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Political Activism and Trust in Government

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Introduction to Research

- The purpose of this study is to dive into the topic of trust in government and how it relates to political activism in regards to voting in the United States.
- According to a recent Gallup survey, currently Congress has a 80% disapproval rating while President Barack Obama has a 55% disapproval rating.
- There is a belief that government elected officials only do what is beneficial for their personal gains and do not value the input of their constituents.
 - Members of the House of Representatives serve a two year term in which always keeps the election cycle running.
 - Members of the Senate serve six year terms in which gives them time to focus solely on their constituents before having to run for reelection right off the bat again.
- In todays society there has been political activity from individuals and groups who take action into their own hands because elected officials are not advocating on their behalf.
 - Occupy Movement: This is a prime example of individuals taking matters into their own hands. The apparent "99% (of citizens)" believed that government was only advocating on the "1 (of citizens)%" based on wealth and were ready to make a change about it.
 - Ferguson: The riots in Ferguson were the cause of individuals not please with the courts ruling and believing that the government did not care for them at all.

Voter Turnout

- Voter turnout has been an issue for all eternity. The 2014 election as reported by the Washington Post had a 36.4% voter turn out which was the lowest since World War 2.
 - The breakdown of voters show that 75% were white, 12% black, 8% hispanic/latino, 3% asian, and 2% other not really creating a diverse group of voters.

Conclusions

- It can be seen that there is not a correlation between trust in government and gender and education.
- Men and Women of all education backgrounds believe that government is doing what is right only some of the time.
- On a positive note, very few people believe that government is doing what is right never which shows that there is not a complete distrust in government.

*Significant at <.05
R square for the model is .332

Hypotheses:

H 1: Minority groups are more likely to be distrusting government.
Specifically looking at

- Gender
- Education

H 2: The more an individual distrust the government the more politically active they will be in regards to voting.

Data

H 1: Minority Groups Trust in Government

Cross Tabulation Results: Gender and how often individuals trust elected officials in Washington to do what is right:

- Just about always
 - Male: 2.8%
 - Female: 3.3%
- Most of the time
 - Male: 20.4%
 - Female: 21.3%
- Only some of the time
 - Male: 74.6%
 - Female: 73.7%
- Never
 - Male: 2.1%
 - Female: 1.67%

| PRE: [STD] How often trust gov't in Wash to do what is right * SUMMARY: Gender of Respondent for both FTF and Web modes Crosstabulation | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--|-----------|-------|
| Count | | SUMMARY: Gender of Respondent for both FTF and Web modes | | Total |
| | | 1. Male | 2. Female | |
| | 1. Just about always | 39 | 51 | 90 |
| | 2. Most of the time | 297 | 330 | 627 |
| | 3. Only some of the time | 1087 | 1141 | 2228 |
| | 4. Never (VOL) | 31 | 26 | 57 |
| Total | | 1454 | 1548 | 3002 |

Table Interpretation

- The table measures gender, and education level among individuals in response to how much they believe government is doing what is right and whether or not they intend to vote.
- There shows that there is no correlation between education and gender and trust in government.
 - In the gender survey, males and females both have the highest and the lowest answers corresponding to each other.
 - In the education survey, each shares the same top answer as well as the same lowest answer.

H 2: Political Activism and Voting History

Cross Tabulation Results: Voting history between gender and education level

- Did you vote for President in 2008?
 - Yes
 - Male: 77.6%
 - Female: 77.9%
 - No
 - Male: 22.4%
 - Female: 22.1%

H 1: Minority Groups Trust in Government

Cross Tabulation Results:

Cross Tabulation Results: Education level and how often individuals trust elected officials in Washington to do what is right:

- Just about always
 - Less than High School credential: 8.5%
 - High School credential: 4.1%
 - Some posh High School, no Bachelor degree: 2.3%
 - Bachelor's degree: 0.68%
 - Graduate Degree: 0.01%
- Most of the time
 - Less than High School credential: 22.9%
 - High School credential: 22.9%
 - Some posh High School, no Bachelor degree: 21.9%
 - Bachelor's degree: 18%
 - Graduate Degree: 16.8%
- Only some of the time
 - Less than High School credential: 63.9%
 - High School credential: 71.3%
 - Some posh High School, no Bachelor degree: 73.7%
 - Bachelor's degree: 80.2%
 - Graduate Degree: 80.3%
- Never
 - Less than High School credential: 4.5%
 - High School credential: 1.4%
 - Some posh High School, no Bachelor degree: 2.0%
 - Bachelor's degree: 1.0%
 - Graduate Degree: 0.01%

| PRE: [STD] How often trust gov't in Wash to do what is right * PRE: SUMMARY: R level of highest education Crosstabulation | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--|---------------------------|--|----------------------|--------------------|-------|
| Count | | PRE: SUMMARY: R level of highest education | | | | | Total |
| | | 1. Less than high school credential | 2. High school credential | 3. Some post-high school, no bachelor's degree | 4. Bachelor's degree | 5. Graduate degree | |
| | 1. Just about always | 26 | 31 | 23 | 4 | 5 | 89 |
| | 2. Most of the time | 70 | 170 | 216 | 106 | 60 | 622 |
| | 3. Only some of the time | 195 | 529 | 727 | 471 | 286 | 2208 |
| | 4. Never (VOL) | 14 | 11 | 20 | 6 | 5 | 56 |
| Total | | 305 | 741 | 986 | 587 | 356 | 2975 |

H 2: Political Activism and Voting History

Cross Tabulation Results: Voting history between gender and education level

- Less than High School
 - Yes: 55.9%
 - No: 45.1%
- High School Credential
 - Yes: 68.7%
 - No: 31.3%
- Graduate Degree
 - Yes: 92.7%
 - No: 7.3%
- Some Post High School. No Bachelor.
 - Yes: 78.5%
 - No: 21.5%
- Bachelors Degree
 - Yes: 90.6%
 - No: 9.4%

Findings

H 1: Minority Groups Trust in Government
While the results showed that minority groups were actually just as distrusting of elected officials in Washington as majority groups. The differences between the majority group and minority group answers were very similar in numbers and showed that gender and education do not correlate to distrust in government.

H 1: Gender

According to the survey, with regards to trusting government officials in Washington to do what is right the minority group of women believe that the elected officials only some of the time do what is right. Males agreed with this answer having about 0.9% stronger feeling than women.

H 1: Education

The cross tab showed that individuals with less than High School credential believe that only some of the time elected officials in Washington are doing the right thing. Individuals with High School credential, Some post individuals with High school but no Bachelors degree, Bachelors degree, and graduate degree agree with individuals with less than a high school degree that individuals in Washington only do what is right some of the time.

H 2: Political Activism and Voting History

These results I found interesting because so many people said they voted while previous knowledge tells us that voter turnout rate is not that high and is usually around 54% while the survey reported that around 78% of people voted. Regarding the education aspect

H 2: Gender

It can be seen that there is no difference between gender and voting history. From this survey it can be seen that men and women vote equally and do actually vote in elections.

H 2: Education

This brought some interesting results to my research. I found that the more educated you are the more likely you are to vote. 45.1% of individuals with less than a high school degree did not vote while compared to the 7.3% of individuals with graduate degrees who did vote. This shows that there is a difference and that the minority of people with lower education do not go out to vote and are not politically active.

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