents from the Communication Science students do not find any ironies in political science, because they do not see it in terms of normative necessity but rather in terms of the communication process in social reality (Danilov, 2020; Davis, 2020; Liu, et al., 2020; Mutmainnah & Afyanti, 2019).

The involvement of communication students in political lectures is not directly proportional to the mastery of political material. The mastery of communication students in the political science is lower than that of law students. It is estimated the subjects of legal science have bigger common area with political science than those of communication. Respondents from the communication sciences only master 5 political science subjects out of the 10 subjects in question, whereas law students master an average of 8 subjects from the 10 subjects in question.

It is different from what is collected from among students of Political Science at UIN Bandung and UIN Jakarta. All respondents state that they are involved in political science lectures because political science is an inherent identity in their status and position as students of political science study programs. In terms of mastering the subject of political knowledge, the students of political sciences in average are able to show satisfactory responses to the 10 subjects of political science being asked. See Fig.1.



Source: The data from survey results as processed by the author

There is equitable mastery in terms of mastery of the subject of political science, namely in the subject of democracy. On average, the respondents know the theories related to democracy and related figures. Meanwhile, the subject of political science which the respondents show lower mastery is related to the themes of international relations. This finding portrays respondents who lack knowledge of international issues, such as diplomatic theories, political asylum, and several other international relations themes.

### **Political Issues and Religious Doctrine**

Several political issues are asked to respondents in three top-tier Public Islamic Universities in Indonesia. The issues raised in this study are those concerning the election of public leaders, democracy, the relationship between religion and the state, and legislature.

From many issues raised and asked, the issue of the relationship between religion and the state turns out to be the most appealing to respondents. Meanwhile, the issue of electing leaders ranks the most desirable political issues and followed by the issues of democracy and legislature, respectively.

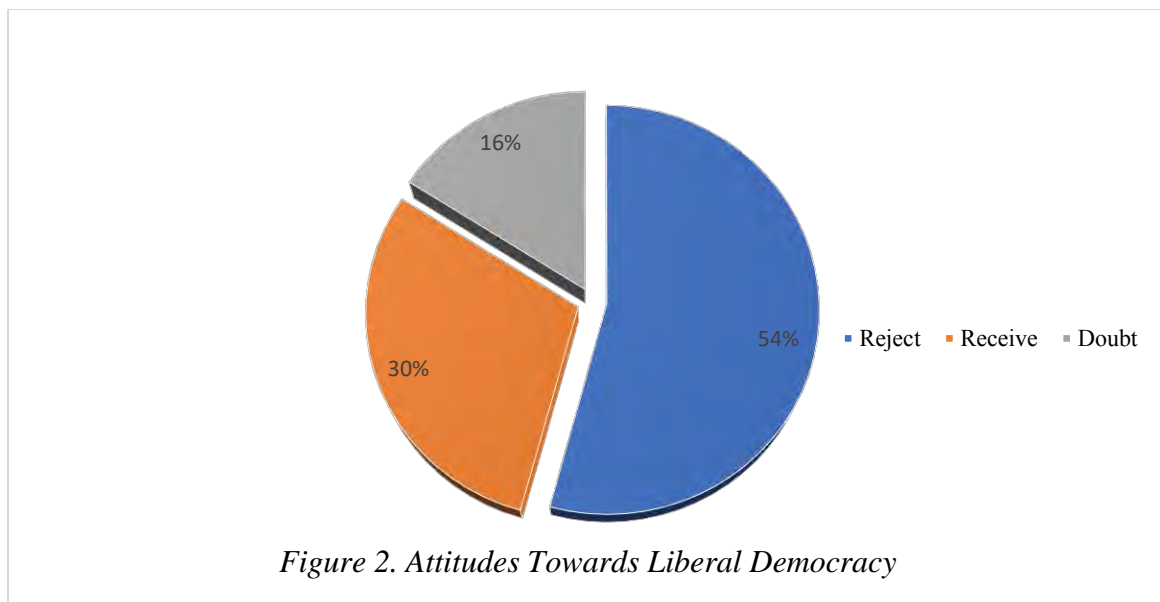
The respondents' preference to the issue of the relation between religion and state because is understandable as they are within the education system related to religion. Their inherent identity influences attitudes, perspectives, and interests in developing political issues. Out of the 30 respondents 24 (42%) show interest in the issue of religion and state relation, both in theory and

in practice. Meanwhile, the issue of democracy is not very attractive to the respondents as only 16% of them declare this (9 out of 30). Meanwhile, legislative issues, both as concepts and practices, are of the least interest, with only 6 (10%) people expressing their attraction.

The majority of respondents' high inclination to the relation between religion and the state is a symptom that religious issues are still susceptible among students and also in society in general. Not just in developing countries, modern countries that have more advanced religious matters are still a sensitive issues and are of a major concern (Kwok, et al., 2020; Masuda & Yudistira., 2020; Singh, 2020).

Although the role of religion is drastically declining in modern society, especially certain countries in West Europa, the issue of its relationship with the state remained a concern of the general people. In Sweden, for example, even though religion has lost a remarkable function in the society, the religion-state issues remains the concern of the people (Shukri & Hossain, 2017). As for Turkey, religious and state discourses has not similarly decline from that of the classical Turkish era (Noble, 2016).

The respondents, on the other hand, show no particular concern and do not highly rate democracy issues. They have more preference to elections. This issue is a signal of some cultural and intellectual barriers among respondents specifically and UIN students in regards of understanding democracy. It indicates that democracy as a whole still faces obstacles among students. The results of discussions in the focus group discussion with the respondents reveal their ambiguities in accepting democracy acceptance, especially the so-called liberal democracy. The majority of respondents refuse to accept the latter term. See Fig.2.



Source: The data were processed by authors based on survey results

Probed with follow-up questions, the majority of the respondents state that it is in contrary to their religious teachings; other respondents answer that they oppose to Indonesia's state ideology (the *Pancasila*). The religious background for the refusal is very high, as much as half of the number of respondents engaged. This data shows that there are still obstacles to the harmonization of religion and democracy within the society, so the assumption that religion and democracy can coexist only in certain aspects, but not in every aspect of social life, as predicted by several researchers (Addai-Mununkum, 2019; Hassell et al., 2019; Lăzăroiu, 2018; Ogland & Bartkowski, 2014).

In general, religion and democracy have some barriers to coexist because there are values that cannot be compromised. Religion teaches that humans are limited beings, while democracy highlights that humans are free beings. Of course, there is a clash of principles, as understood by the majority of the respondents in this study.

The acceptance rate liberal democracy differs among the students. Respondents from Political Science show higher acceptance than those from Communication and Law. In the other hand, the data shows also that the respondents from Law Sciences students have lesser acceptance than the Communication Sciences students do.

Based on the data as presented above, it is argued that political sciences students are more easily to develop liberal thinking than their counterpart from law department. Meanwhile, the potential

of developing liberal thinking has even lesser room for communication studies students. However, this data cannot portray whether liberal thoughts will conform to socially liberal attitudes because it is not certain that people who have liberal thinking have corresponding liberal attitudes and actions (Ilc, 2017).

The percentage of rejection of liberal democracy spreads evenly among students of three different majors from three different universities. The number is pretty much similar at around 30%. This percentage is a snapshot of the typology of students' refusal against liberal democracy at the State Islamic Universities.

### **The Role of Political Science for Life**

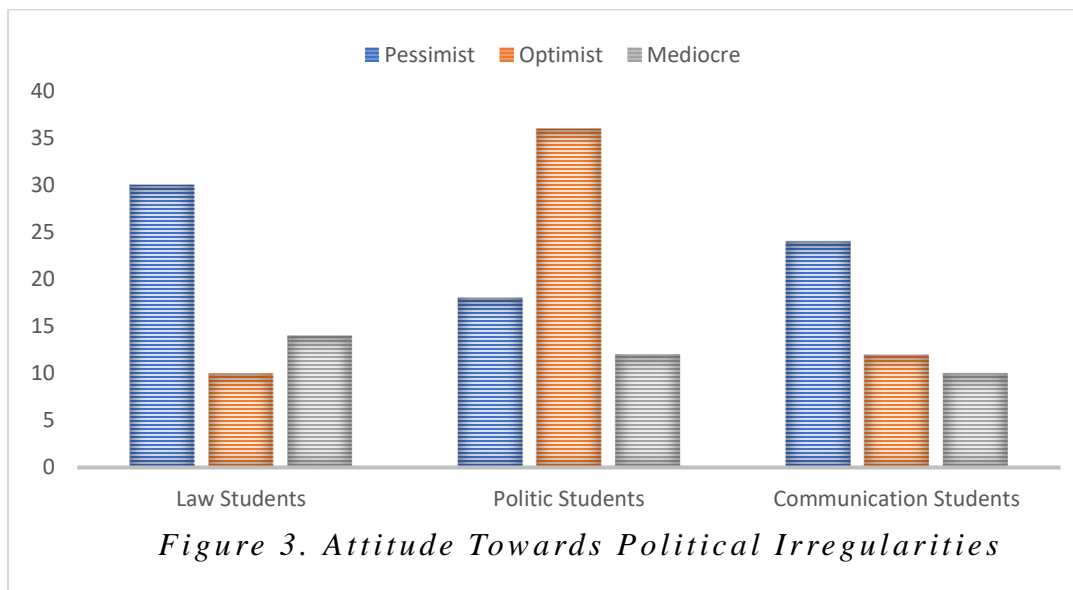
Some research results report that in general, people view politics positively because they view it as a noble knowledge. Politics is inherently valuable, because it contains teachings about good governance and management of power, but extrinsically politics can be worthless. Several political factors and phenomena cause negative perceptions of politics. People take some poor socio-political instances as negative precedence of their view on politics, not based on the inherent nature of politics (Ceresola, 2016).

Based on the results of a poll distributed to students of Political Science, Legal Studies, and Communication Studies at three State Islamic Universities (Bandung, Jakarta, and Yogyakarta), it shows that negative views on politics reached 10%. Also, those who are unclear stance or are doubtful of politics reach 27%. Meanwhile, 63% of respondents perceive politics positively. Respondents consider that politics is essential, as much as other social supra-structures.

The highest percentage of positive views is from Political Science students, while the lowest is from Law Science students. Law students have more negative perception on politics due to the phenomenon of irregularities in political activities. Law students are less critical of political irregularities, while Political students are more tolerant of the phenomena. Likewise, students of Communication Studies are more tolerant of political deviations than Law students are.

Negative attitudes towards politics cause social effects towards politics. However, some respondents associate their negative views with religious doctrines taught by authoritative scholars who state that politics is the source of evil. Meanwhile, a minority of respondents correlated their views with their lack of understanding of the nature of politics.

Negative perceptions of politics that are based on religion have a relation with Muhammad Abduh's view which states that all political content is bad (El-Thalaqani, 2020). Negative views also come from the reality of political irregularities, and it is caused by the people's lack of knowledge of politicians' irregularities, either in the form of corruption or other irregularities. The findings show that the respondents, with various reasons, pessimistically look the behavior of politicians. Law students are more pessimistic than Politics and Communication students. See Fig.3.



Source: The data were processed by authors based on survey results

Based on the data in the picture above, it appears that in general, respondents show a pessimistic attitude towards political irregularities. They consider that the general politicians are corrupt, hence their negative views on politics and on other matters related to politics.

The findings show that the majority of respondents' views on the role of politics in life are connected to the socio-political facts. Objectively they view that politics has utility for the human beings. However, upon witnessing massive political irregularities on media or by their own eyes, their objectivity changes through time.

### **Sensitivity to Political Development**

Political students have a high level of sensitivity compared to Law and Communication students. Even so, the percentage of those who are less sensitive to political developments is quite significant, reaching 31% of the total respondents surveyed.

As for the respondents from the Legal Sciences, 55% rarely followed the political events, 43% always followed, and as many as 2% had never followed. This data shows that respondents from the Law Sciences do not know factual political events too well, so it influences their literacy on political issues. Predictably, on the contrary, sensitivity to political development is stronger among Communication Science respondents compared to Law Science students, even though the percentage difference is only 3% adrift. As many as 48% of respondents from the Communication Sciences always follow the political developments while 52% of them say only rarely.

In regards of the most frequently followed political development material, students respond in a variety of ways. The majority of respondents answer with political parties, followed with government cabinet change, freedom of the press in political coverage, and dynamics in the legislature. In regards of political parties, respondents' highest interest is regarding the events of the general meeting, congress, and national meeting. Respondents believe that in those moments, political dynamics take place, despite the fact that those events are widely covered by the media.

The lowest sensitivity is on international political issues. Respondents' answers, in general, have never followed developments in international politics, except those regarding Palestine. They rarely observe the development and dynamics of contemporary international institutions.

Some international political instances that attract the respondents' to the attention, although in a very small number, are about trade wars between the United States and China. However, in terms of substance, the respondents do not understand what is really happening: tariff wars and import/export embargo of certain commodities to and from two countries at war (Silver, 2018). The respondent number who worry about the trade disputes between America and China is smaller those who are not worried and are not sure that it would bring major effects on the domestic economy. Meanwhile, the majority of respondents are unaware of the impact of the trade war, one of which is the instability of regional trade and the imbalance of international trade in the East Asia region (Park & Stangarone, 2019).

Respondents who state they are not worried about the effects of the war, which reached 33% pick their stand arguing that the war is far from where they live, that is in other countries. Meanwhile, the opposing group state that they hear from the media about the consequences that would arise from the war. Another group respond that they never know about the trade war between the two big countries, hence they do not know the implications of such conflict.

The proportion of the responses is distributed evenly among Law, Communication, and Political Science students at three universities. There are no significant data differences between respondents and tend to be similar. This data indicates that international political literacy is very low among respondents. Hence, it is crucial for special handling in that field, both in the lecture process and in the process of preparing the political science curriculum.

#### **a. Interest in Practical Politics**

There was a significant difference in the respondents' interest in practical politics. Some 33% of respondents from Communication Science students answered that they are interested in becoming politicians, 56% say they are not, and 11% said they do not know. Meanwhile, respondents from the Legal Sciences are less interested in becoming politicians than respondents from the Communication Sciences. The respondents from the Legal Sciences students who respond with interest is only 13%, while those who answer with no interest is 87%. The responses from the Political Science students are as much as 74% with interest, 12% with no interest, and 14% with not knowing.

When accumulated from the total respondents from the three universities, the respondents, Political Sciences students had a greater percentage than the other respondents. This percentage is related to their contact with more intensive political exposures than other respondents, thus forming their responses.

The students respond to a question on political jobs that they would like to take, including party officials, legislators, political volunteers, observers, government officials, NGO activities, political journalists, and political lecturers. Two professions, namely legislative members and government officials, get the most choice.

The political profession that is the least desirable by respondents is political volunteer, NGO activist and political teacher. Politics lecturers are more in demand by respondents from Political Science students, while it is of the lowest interest among the Law Science students.

The reason Law students are not really attracted to become political teachers is because of their negative perceptions of politics, as stated above. Meanwhile, the respondents of Communication Science are more in becoming politic teachers because it is part of communication activities. According to students of Communication Science, teaching knowledge is a process of



communication between communicators and communicants in delivering messages (Soukup, 2014).

The distribution of specialization tendencies in the practical political profession tends to be flat in the three State Islamic Universities. Even though there is a percentage difference, it is not significant. Even so, the data shows that there is a rather striking difference in the interests of Law students in Yogyakarta. The law students in Yogyakarta have a higher interest in becoming members of the legislature compared to law students in Bandung.

However, some respondents answer of more interest in becoming soldiers and entrepreneurs. The choice of the legal profession overrides the practical political jobs, as stated above. Meanwhile, respondent number from the Communication Sciences who have interest in practical politics are quite high because they do not have specific professional targets. Communication graduates have more various fields of job (Yeger, 2015). As a knowledge system inherent in various occupations, communication students do not attribute themselves to specific areas. They can implement their communication skills and theories in any activity, as long as it entails the process of sending messages (Lacayo, 2013). The results of this research also portrayed the views of Communication Science students who do not put too much emphasis on specific types and forms of work that they desire.

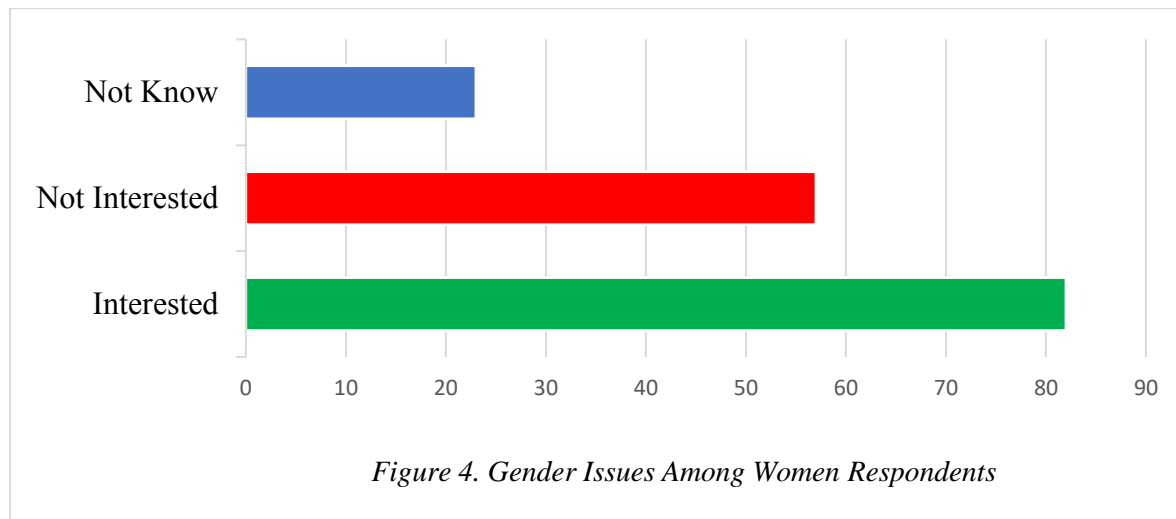
#### **b. The Intensity of Political Discussion**

Political discussion is not a very attractive activity among the whole groups of respondents. The percentage of those who occasionally engage themselves in discussion circles with their colleagues is not overwhelming, reaching only 35%. Meanwhile, 40% answer to rarely have discussions about politics, and 25% never.

Being asked about the four topics of political discussion, the majority respond that the religious and state relation topic is the most appealing, and followed by the country's future, democracy, and gender issues. The future of the country is among those discussed by a number of respondents because it concerns their future. Meanwhile, gender issues are the least attractive of a discussion for the respondents.

The respondents find that issues on gender are unattractive because for them, the issues are no longer crucial in Indonesia. Both sexes may access public activities, so it is considered as irrelevant to discuss. Several respondents from women answer that they are not interested in addressing

gender issues, because of their religious teachings that they consider is more important than gender issues. See Figure 4.



Source: The data taken from the survey as processed by the author

One of the questionnaire topics is about state female leadership. Respondents' answers vary between that it is legitimate, illegitimate and not knowing.

In general, the respondents agree (choosing “legitimate”) with women's leadership provided that they are more qualified than their counterparts. The reasons for the respondents varied in accepting and rejecting women as state leaders. Some respondents state that a woman is a legitimate leader of a country as an act of emergency when there is no sufficient man with comparable quality. Some respondents pick that it is “legitimate” because they believe in the freedom principle of democracy, in which all have equal access to public positions without gender restrictions.

Women's political leadership in Islamic constitutions is a legal theme with polarized standings. And in the last few decades, the movement to expand women's political rights, according to Gilia (2018), has become a symptom in many regions, especially countries that have culturally placed women in second-class positions in their social lives (Abbott et al., 2016). Culturally, women face barriers in many cultural systems to assume men's social roles (Cassese & Holman, 2016). In European countries, too, there are still cultural barriers that shape social barriers for women to take a dominant role in the political system (Tsyrendorzhiev & Bagaeva, 2016). The emergence of a gender revolution in the 1960s, together with the sexual revolution campaigned by feminists, is not strong enough to eradicate the cultural barriers of women's social roles, especially in a country

dominated by religious doctrine (Harahap, 2016). Even so, Indonesia made a breakthrough by providing affirmative measure for women through the Law Number 10 of 2008. The Law mandates that women are entitled with political opportunities by forcing political parties to allocate a minimum number of female candidates for the national and local elections.

Some respondents support the granting of political privileges to women, and others do not. The respondents' who disagree say that the political process is a competitive activity, without any gender restriction.

Based on the data processing and analysis, this study has distinctive aspects compared to the previous studies in the same field. Researchers argue that knowledge is closely related to the political attitude and behavior of the society. Most of the scholars believe that the respondents' political knowledge determine the development of their attitude and behavior in such a way that it also shapes their viewpoint on political issues. Earlier researchers always see the correlation of one particular knowledge gained by a learner and his/her action. It turns out that given certain circumstances, there are predetermining factors that shape their actions other than knowledge, even though they formally achieve or actively seek that particular knowledge. Hence, this research differs in that conclusion. This study finds that political knowledge gained by the Muslims students through formal education does not give significant impacts to their political behavior. Most of them are disinterested in political discussion, and even when they are involved in such discourses, they tend to respond to political issues within the frame of their pre-knowledge, i.e. religious doctrines.

The research urges some reconsiderations of the political learning in the Muslim society. There are two changes that political sciences administrators should address: first, there should be some measures to review if there are ineffective learning process within the study program, and two, there should be a review on the learning content within the curriculum. The learning process and content should give impact to the learning subjects' behavior. If it doesn't occur, then some other determinants shape their political choices and it is safely concluded that the education has failed in changing pre-existing negative knowledge.

In terms of the learning content, it is consequentially suggested there should be an integration of political and Islamic science for the Muslim learners. Muslims tend to view political instances within two-fold dimensions: doctrine and knowledge. They need to be able to discriminate the religious aspects of politics and otherwise. Therefore, the integrated religious learning in this

particular Muslims society is a must to train the learners how to separate religious prejudice from scientific measures.

### Conclusion

This research conducted a study on the influence of political knowledge toward the political attitudes and behaviors of Muslim students in three Islamic state universities in Indonesia. The result shows that (1) in general, Muslim students have studied and mastered political knowledge, (2) their attitudes on political issues are not based on their knowledge, but on a subjective norm, namely religious doctrines, (3) their political knowledge does not influence them to practice politics, (4) their political knowledge does not influence their sensitivity toward political issues and developments. Muslim students view the role of political knowledge as positive for their life, but their political knowledge does not motivate them to discuss political themes. In conclusion, the proposed research hypothesis is accepted, in which there is no correlation between the respondents' political knowledge and their political attitudes and behaviors.

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