

# Peers Influence on Youth Political Behavior: A Systematic Review

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## Abstract

Youth political behavior plays a crucial role in shaping the democratic system of a country. Several factors, such as socio-economic status, employment opportunities, and educational background, have been extensively studied in relation to their impact on youth political behavior. However, there is a deficiency in systematic reviews specifically focusing on the influence of peers on youth political behavior. This article aims to address this gap by conducting a systematic review of relevant studies from the Web of Science, Scopus, SpringerLink, and ProQuest databases. In total, 30 studies were identified through comprehensive search terms such as “peer influence”, “youth”, “political knowledge”, and “political behavior”. Through this review, four key themes emerged: (1) political knowledge, (2) group discussion, (3) peer pressure, and (4) identity development. The findings highlight the significance of identity development and peer pressure as the most influential factors shaping youth political behavior. By adhering to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines, this review encompasses studies conducted in various countries without any geographical restrictions. Gaining a comprehensive understanding of how peers influence the youth political behavior can provide leaders and policymakers with crucial insights for encouraging knowledgeable peer networks.

**Keywords:** youth, political behavior, political knowledge, group discussion, peer pressure, shared identity

## 1. Introduction

Peer relationships play a pivotal role in shaping political behaviors, mobilizing political participation, and fostering youth civic engagement. Understanding the influence of peers on youth political behavior allows for studying the complex processes through which peers shape these behaviors, like dynamic discussions, significant social interactions, and the development of influential social norms. It also affects how youth perceive and engage with politics, thereby directly affecting their level of democratic participation. Peers, along with other influential factors such as family, education, and socioeconomic status, are integral to the social networks and communities of youth (Pellicer et al., 2020; Shala et al., 2018). Identity development is inextricably linked with the involvement of peers, as youth seek validation and acceptance from their social circles, leading them to embrace similar political views and behaviors (Kroger, 2004). Besides peers also serve as a mirror reflecting shared values, beliefs, and ideologies, contributing to the development and consolidation of political identities among youths. Furthermore, they also can exert direct and indirect pressure on youth, encouraging a desire for acceptance and nervousness of exclusion. It leads to youths imitating the perceived expectations of their peers, which influences their political behavior and choices. (Schroder et al., 2022).

Peer pressure is a significant factor influencing youth political behavior and deserves careful consideration because it can have profound effects on democratic processes. Youths' susceptibility to misinformation within their peer networks is cause for concern, as they are more likely to spread false political information that aligns with their preexisting beliefs of their peer group (Pennycook, 2018). Interactions with peers can perpetuate and bolster false information, distorting political knowledge and decision-making. Furthermore, the presence of groupthink in close-knit peer groups can discourage the expression of diverse opinions and promote conformity to the dominant group ideology, while interpersonal pressure can lead to the adoption of extreme political ideologies (Schroder et al., 2022). These dynamics demonstrate how peer influence can contribute to political polarization and the entrenchment of youth's rigid ideologies. Consequently, it is essential to promote critical thinking, media literacy, and exposure to viewpoints among youths. These abilities enable them to withstand peer pressure and make well-informed political decisions.

Youth political behavior is significantly influenced by political knowledge, which includes an understanding of political concepts, institutions, and processes. Research has consistently demonstrated that higher levels of political knowledge are associated with increased political engagement and participation among youth (Galston, 2001). Youth political behavior is influenced by a complex interaction of individual and societal factors, including political socialization, role models, life experiences, and the political environment. Peer influence emerges as a significant factor in shaping youth political behavior in this context. Peers contribute to the development of political behaviors through the exchange of information, group discussions, and the influence of social norms (Dermody et al., 2010). Positive peer influences, such as peer pressure and exclusion, can discourage youth participation in politics, whereas negative peer influences, such as peer support and encouragement, can encourage youth participation. Likewise, peer networks have been found to facilitate the acquisition of

political knowledge among college students, with politically knowledgeable peers positively influencing their peers' political learning (Djupe et al., 2018).

Group discussions, particularly within peer networks, significantly impact on youth political behavior. Therefore, understanding the influencing factors is essential for formulating strategies that promote informed choices and decisions. Consistently, research demonstrates positive correlations between youth political behaviors and peer political discussions. It has been shown that engaging in political discussions with peers increases political participation, strengthens political opinions, and encourages voting and joining political organizations. (Jennings et al., 1981; Henn et al., 2006). Peer networks have also been found to influence the adoption of extremist political beliefs and behaviors among youth (Van Zomeren et al., 2008). These findings emphasize the significant impact of group discussions and peer influence on various aspects of youth political behavior, such as participation, opinion formation, radicalization, and knowledge acquisition. Policymakers and educators should recognize the importance of group discussions to develop interventions that maximize the positive aspects of peer influence.

Peer influence towards youth is a complex relationship because it can have both positive and negative effects (Guzman, 2007). The youth political behavior is particularly influenced by their peers, and this relationship constantly seen in prejudicial behavior. Youth's interactions with prejudiced peers not only reinforces negative sentiments toward the outgroup but also tends to exhibit similar degrees of prejudice among friends (Bohman et al., 2019). This negative political behavior encompasses behavior that have negative effects on the political process and the well-being of the society. Unhealthy political behavior like apathy in voting, lack of accommodating others' political views, experiencing frustration and confusion due to the complex nature of politics, which can lead to decrease of trust. While it is common to believe that peer influence drives teenagers to participate in risky and harmful activities, peer political discussions with peers seem to foster political engagement independently, suggesting the significance of these conversations for political development in a variety of circumstances (Guzman, 2007). Youth should be aware of peer influence to protect their individuality, make wise decisions, refrain from harmful behaviors, maintain their well-being, and develop resilience, as youth identity exploration is linked to an increased susceptibility to peer pressure (Renström et al., 2020). By being cautious and selective about the influences they allow into their lives, youth can choose a path that is in line with their ideals and the goals of their community and country.

According to social identity theory (Tajfel et al., 2004), identity formation has a significant impact on youth political behavior. Through the process of comparison and validation, peers exert a strong influence on individuals, leading youth to conform to group norms and desire a sense of belonging. Youth develop a political identity by categorizing themselves into political groups, which influences their behaviors, and participation. This connection to a political peer group increases self-esteem and promotes conformity to group beliefs, influencing political behavior and reinforcing ingroup-outgroup dynamics (Perez-Truglia et al., 2016; Rajeliene, 2016). The formation of identities within peer networks plays a crucial role in influencing the political attitudes, behaviors, and group dynamics of by comparing

their political perspectives with those of their peers, youths seek validation and conform to group norms.

Clearly peers' influence impacts political behavior together with and without the existing political knowledge. Youth represents the critical timeframes as it represents the transition from childhood to adulthood, a period during which political attitudes and behaviors are formed (Abdullah et al., 2021). They have the capacity to exert a substantial impact on political stability. Youths who are empowered and politically literate can serve as catalysts for positive change, ensuring the responsiveness of democratic systems (Memon, 2018). Scholars and practitioners currently lack a thorough understanding of factors of peers' influence on youth political behavior. This paper provides an overview of literature by examining the relationships between peers' influence and political behavior among youth to clarify the current state of the literature. Multiple studies will be analyzed to compare (C) the factors of peer influence (P) and political knowledge (I) on the political behavior (O) of youth. By comparing and synthesizing the findings of these studies, this research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationships between peer influence and youth political behavior. This comparison will help identify strategies for empowering politically literate youth, promoting informed decision-making, and ensuring the responsiveness and adaptability of democratic systems.

## 2. Method

Despite the growing number of literatures on the influence of peers on youth political behavior, a comprehensive systematic review of this topic is still uncommon. Nonetheless, a systematic review of the literature on youth political behavior conducted to resolve this knowledge gap (Sancho, 2017) conducted. An extensive selection of 124 scientific articles obtained primarily from journals indexed on Redalyc.org and Kimuk.conare.ac.cr were included in the study. The scope of the evaluation was from 1990 to 2016, with Latin America and Costa Rica serving as the geographical context. The study's lack of publication date restrictions ensured an exhaustive coverage of relevant literature. The author used a snowball sampling technique to identify additional relevant sources by reviewing the reference lists of the identified articles. The search terms employed in the study encompassed various domains, including: (1) political electoral behavior, political participation, political inclusion, social and political exclusion, political trust, OR political credibility, in combination with keywords related to (2) youth OR young people, and (3) Latin America, Costa Rica, OR Spain.

It is important to note that the systematic review on youth political behavior conducted by (Sancho, 2017) is written in Portuguese. This language barrier makes it difficult for non-Portuguese speakers to comprehend the study's content and findings. Accessing and understanding research written in an other's language can delay the dissemination and application of valuable insights, because translation or interpretation services are required to completely comprehend the study's contributions.

*Criteria.* The researchers used an established set of inclusion criteria to identify studies for this systematic review (Table 1). First, studies on the influence of peers on youth political

behavior and related variables had to be written in English. Within the framework of the review, this criterion ensured that the research material could be effectively analysed and synthesised. Furthermore, studies were excluded if they did not investigate youth political behavior specifically or if they did not report on the influence of peers on such behavior. This criterion intended to maintain a clear focus on the specific research area of interest and prevent the findings from being diluted by unrelated or peripheral studies.

Moreover, article reviews, book chapters, book series, books, and conference papers were excluded from the review. This decision was made since journal articles endure a rigorous peer-review process in which subject-matter experts evaluate the methodology, validity, and contribution to knowledge of the study. By including only peer-reviewed journal articles in their analysis, the researchers aimed to assure the reliability and credibility of the sources they considered. It is essential to note that studies that did not focus primarily on youth or young adults were also excluded. However, the researchers did include studies in which the sample included individuals outside of the age range of youth, such as elder generations and adults. This adaptability enabled the exploration of studies that provided valuable insights into the influence of peers on youth political behavior, while discovering any potential of intergenerational dynamics.

To ensure comprehensiveness in the study selection procedure, at least two of the three authors reviewed each full-text article for inclusion. In instances of disagreement, the second researcher provided additional input until all authors reached a consensus. This collaborative strategy enhanced the reliability and quality of the systematic review by incorporating multiple perspectives and areas of expertise in the evaluation of the articles (Figure 1).

To extract pertinent information from the chosen articles, the researchers employed a comprehensive methodology by examining each article's independent and dependent variables, as well as its design characteristics, with great attention. This required collecting information on the style of study (e.g., cross-sectional, longitudinal), the targeted population, and the methodologies and measures employed. The original investigators' findings and significant conclusions were also documented (Table 2).

To ensure precision, the researchers created a systematic coding scheme based on prior knowledge and refined it as common themes arose across studies (Table 3). Both authors independently applied thematic classification to each article. This rigorous methodology improved the reliability of the findings and enabled a thorough analysis of the collected data.

Table 1. The Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Inclusion</b>	<b>Exclusion</b>
<b>Timeline</b>	2009–2023	Less than 2009
<b>Document type</b>	Article Journal (Empirical data)	Article review, chapter in book, book series, book, conference
<b>Language</b>	English	Non-English

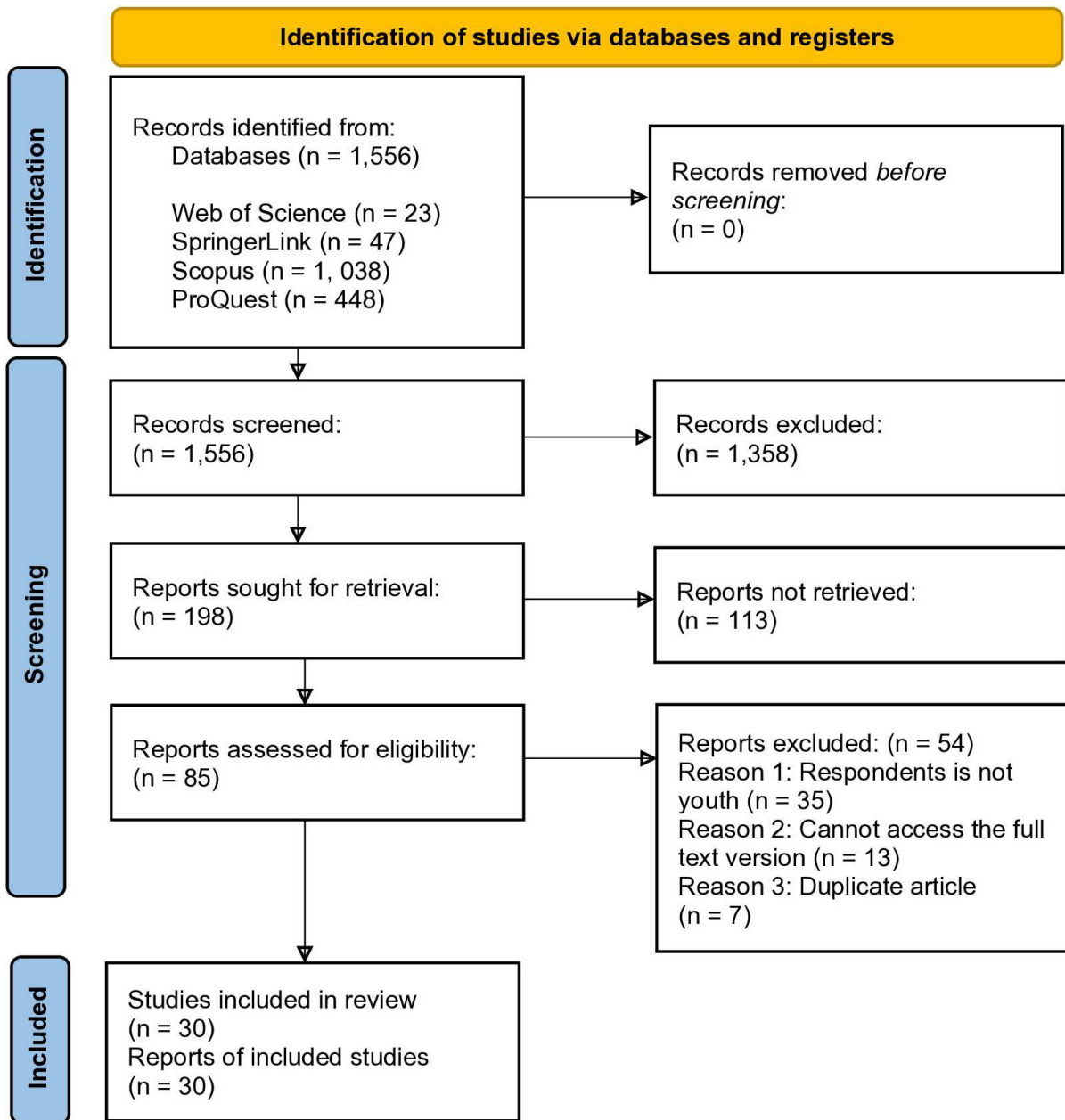


Figure 1. PRISMA flow diagram for included and excluded studies.

Table 2. Summary of research methods and findings from studies examining the relationship between peers' influence and youth political behavior.

Study	Sample Size	IV	Mod/ Med	DV	Results
Nkansah (2022)	10,093 Aged 18–29	Youth cohort size	Peers influence	Electoral participate	Perceived political knowledge of peers → Discussion → Moderate peer influence → Large YCS Voting →/ (-YCS)

Study	Sample Size	IV	Mod/ Med	DV	Results
Renstrom (2020)	2,034 Aged 16–80	Age	Need to belong	Manifest/ Protest activities	Younger respondents→ Protest activities Belongingness→ Significant participation
Bergan (2021)	2,801 1 <sup>st</sup> year college	Info cues Social pressure	Spillover effects	Student voter turnout	Social pressure→ Turnout Positive spillover effects→ Increased turnout
Bene (2017)	800 35 University	Political information source	-	Social media politics Democracy satisfaction	Post or share political content on Facebook→ Dissatisfaction with democracy Negative Perceptions about Democracy→ Obtaining Political Information on Facebook→ Influenced by Discontented Peers
Russo (2015)	895 Aged 22–26	Information gain Political talk	-	Political participation	Political talk→ Increases participation Information gain→ Political participation
Salado (2021)	3,715 Aged 13–18	Friends Family Teacher	Sense of unity	Socio-political participation	Peer Support→ Sense of unity and future participation Family, teacher support →/ Socio-political participation
Lantos (2015)	8 Aged 20–30	Family Peers Political events	-	Political participation	Family, peers, political events→ Political socialization
Šubrt (2022)	295 Aged 21–77	Work stress Offline social leisure	Participa tion efficacy	Political participation Voting	Work stress→/ Political participation Offline social leisure→ Political participation Participatory efficacy→ Offline social leisure→ Political participation
Pavan (2020)	467 College	Use of political techs	-	Citizen engagement	PEU→ Trust, PEU→ PU, PU→ CE, PI→ PU, PI → PEU
Couto (2020)	211 Aged 18–80	Social network	Online confiden ce	Radicalism intention Activism intention	Diverse political opinions on social network→ Influence identity formation Online confidence →/ Not Mediate Facebook Use→/ Political Activism/Radicalism
Palermo (2020)	2,458 Aged 14–19	Peers	-	Violence & sexual Health & daily life	Peer groups→ decision-making (Sexual relationship) Peers' interventions→ Promote gender-equitable decision-making
Joseph (2020)	313 Aged 16–35	Social media education	-	Perceived learning outcomes	Social media (Whatsapp)→ Perceived learning outcomes Social media in education→ Students' learning outcomes
Maslova (2020)	1,237 Aged 16–25	Values hierarchy	-	Traditionalists -Universalists/ Conformists Social superiority seekers	Traditionalists-Universalists & Traditionalists-Conformists (72%) → Prioritize self-transcendence and conservation values Social superiority seekers (28%) → Own interests, leadership, superiority, and individual achievement
Harell (2019)	3,334 Aged	Interpersona l political	-	Individual/ Collective	Diverse political perspectives→ Individual acts



Study	Sample Size	IV	Mod/ Med	DV	Results
	15–18	diversity		political acts	Political network diversity→ Political action
Mac Kinnon (2019)	46 Aged 23–30 & 21–24	Leadership Training (ILP)	-	Professional growth	ILP→ Advancements, professional growth, instructional leadership, administrative effectiveness Online ILP→ Leadership role of politically engaged
Pang (2018)	282 Aged 18 and >	WeChat mobile usage	-	Online discussion	WeChat Usage→ Online Political Discussion Peer interactions→ Improve understanding of political issues through discussions
Mc Cabe (2018)	29,084 Aged 18 and >	Mortgage stress exposure	-	Perceptions strategic default behavior	Mortgage stress exposure→ perceptions about strategic default behavior Peer networks→ perceptions about strategic political behavior
Mallinson (2018)	58 Students	Political issues	-	Pre- and post-treatment opinions	Peers' understanding of political issues, policies, and events→ Dialogue, debate, information exchange
Wang (2018)	650 College students	Media usage patterns	-	Voter turnout	Chinese media→ (minimum) Attitudes towards foreign policy College students→ Online news College students→/ Traditional media
Park (2017)	152 Aged 18-34	Indirect/ Direct peer influence	-	Prosocial behavior	Direct→ Prosocial behavior Indirect→/ Prosocial behavior
Wang (2017)	1,014 Aged 18–70	Class status	Psychological	Voter turnout	Middle class→ Higher voting rates Non-state sector member→ Lower voting rates Motivation→ voter turnout middle class
Braha (2017)	Generalized voter	Social influence	-	Voting behavior	Social influence→ Shapes Behaviors, Actions, Preferences→ Increasing Impact on Voting Behavior
Nový (2015)	34, 440	Peers' political knowledge	-	Self-reported turnout	Peers' political knowledge→ Likelihood of voting
Lehmiller (2014)	206 College students	Peer evaluation data	-	Attractiveness ratings	Social influence→ Attractiveness and interest ratings
Klofstad (2009)	-	Civic talk	-	Civic participation	Civic Talk→ voluntary civic organization participation
Wegemer (2021)	354 High School	Peer service activities	-	Participant in service activities	Friends→ Service activities among youth
Cont. Wegemer (2021)	354 High School	Youths' views on inequities	-	Participant in service activities	Youths' perception of systemic inequities→ Engagement in activism
Goel (2010)	2,504 Average 29	Beliefs on peers' attitudes	-	Level of agreement/disagreement	Peers' differences in political attitudes→ Often unaware of disagreements
Durrant	614	Engage in	-	Self-reported	Actively Engaged in Community→

Study	Sample Size	IV	Mod/ Med	DV	Results
(2012)	Youth aged	community activities		behavior	Requires more than just being well-behaved
Weinschenk (2021)	Grade 7–12	Civic education	-	Voter turnout	Civic education → Limited turnout Civic education → Strong political knowledge Civic education → Positive citizenship
Pires (2016)	Under age 25.	Factors affecting riots	-	Dynamics of riots	Youth → Likely to take part in riots Social Networks → Spreading rumours, causing riots Increasing education & job opportunities →/ Rioting or life

*Note.* → correlated/significant relationship; →/ not correlated/ not significant relationship.

**Table 3. Results by theme and peer influencing youth political behavior**

Citation	Theme	PPKP	CPP	ICE	IG	PEIIP	SMPD	RPA	SAB	SPP	SBA
Nkansah (2020)	1;2	/			/						
Novy (2015)	1	/									
Mallinson (2018)	1	/									
Pavan (2020)	1;3		/			/			/		
Weinschenk (2021)	1			/							
Bene (2017)	2;4					/					/
Russo (2015)	2					/					
Joseph (2020)	2						/				
Harell (2019)	2;4						/	/			
Park (2017)	4						/				
Renstrom (2021)	3;4								/	/	
Bergan (2022)	3					/					
Wang (2018)	3						/				
Wegeme (2021)	3					/					
Goel (2010)	3					/		/	/		
Subrt (2022)	4										/
Salado (2022)	4								/		
Couto (2020)	4						/				
Durrant (2012)	4					/					
Lantos (2015)	4								/		
Pires (2016)	4					/					
Palermo (2020)	3					/					
McCabe, (2018)	3						/				
Maslova (2020)	4										/
MacKinnon (2019)	2					/					/
Pang (2018)	1	/	/				/				
Wang (2017)	1					/					
Braha (2017)	3					/		/			
Lehmiller (2014)	4								/		
Klofstd (2009)	2					/	/				

*Note.* 1=political knowledge; 2= group discussion; 3=peer pressure; 4=identity development; Perceived Political Knowledge of Peers (PPKP); Conformity to Peers' Perspectives (CPP); Impact of Civic Education (ICE); Information Gathering (IG); Politically Engaged Individuals in Influencing Political (PEIIP); Social Media on Political Discourse (SMPD); Recruitment for Political Activism (RPA); Social Acceptability and Belonging (SAB); Susceptibility to Peer Pressure (SPP); Sense of Belonging and Affiliations (SBA).

### 3. Results

A total of 30 articles met full criteria and were included for analysis in this systematic review (Figure 1). Among the studies analyzed, it is important to note that a variety of age categories

were presented. 11 studies (36.67%) focused on youths between the ages of 13 and 30, whereas 8 studies (26.67%) covered a broader age range, including youth, young adults, and even elder generations, ranging from 16 to 80 years of age. Likewise, nine studies (30%) explicitly targeted youth in educational contexts, such as registered students, graduate/undergraduate university students, and those attending school. Notably, two studies (6.67%) did not specify the sample category explicitly, indicating a broader inclusion of participants. Regarding methodologies employed, 20 articles reported on cross-sectional data, five on longitudinal data, and two articles presented findings from semi-structured interviews (Lantos et al., 2016 & Durrant et al., 2012). While one article utilized a mixed-method approach analyzing cross-sectional data and interviews (Palermo et al., 2020). One article employed experimental design (Bergan et al., 2022), as mentioned in Table 2.

Four significant themes have emerged from a comprehensive review of the literature as peers' influential factors shaping youth political behavior. These themes illuminate the dynamic interaction between youth and their peers in the political sphere. Table 2 provides a comprehensive understanding of the findings, which are summarized earlier. The four key themes are: (1) political knowledge, (2) group discussion, (3) peer pressure, and (4) identity development have emerged as factors shaping youth political behavior through peer influence.

### *3.1 Theme 1: Political Knowledge*

Since political knowledge is essential for an informed decision-making and active participation in democratic processes, seven studies classified political knowledge as the factor peers' influencing youth political behavior. As shown in Table 2, studies discovered a strong positive correlation between perceived political knowledge of peers and the likelihood of youth voting (Nkansah et al., 2022; Novy et al., 2015). This suggests that political knowledge and perceptions of democracy significantly influence the youth's political behavior, particularly voting behavior. These findings highlight the need for targeted interventions to promote political knowledge among youth and combat their declining participation in democratic processes. Meanwhile, study also demonstrated that peers can enhance one another's comprehension of political issues, policies, and events through dialogues, debates, and the exchange of information (Pang, 2018). This political knowledge exchange among peers broadens their perspectives, shapes their attitudes, and influences their decision-making processes. Peers contribute to the development of youth's political knowledge by providing a variety of viewpoints, sharing news and information, and engaging in political discussions.

Furthermore, studies indicate that social pressure and conformity to peers are factors in determining youth political behavior. The positive correlation between political technologies and citizen engagement demonstrates that youth frequently trust the viewpoints of their peers, especially on politically contentious issues (Pavan et al., 2020). Observational and experimental studies have demonstrated the importance of social networks in the dissemination of political information and the formation of individual behavior, including political behavior since individual motivations regime support had limited influence in

voting-decision (Wang, 2017). They may conform to blend in and be accepted by their social group, or they may perceive their peers to be more knowledgeable and well-informed. Youth adopt alike behaviors and consider their opinions as more informed when their peers demonstrate political knowledge and participate in informed discussions. Also due to social pressure within networks, they conform to desired social and political norms to acquire acceptance within social groups.

Research by Weinschenk et al. (2021) examines the connection between high school civic education and political behavior, with a focus on voter participation. Based on Table 2, although the study acknowledges the limited impact of civic education on voter turnout, it highlights the potential influence of civic education on political knowledge and other political orientations. The research establishes a strong relationship between civic education and increased political knowledge through a thorough examination, by relying on prior evidence of enhanced comprehension resulting from civics classes. Besides, the study indicates that civic education has positive effects on aspects of citizenship that extend beyond voter participation. It emphasizes the critical role of political knowledge in influencing the youth political behavior and the significance of developing citizens who are well-informed and involved in democratic processes.

### *3.2 Theme 2: Group Discussion*

Youth group discussions significantly affect the political behavior and knowledge of youth. It offers a one-of-a-kind setting for youth to engage in political discourse, express their perspectives, and exchange information with their peers (Hassim et al., 2020). In a variety of ways, these conversations play a crucial role in shaping the political behaviors and political knowledge. Besides, it fosters an environment where youth can freely express their opinions and engage in dialogue. During the process they can challenge and refine their own political beliefs thus promoting critical thinking, empathy, and a deeper comprehension of complex political issues.

Eight studies on the effect of peer and youth group discussions on political behavior have yielded several noteworthy findings. Referring to Table 2, Nkansah et al. (2022) highlight the influence of peers on the youth political behavior, particularly in terms of information gathering through discussion. Their research indicates youth who rely significantly on their peers for information are more likely to participate in the electoral process. However, when coupled with a large youth cohort size, peer pressure can contribute to a decline in political engagement and cultivate apathy. Moreover, studies highlighted the importance of politically engaged youths through effective communication strategies, such as posting or sharing political perceptions over time, as well as the impact of online leadership programmes (Bene, 2017; MacKinnon et al., 2019). These studies emphasise that peers' communication practises and their profound influence correlated on shaping youth's political behavior.

Engaging in political discussion with politically active peers substantially increased political engagement (Russo et al., 2015) found that. However, the frequency of political discussion with peers has minimal impact on youth political participation. For example, civic talks demonstrated a remarkable increase in students' civic participation, with a significant 38%

rise observed during the first year and a further 20% increase by the third year (Klofstad, 2009). The study also highlights the significance of social networks and peer political discussions in recruiting youths for political activism (Harell et al., 2019). Their research demonstrates that of diverse political perspectives and the frequency of political discussions among peers have a significant impact on youth political behavior and demonstrate the transformative effect of collective dialogue in promoting youth political participation.

Furthermore, the use of social media, specifically WhatsApp, on student political discourse also been studied (Joseph et al., 2020). Their research demonstrates how social media platforms facilitate youth and peers, allowing for active participation in political discussions and the exchange of opinions. Similarly, Pang et al. (2018) discovers a positive correlation between WeChat usage frequency and participation in online political discussions with peers. This suggests that peers influence the youth political behavior occurred through various social interaction platforms including online discussion. The selected studies provide evidence of the influence of peers on youth political behavior, including information gathering, communication practises, social networks, and online platforms.

### *3.3 Themes 3: Peer Pressure*

Nine studies demonstrate the importance of peer pressure in influencing the youth political behavior. As Table 2, Renstrom et al. (2021) reveals that younger individuals are more likely to engage in protest activities due to desire for social acceptability and a feeling of belonging. Youth are vulnerable to peer pressure due to the social incentives of belongingness for identity formation, and social acceptability into desired social groups. Peer, particularly among college students, substantially influence voter turnout (Bergan et al., 2022). Implementing social pressure treatments resulted in positive spillover effects on voter turnout, notably when the student's roommates were registered to vote, particularly regarding topics such as violence, sexuality, health, and disease prevention (Palermo et al., 2020). Meanwhile Wang et al. (2018) demonstrate the exposure to political information shared by peers on news platform significantly impact on the youth political behavior as China's college students rely on mainly news outlets despite traditional media. Social network exposure to political discourse is associated more positively towards youth political behavior, indicating the influence of peer pressure in shaping the youth's political engagement (McCabe, 2018). Yet, peers, and family can expose youths to diverse political perspectives through social media, thereby fostering political engagement and the adoption of political views.

As Table 2, investigates the influence of peer pressure on youth political behavior, concentrating on civic engagement in service and activist activities, and perceptions of systemic inequities (Wegemer, 2021). It indicates that youths' peers can influence their participation in service activities, highlighting that peer socialization influencing such behaviors. Underscoring the impact of peer pressure on civic engagement, youths tend to conform to the average level of participation among their peers. However, the study found no correlation between peer pressure and activism or perceptions of inequalities. As political technologies have emerged to improve access to information and candidate analysis during elections, social influence from peers and perceived utility positively correlate the trust of

citizen participants (Pavan et al., 2020). These technologies are also used to monitor government actions, thereby encouraging youth civic engagement.

Moreover, research also concentrating on the effect of friends and acquaintances on political attitudes and beliefs through peer pressure (Goel et al., 2010; Braha et al., 2017). They demonstrate that the opinions of peers have significantly impact on how youths perceive the views of their peers, resulting in a discrepancy between actual and perceived agreement. It suggests that peer pressure influences political behavior, as youths tend to rely on stereotypes, project their own views instead of engaging in substantive discussions. The significance of peer influence in understanding youth political behavior and its implications for political polarisation is highlighted by these findings. Peer influence substantially shapes youth's political behavior, whether through direct social interactions or exposure to peers' political views and behaviors. Youth frequently assume political behaviors supported by their peer group, because of their desire for social approval and belonging within social norms.

### *3.4 Theme 4: Identity Development*

Regarding to Table 2, during identity development, youths are more susceptible to peer pressure and tend to experiment with different worldviews (Renstrom et al., 2021; Park et al., 2017). Due to this heightened susceptibility, social incentives, such as participation in protest activities, are particularly effective among youths. By engaging in political activities, youths who value individualism can demonstrate their social identity and exert control over how others perceive them. Youth's political behavior is powerfully influenced by their sense of work-related stress and offline social leisure, which linked to their identity formation (Subrt, 2022). Constructing youth identity fosters a sense of belonging via affiliations with political parties that share similar beliefs and values, but negative perceptions about democracy influenced by peer and unevenly values hierarchy of the system impacts youth political behavior (Bene, 2017; Maslova et al., 2020).

Political party membership affords opportunities for collaboration and advancing the party's goals. Youth political behavior, including participation, is substantially influenced by the sense of belonging and community support derived from these affiliations (Salado et al., 2022; Lantos et al., 2015). Besides, peer socialization plays a crucial role in fostering a sense of unity among youths. The study indicates that peer group norms that support civic engagement can influence the beliefs of other youth (Lehmiller et al., 2014). Higher perceived peer support is associated with greater engagement in social and political issues, highlighting the importance of peer influence on youth's sense of unity and motivational outlook.

The function of social media demonstrates the relationship between peer influence, identity development, and youth political behavior. Youth's exposure to diverse political opinions and perspectives through their social networks substantially influences identity development (Couto et al., 2020; Harell et al., 2019). Teens who actively participate in political discussions and tolerate political diversity in their social networks tend to have a broader understanding of various perspectives and to be politically engaged. Besides, school plays a role in facilitating the relationship between peer influence, identity development, and youth political behavior. School as primary source of information in providing valuable avenues for identity

formation through community involvement and encourages youth's political behavior by promoting civic education and participation in community activities. But having only good behaviors is not enough for community involvement (Durrant et al., 2012) and increasing in education and employment did not have a direct impact on rioting or the overall quality of life (Pires et al., 2016). Socialization with peers and exposure to disparate political perspectives within social networks play crucial roles in the formation of political engagement among youth.

#### **4. Discussion**

This systematic review examined several topics pertaining to the influence of peer pressure on the youth political behavior. Each of these themes sheds light on the various ways in which peers influence youth political behavior. Nonetheless, it is essential to recognize the potential for bias in the included studies and the limitations of the current research landscape.

Studies (Nkansah et al., 2022; Novy et al., 2015; Mallinson et al., 2018; Pang, 2018; Weinschenk et al., 2021) have demonstrated the positive correlation between peers perceived political knowledge and youth's likelihood of regular voting, highlighting the importance of political knowledge among youth for democratic participation. Peer discussions were found to enhance youths' political comprehension (Mallinson et al. 2018; Pang 2018), thereby influencing their political attitudes and values. Nonetheless, bias in group dynamics must be considered during these discussions.

Youth group discussions had a transformative effect on youth political behavior, increasing their engagement (Hassim et al., 2020; Bene, 2017; MacKinnon et al., 2019; Russo et al., 2015; Harell et al., 2019; Joseph et al., 2020; Pang et al., 2018). Through the acquisition of new insights and perspectives through dialogue, youth increased their understanding of political issues and their confidence in their ability to participate.

Peer pressure emerged as a major determinant of youth political behavior in various contexts, including social media and real-world networks (Renstrom et al., 2021; Park et al., 2017; Bergan et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2018; McCabe, 2018; Wegemer, 2021; Goel et al., 2010; Braha et al., 2017). However, when measuring conformity, social desirability bias and self-reporting bias should be considered. Additional research should investigate experimental designs and objective measures to better comprehend the scope and mechanisms of peer pressure.

Identity development influenced by peer pressure and social incentives played a crucial role in shaping youth political behavior (Subrt, 2022; Maslova et al., 2020; Salado et al., 2022; Lantos et al., 2015; Lehmillier et al., 2014; Couto et al., 2020; Durrant et al., 2012; Pires et al., 2016). Youth participation was motivated by a sense of belonging and social acceptance, while schools nurtured community involvement and identity formation. Youth frequently used their political beliefs and affiliations as a means of self-expression and social connection, which contributed to their increased political engagement. When examining the influence of social media, it is essential to account for selection bias.



## 5. Conclusion

The analysis of the included studies on the influence of peers on youth political behavior exposes several significant themes, such as political knowledge, group discussion, peer pressure, and identity formation. These themes illuminate the mechanisms by which peers influence the political beliefs, attitudes, and behavior of youth. However, it is essential to consider the quality of the included studies and the limitations of the research landscape. The conclusion derived from these investigations is subject to a few limitations, which must be acknowledged. First, there is the possibility of bias in the included studies. The validity of the findings could be affected by sample bias, self-reporting bias, and omitted variable bias. It is essential to account for these biases when interpreting the results and extrapolating them to larger populations.

Second, the landscape of research on the influence of peers on youth political behavior may not be exhaustive. The analysis only includes studies up to a certain date, and there may be more recent research that adds to or contradicts the extant findings. To ensure the validity and dependability of the conclusions, future research should continue to investigate and expand upon these themes using rigorous methodologies and larger samples. Despite these limitations, the identified themes provide important insights into the influence of peers on youth political behavior. We emphasize the significance of political knowledge, group discussions, peer pressure, and identity formation in determining the political engagement and attitudes of youths. These findings have implications for interventions and strategies designed to encourage youth's informed political participation.

Using standardized criteria of Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines, the risk of bias had been evaluated. Possible limitations include sample bias, self-reporting bias, and omitted variable bias. The researchers were evaluating the themes and studies associated with the influence of peer pressure on youth political behavior. As a result, the assessment of bias and quality was founded on a general evaluation of the individual studies discussed. Various criteria, such as study design, sample size, methodology, data acquisition methods, data analysis techniques, and potential conflicts of interest, be used to evaluate the bias and quality of individual studies. Moreover, evaluating the internal and external validity of the studies aids in the identification of potential biases.

In conclusion, while the included studies contribute to our comprehension of peer influence on youth political behavior, it is important to consider the quality of the research and the limitations of the current landscape. Future research should address these limitations to increase our understanding of this topic and to inform the development of effective interventions to promote positive peer influences and encourage active political participation among youth.

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### Notes

Note 1. PRISMA guidelines were followed except the study protocol not yet registered.

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