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## THE ROLE OF POLITICAL PROTESTS IN SHAPING TERTIARY-LEVEL STUDENTS' POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION IN ACADEMIA

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**Maroof Ahmed**

M.Phil. Scholar,  
Faculty of Education, Indonesian International Islamic University,  
Depok, Indonesia.  
Email: [maroof.ahmed@uiii.ac.id](mailto:maroof.ahmed@uiii.ac.id)

**Amanullah Zarawar**

M.Phil. Scholar,  
Faculty of Social Science, Indonesian International Islamic University,  
Depok, Indonesia.  
Email: [aman.ullah@uiii.ac.id](mailto:aman.ullah@uiii.ac.id)

**Hamad Shoukat**

M.Phil. Scholar,  
Faculty of Social Science, Indonesian International Islamic University,  
Depok, Indonesia.  
Email: [hamad.shoukat@uiii.ac.id](mailto:hamad.shoukat@uiii.ac.id)

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**ABSTRACT**

*The influence exerted during political protests led by Pakistani political parties extends towards academia within Pakistan. Using Political Socialization Theory as a theoretical framework, this study was conducted in order to comprehend the immediate and long-term implications of these protests on education in the country. Following thematic analysis through qualitative research approach that involved conducting interviews with students from various academic institutions, the study uncovered prevailing themes surrounding the impact of political protests on academia. The findings demonstrated that these protests disrupt academic schedules, hamper students' performance and give rise to psychological stress and anxiety. Furthermore, experiences with political unrest potentially influenced career path choices, underscoring the theory's premise of political experiences impacting life decisions. These protests also contributed towards heightened political awareness and engagement among students and fostered resilience and adaptability. The study highlighted the need for comprehensive policies, a supportive environment and balanced political socialization, stressing the importance of educational continuity and mental health support within academic institutions amid political unrest. It called for a holistic approach to policy formulation and implementation that considers the*

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*diverse outcomes of political protests. The study contributed to a better understanding of the intersection between politics and education in Pakistan by demonstrating the applicability of Political Socialization Theory in this context and provided insights for policymakers and educators to mitigate the adverse effects and leverage the potential benefits of political protests on academia.*

### **KEYWORDS**

*Political protests, political socialization, academic schedules, student performance, mental health*

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the dynamic theater of societal and political events, the functioning and productivity of a country's institutions often find themselves caught in the crossfire (Pabst, 2021). Educational institutions are among the most vulnerable in this respect. Particularly, Pakistan frequently plays host to myriad political protests and demonstrations, instigated primarily by its numerous political factions (Siddique, 2023). The culture of political protests in Pakistan is as old as the country itself, having taken root in its political narrative since its birth in 1947. From expressing dissent to triggering political reform, protests have been a preferred tool of political parties (Ullah et al., 2020). However, the ripple effects of these protests infiltrate beyond the political arena, significantly impacting the daily lives of citizens and notably, the educational sector. Evidence points towards the tangible repercussions of these protests on Pakistan's academic institutions and students' educational journeys. A poignant example is the country-wide upheaval following the arrest of former Prime Minister Imran Khan in May 2023. Schools, colleges, and universities had to shutter their doors amidst large-scale protests, which invariably led to the postponement of exams and a disruption in the academic timetable (Areej T, 2023).

Such disruptions, depending on their duration, can severely delay syllabi completion, extend the academic calendar, and negatively affect students' learning opportunities. As classes stand suspended, students miss out on crucial learning experiences. When classes resume, the quality of education suffers due to the haste to complete the syllabus, and students often miss out on vital co-curricular activities integral to their all-round development (Areej T, 2023). Furthermore, political protests can also wreak havoc on physical infrastructure, including academic buildings. Institutions situated at the heart of these protests often bear the brunt of damage, which can take considerable time to rectify. Such situations can lead to significant economic implications, causing job and income losses, and consequently, a reduction in educational funding, scholarships, and other financial aid (Areej T, 2023).

Historical accounts bear testimony to the severe disruptions that political protests can cause in Pakistan's academic calendar. Protests like those orchestrated by the Pashtun

Tahafuz Movement (PTM) in 2019, or the long march and sit-in by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in Islamabad in 2014, resulted in lengthy academic standstills (Areej T, 2023). The education sector forms the bedrock in the grand scheme of national development and prosperity. For a developing nation like Pakistan, with a population exceeding 200 million, the importance of education in shaping its trajectory cannot be overstated (UNESCO, 2020). However, this sector has perennially been affected by underinvestment, with political instability exacerbating the issues (World Bank, 2021). The analysis of the impact of political protests on Pakistan's education system necessitates a comprehensive exploration. It is essential to recognize that academic institutions serve as the foundation for intellectual growth and societal advancement. Constant political unrest disrupts academic timelines, impedes access to education, and instills an atmosphere of uncertainty, potentially affecting students' mental health and academic performance (Sriyakul & Jermsittiparsert, 2020).

However, the impacts of protests are multi-faceted. These expressions of societal grievances and calls for reform might usher in advantages, such as enhanced democratic practices, political awareness among students, and educational policy reforms. Thus, a thorough evaluation of the net impact of political protests, considering both immediate disruptions and potential benefits, is essential. In the light of these multifaceted impacts of protests, the importance of employing the Political Socialization Theory in this study becomes evident as the theory, deeply entrenched in the fields of political science and sociology, provides pivotal insights into the formation of individuals' political attitudes and identities (Sigel, 1970). The theory asserts that political orientations and behaviors are not inborn, but rather developed through an intricate process of learning and assimilation, which is significantly shaped by individuals' environments (Hyman, 1959). Various factors play an instrumental role in this process, including family, friends, media, educational institutions, and most notably, the wider socio-political context (Easton & Dennis, 1969).

The salience of Political Socialization Theory comes to light in the context of the current study as this theory offers a robust theoretical framework for scrutinizing how political protests shape students' political consciousness and engagement. As detailed in this study, frequent political protests are a salient feature of Pakistan's socio-political landscape (Mahmood et al., 2020). Inevitably, these protests permeate the academic environment, making them an integral part of students' lived experiences and playing a significant role in their political socialization (Lauglo, 2011).

Guided by the theory as a theoretical framework, the study endeavors to elucidate how encounters with and participation in political protests contribute to the political education of tertiary students. Stemming from this theory, a conceivable hypothesis is that frequent exposure to political protests could expedite students' political

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socialization, culminating in enhanced political consciousness and engagement (McDevitt & Chaffee, 2002). Moreover, this exposure could sculpt their political beliefs and attitudes, fostering a more profound understanding of democratic processes, civic responsibilities, and the power of collective action (Dalton, 2015). However, the influence of these protests might not always be beneficial. The Political Socialization Theory will also assist in delving into the potential adverse consequences of such exposure, such as engendering political cynicism, disillusionment, or intolerance towards differing viewpoints (Niemi & Hepburn, 1995). Therefore, the application of the Political Socialization Theory paved the way for a comprehensive and nuanced comprehension of how political protests impact tertiary level students in Pakistan, affecting not only their academic trajectories but also their political socialization process (Lauglo, 2011).

By integrating this theory, the study aims to broaden the understanding of the complex dynamics between politics and education. It has the potential to offer invaluable insights for policymakers, educators, and researchers alike, enabling them to recognize the potential of educational institutions as spaces for political learning and the role of broader socio-political phenomena, like protests, in shaping students' political identities and engagement (Torney-Purta et al., 2001).

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The intersection of political events and their impact on education has been a subject of several studies worldwide. However, the literature specifically focusing on the impact of political protests on academic institutions and education in Pakistan remains relatively scarce. This section attempts to provide an overview of the existing literature in this realm, the strengths and limitations therein, and how this study aims to address these gaps. Studies have shown that political instability, including protests, can have significant effects on education. For instance, Sriyakul and Jermstittiparsert, (2020) analyzed the impact of political instability on education across different Asian countries and found that political unrest can lead to a decrease in educational performance and attainment. Similarly, a study by Kahn (1997) underscored the potential for political instability to disrupt educational schedules and access to education. However, these studies were not specific to Pakistan, and the extent to which their findings are applicable to the unique socio-political context of Pakistan remains an area to explore.

Research specific to Pakistan's educational sector has largely focused on issues of access, quality, and investment. A study by the World Bank (2021) highlighted chronic underinvestment and issues in governance as major challenges in Pakistan's education sector. Ullah et al., (2020) in his historical analysis of political protests in Pakistan, briefly mentioned the potential of these protests to disrupt societal functions,

including education, but did not delve deeply into the implications for the education sector. Another study by Khan et al., (2021) examined the impact of political protests on students' academic performance and psychological well-being in Pakistan. They found that students who participated in political protests reported lower academic achievement, higher stress levels, and lower life satisfaction than those who did not. They also found that students' political orientation and perceived social support moderated these effects. This study provides empirical evidence of the negative consequences of political protests on students' education and mental health in Pakistan.

Moreover, in its report, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (2020) recorded instances where students, teachers, and educational institutions faced violence, harassment, intimidation during political protests. The violation of academic freedom, freedom of expression, and right to education took place due to several entities such as political parties, state authorities & extremist groups. The report contains recommendations on preventing these types of behavior so that political interference & violence do not endanger educational activities. Existing literature also shows potential benefits from engaging in political protests. One such study by Badaru and Adu (2021) demonstrated that political protests could foster greater political awareness and improved democratic practices among students. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that their findings were specific to South Africa, corresponding studies examining Pakistan are currently lacking.

Moreover, the concept of political socialization within the educational context has been explored to a certain extent in the literature. Dalton (2015) highlighted the role of educational institutions in fostering democratic values, civic responsibility, and political participation. Furthermore, a study by Lauglo (2011) found that political discussions at school have a significant impact on students' political engagement. However, these studies lack specificity in relation to the unique political and educational contexts of Pakistan, making their findings less directly applicable to this study's focus.

Regarding the impact of political protests, several authors have documented how these events may influence students' political learning and attitudes (Mahmood et al., 2020; Torney-Purta et al., 2001). Their work suggested that frequent exposure to political protests could promote political awareness and understanding of democratic practices. However, there is a dearth of research specifically studying the effects of political protests on students' political socialization in Pakistan.

Additionally, the potential downsides of political protests on students have been explored in the literature. McDevitt and Chaffee (2002) found that political cynicism

and disillusionment could be unintended consequences of exposure to such socio-political events. Meanwhile, Easton and Dennis (1969) noted that such experiences could foster intolerance for divergent views. Yet, these negative implications have been scarcely examined within the Pakistani context. This study will extend upon this literature by using Political Socialization Theory to investigate how political protests in Pakistan impact tertiary level students both academically and politically. It seeks to address existing limitations by conducting an in-depth analysis into how political protests led affect academic institutions and education throughout Pakistan. The main focus of this analysis encompasses examining not only immediate consequences but also long-lasting implications so that a comprehensive understanding can be cultivated regarding this critical matter. Therefore, the scientific merit of this paper lies primarily within its efforts of concentrating on one specific yet far-reaching aspect responsible for shaping societal dynamics within Pakistan - a factor that could potentially offer valuable suggestions for policymakers who govern Pakistan's educational sector.

Overall, although some valuable insights emerge from previous works; nonetheless significant gaps remain unaddressed in this area of study. A considerable void exists concerning inquiries into how political protests alter Pakistan's educational landscape explicitly - making current literature incomplete. Another concerning point regarding past investigations focuses solely on immediate disruptions during protests with little thought put towards long-term implications like changes to academic programs or increased student activism detrimental to learning environments nationwide. Lastly, substantial data-driven analyses, using Political Socialization Theory with a focus on the distinctive political protests dynamics within Pakistan and their specific effects on education in the country remain elusive.

### **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

1. Evaluating the immediate impact of political protests on academic institutions, focusing on disruptions to schedules, student performance, and student mental health.
2. Exploring potential ramifications of political protests on Pakistan's education sector, accounting for variables such as enhanced political awareness among students and potential policy reforms.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. How do political protests directly impact the tertiary level students' and their academic progress in Pakistan?
2. What are the potential long-term benefits or drawbacks of these political protests on the education sector?
3. How do these protests shape the political socialization of the tertiary level students and the overall academic and political landscape of the country?

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## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study used a qualitative research approach followed by thematic analysis using MAXQDA, a computer-assisted qualitative and mixed methods data analysis software, within the framework of Political Socialization Theory aimed at understanding the impact of political protests on tertiary level students and their academic progress in Pakistan. This approach allowed for an in-depth exploration that captured complex experiences and perspectives regarding political protests in the country under the lenses of the theory used.

### **Data Collection**

The researcher gathered data through interviews, conducted in Sindhi and Urdu languages, with a total number of fifteen tertiary level students from various academic institutions across the four provinces in Pakistan utilizing the convenience sampling of the nonprobability sampling method. According to Creswell (2014), nonprobability sampling methods such as convenience sampling involve selecting participants who are easily accessible and willing to take part in the study. The sample comprised of both male and female students. Ten students were male whereas five students were female. The interviews offer a flexible framework, allowing the exploration of predetermined themes while also providing room for participants to express their views and experiences freely (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The researcher designed an interview guide which consisted of questions designed to explore the direct impact of political protests on the students' educational experiences, their perception of the long-term effects of these protests on their education, and the influence of political protests on their political awareness and participation.

### **Data Analysis**

The data obtained from interviews were analyzed utilizing thematic analysis within the framework of Political Socialization Theory using MAXQDA application. Thematic analysis serves as a valuable qualitative methodology applied towards identifying key patterns and recurring themes within the data. The process of thematic analysis undergoes familiarization with the data alongside generating initial codes within a search for themes, reviewing, defining, and naming them and finally producing the final report (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

After translating and transcribing the interviews into English, a thorough reading was conducted by the researcher to gain familiarity with the data. Initial codes were established based on interesting features of the data that pertained to the research questions. These codes went on to form potential themes which underwent a rigorous reviewing process for coherence and accuracy. The themes were then refined, defined, and named. Throughout the data analysis process, the researcher remained aware of

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the Political Socialization framework, using it as a lens to interpret and understand the data.

The above approach allowed for a detailed and nuanced understanding of the perspectives from those directly impacted by political protests - students themselves. Ultimately leading towards invaluable insights surrounding intersections between politics and education within Pakistani society.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Throughout the course of this study rigorous ethical guidelines were upheld. Every participant received clear explanations about what would be expected from them during interviews ahead of time with informed consent being obtained prior to the interviews. Measures were taken throughout every step of this process so as to ensure complete confidentiality and anonymity for each individual who participated; any personally identifiable information was excluded from the final reports, and participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

A crucial part of any research study is the results section since it showcases what researcher have discovered via their data (Creswell, 2014). In this study, the researcher gained below themes after analyzing the data through the lens of Political Socialization Theory as the guiding analytical framework. Applying the Political Socialization Theory across these themes gave valuable insights in understanding the intricate and multidimensional impacts of political protests on students. It underscored the importance of acknowledging these effects and striving for a balanced approach to political socialization that emphasizes both political awareness and the well-being of students' academics and psychology.

#### **Disruption to Academic Progress**

The theme that stood out most prominently from the interviews was the significant disruption to the students' academic progress due to political protests. Numerous participants reported that they had faced recurrent school closures and postponement of academic schedules during periods of intensified political protests. These disruptions invariably led to gaps in their academic timelines, often resulting in academic backlogs.

One participant vividly described his experience, stating, "It was an ongoing struggle to keep pace with our lessons and assignments during the protests. We missed numerous university days, and playing catch-up was an uphill task" (Participant 4). The initial theme supports the evidence found in Sriyakul and Jermsittiparsert, (2020) who found that political protests can lead to decreases in academic performance. The

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finding confirms that students' academic timelines were substantially disturbed due to the protests. This affirms the suggestion in the Political Socialization Theory that external political events have a direct impact on individuals' lives (Wikipedia, 2023), notably their educational progression in the context of this study. In essence, students, through their political socialization, are confronted with a complex reality where political events can profoundly impact their academic routines and progress.

However, it is vital to note that these disruptions were not uniform across all regions and institutions in Pakistan, indicating a need for more localized studies to understand the varying degrees of impact across different academic settings.

### **Psychosocial Impact**

Another significant revelation from the interviews was the psychological stress and anxiety experienced by the students during periods of political unrest. Many participants shared sentiments of uncertainty and concern about their educational future, which was continuously under threat due to the constant disruptions. For instance, one student noted, "The relentless disruptions and the cloud of uncertainty hovering over us made me extremely anxious. The constant worry about my academic standing and the potential repercussions of these protests on my future was always on my mind" (Participant 7).

The second theme, which corroborates the Political Socialization Theory that individuals' emotional states are connected to their political environment (Neundorf & Smets, 2015), resonates with the findings of Khan et al., (2021), who demonstrated a link between participation in political protests and negative psychological outcomes, such as substantial psychological stress and anxiety, primarily driven by the uncertainty and unpredictability associated with periods of political instability, that students reported to influence not only their academic lives but also their psychological welfare.

### **Political Awareness and Engagement**

The data revealed a positive outcome as well, despite the various challenges posed by political protests, as a considerable number of students reported that the political unrest had led to increased political awareness and engagement among them, which sparked discussions about politics, democracy, and civic rights within the academic settings, leading to a more politically conscious student body.

As one student stated, "The political turmoil made us more conscious of the political landscape of our country and prompted us to engage in deeper discussions on these issues in class; thus, we became more participative in political debates" (Participant 10). This theme, which mirrors the primary premise of the Political Socialization

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Theory that one's political environment fosters political knowledge and engagement (Owen, 2017), offers a more promising perspective on political socialization, as Badaru and Adu's study (2021) also corroborates these findings, suggesting that political unrest facilitated an increase in political consciousness and engagement among students, which points to active political socialization in the midst of political protests, despite the disruptions and psychological impact.

### **Long-term Educational Outcomes**

When it came to the long-term effects of political protests on their education, the students' views were mixed as some participants felt that the frequent disruptions had a detrimental impact on their academic progress and future prospects, whereas others believed that the experiences had instilled a sense of resilience in them. As one student expressed, "the disruptions were a hurdle, but I believe it made us more robust. We learned to adapt and manage our studies even in the face of adversity" (Participant 12).

This theme reflects diverse responses, mirroring the varied outcomes of Political Socialization, described by Hyman (1959) and Lauglo (2011) such as the disruptions, caused by the political protests, which has negative effects on students' academic prospects, indicating the negative repercussions of political socialization to the intricate process of learning and assimilation shaped by individuals' environments.

### **Influences on Career Choices**

A less studied but equally significant long-term outcome was the possibility of these experiences influencing students' career choices. Some participants expressed that the political climate and the disruptions it caused had made them rethink their career paths. As one student shared, "The whole situation made me think about how I could contribute to making things better. I'm now considering a career in public policy" (Participant 14).

In this theme, the Political Socialization Theory elucidates how political unrest might shape students' future decisions. Students' reported inclination to alter their career paths in response to the political climate which echoes the theory's premise that political experiences significantly impact individuals' life choices (Easton & Dennis, 1969). While this area is still underexplored, it signals a potential shift in career trends due to the political climate, warranting further investigation as that of Siddiky and Akter's study (2021).

### **The Role of Educational Institutions**

Building on the lessons from these findings, it is also important to note the role of educational institutions and educators in navigating these challenges. The data suggests that schools and universities have a significant role in not only managing

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disruptions but also in facilitating discussions about political events. They are uniquely positioned to foster political awareness and engagement among students, turning these challenging circumstances into learning opportunities. One participant stated, “Our teachers played a crucial role during those times. They not only helped us catch up with the curriculum but also facilitated open discussions about the protests and their implications” (Participant 3).

This subsequent theme strengthens the application of the Political Socialization Theory as participants underlined the pivotal role that educational institutions and educators played during these periods by managing disruptions, facilitating political discussions, and providing psychological support. This observation supports the Political Socialization Theory (McDevitt & Chaffee, 2002; Dalton, 2015) highlighting the significance of these institutions in mediating the effects of political socialization. In addition, it ensures the continuity of education, fostering an environment of open dialogue and critical thinking as pointed out in the study conducted at Al Ain University (2021).

### **Mental Health Support**

Moreover, the study highlights the importance of mental health support within academic institutions. The finding uncovers that political protests can generate significant psychological stress on students, indicating the necessity for educational institutions to have sufficient mental health support programs in operation. These could include counseling services, stress management workshops, and mental health awareness programs to help students cope with the stress and uncertainty caused by political unrest. The availability of such resources could significantly mitigate the psychological impact of these events on students. However, merely having these services is not enough. Schools and universities should actively promote these resources and encourage students to utilize them.

As one student shared, “We did have a counselor in our university, but I didn't feel comfortable going there. I think more needs to be done to make students aware that it's okay to seek help when you're feeling anxious or stressed” (Participant 2).

According to the Political Socialization Theory, institutions play a significant role in imparting knowledge about politics and shaping students' attitudes and beliefs (Hyman, 1959), this finding aligns with this notion of political socialization that institutions are influential in shaping political socialization processes. However, when political protests take place, institutions do not just impact students' understanding of politics; they also stress and impact their mental health (Khan et al., 2021). Consequently, universities should not just be a place where students learn about politics, they also need to help students cope with the emotional rollercoaster that can come with political unrest as offering mental health support can help students handle

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these stresses and navigate the political landscape more confidently (Dalton, 2015). Thus, learning about politics and looking after mental health go hand in hand which eventually points to a need for cultivating a supportive and accepting environment in educational institutions where mental health is prioritized and openly discussed similar to the suggestion by Barrable et al., (2018) in their study.

While the results of this study, revealed under the lenses of the Political Socialization Theory, corroborated the findings of previous studies in some aspects, they also revealed new dimensions of the problem, such as the potential influence on students' career choice. Additionally, the study has its limitations, given that it is qualitative and dependent on the perceptions and experiences of a limited number of participants. The experiences shared by the participants may not be generalizable to all students across Pakistan; however, the insights derived offer a starting point for more extensive, perhaps quantitative, research on the subject.

Grounded in the Political Socialization Theory, the study revealed a multifaceted impact of political protests on students' education in Pakistan, encompassing disrupted academic progress, psychological stress, enhanced political awareness, varying long-term educational outcomes, and potential influences on career trajectories; while these impacts presented substantial challenges, they also provided opportunities for developing resilience, political consciousness, and career reevaluation. The role of educational institutions and mental health support systems emerged as pivotal in these contexts, facilitating learning opportunities and fostering an environment of openness and support. Despite the limitations of the study, it offered valuable insights and a springboard for further investigation into this relatively unexplored area. It underscored the necessity of inclusive and comprehensive policy-making, considering the diversity of impacts to mitigate adverse effects and harness potential benefits. Hence, even amidst disruption, political unrest can contribute to the formation of a resilient and politically aware generation, provided it is addressed with informed, compassionate, and comprehensive strategies.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The application of Political Socialization Theory in this study suggested that political protests affect not only the academic outcomes but also students' psychological and socio-political engagement. Therefore, this study called for more comprehensive policies and practices in educational institutions that can address these diverse aspects and support students in coping with the challenges and opportunities posed by political protests.

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**Need for Comprehensive Policies in Education**

In line with the Political Socialization Theory, the study emphasized the necessity for educational institutions to devise robust policies addressing the academic, psychological, and socio-political experiences of students during political unrest since such policies would be crucial in ensuring that the education sector remains adaptable and resilient in the face of political turbulence.

**The Multifaceted Impact of Political Protests**

Using Political Socialization Theory helped to interpret the impacts of political protests on academic institutions in Pakistan which are multifaceted and far-reaching, posing significant challenges and presenting opportunities for fostering political awareness, resilience, and adaptability among students that highlight the need for a more nuanced understanding of these impacts while taking the diverse experiences and perspectives of students into account.

**Policy Interventions and Institutional Practices**

With an issue as complex as this, there are no easy solutions; however, a multi-pronged approach, as informed through the Political Socialization Theory analysis, that includes policy interventions, institutional practices, and research initiatives can pave the way forward; therefore, it is also crucial to foster a culture of dialogue and engagement, where students' voices and experiences are heard and considered in decision-making processes, such an approach can not only help mitigate the adverse effects of political protests on education but also harness their potential benefits, contributing to the development of a resilient and politically conscious generation; in addition to this, the diverse perspectives gained via this study underscore the complexity of the issue at hand, emphasizing that the impact of political protests on education cannot be measured solely in terms of academic performance and progression. The findings suggest the need for a more holistic approach in policy formulation and implementation that caters to these diverse outcomes. Overall, the complex relationship between political unrest and educational outcomes calls for an inclusive and comprehensive approach in policy formulation. It is essential to consider the immediate and long-term impacts of political protests on students, including their academic progress, psychological wellbeing, political awareness, resilience, and career choices. Policymakers, educators, and stakeholders need to work collaboratively to mitigate the adverse effects while leveraging the positive outcomes to shape a resilient and politically conscious generation.

**Conclusion**

The study revealed a multifaceted impact of political protests on students' education in Pakistan, encompassing disrupted academic progress, psychological stress, enhanced political awareness, varying long-term educational outcomes, and potential

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influences on career trajectories; while these impacts presented substantial challenges, they also provided opportunities for developing resilience, political consciousness, and career reevaluation. The role of educational institutions and mental health support systems emerged as pivotal in these contexts, facilitating learning opportunities and fostering an environment of openness and support. Despite the limitations of the study, it offered valuable insights and a springboard for further investigation into this relatively unexplored area. It underscored the necessity of inclusive and comprehensive policy-making, taking into account the diversity of impacts to mitigate adverse effects and harness potential benefits. Hence, even amidst disruption, political unrest can contribute to the formation of a resilient and politically aware generation, provided it is addressed with informed, compassionate, and comprehensive strategies.

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