Examining on-and-off-Campus Students' Public Participation Experiences in Management Consciousness Towards a Sense of Responsibility

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ABSTRACT

Background: Today, the education field has been transformed by integration courses and social awareness among students to enhance their sense of responsibility. These courses encourage students to be active not only in education but also in solving social problems.

Objective: This study examines the influence of public participation in social activity experiences on students' awareness, engagement and sense of responsibility in the context of evolving university education.

Methodology: A total of 800 students across 38 institutions in Guangxi, China, were recruited, and structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to examine research hypotheses. Furthermore, Hayes' bootstrapping approach was applied to examine students' awareness and engagement in mediating the relationship between public participation experience and a sense of responsibility.

Result: Public participation experiences positively affect students' awareness, engagement, and sense of responsibility. The public management quality faces some challenges, especially those related to students' sense of responsibility, including awareness and engagement during the learning process. Moreover, personal public participation experience can potentially enhance students' attitudes and engagement in a sense of responsibility in public management consciousness.

Unique contribution: The study emphasises the value of experiential learning in advancing students' comprehension of public affairs and management by arguing that students' sense of responsibility is shaped by their active participation in public activities.

Key Recommendation: Personal public participant experience has a crucial role in influencing students' sense of responsibility; government and education stakeholders should invite students to collaborate on social activities and public management services.

Keywords: Public participation experience; awareness; engagement; sense of responsibility

Introduction
The architecture of public consciousness requires two tiers: management psychology, which forms the ordinary consciousness of management and is empirically shaped within the practice of management (Eichhorn et al., 2020; Shamad et al., 2023). In this context, the structure and processes of management mirror the flow of management processes in various spontaneous ways without any systematisation of observable management phenomena. The second tier is scientific and theoretical consciousness, which encompasses ideology as a representation of the fundamental interests of management. Personal public participation experiences positively influence a sense of responsibility (Anriani et al., 2022). Hence, examining awareness and engagement effects on a sense of responsibility among students is important due to education's role in fostering transparency, accountability, inclusivity, and responsiveness in public management issues (Stagg & Bossu, 2024). The proactive engagement of students in public management's planning and decision-making processes can enhance the learning process and performance efficiency and effectiveness (Korhonen et al., 2024; Panigrahi et al., 2021).

Despite the intrinsic potential of these findings to shape the success of participatory practices, research on consciousness and participation as a sense of responsibility in public management within academic institutions remains scarce. This subject's lack of systematic evidence (Kumari & Sharma, 2021; Dhaliwal et al., 2024) confirms this. In addition, preliminary studies show more concern for students' self-esteem, sense of responsibility (Chang et al., 2022; Jia et al., 2023), and academic stress (Procentese et al., 2020). Consequently, there is a pressing need for an increased volume of scholarly investigations in this area, as they can contribute significantly to advancing higher education services towards a more contemporary paradigm in the sense of responsibility context (Junaidi, 2024). This research aims to fill this gap by conducting a comparative investigation of the sense of responsibility of public management and the extent of public participation among university students across different public universities in China. The research seeks to uncover the cultural and contextual determinants that shape awareness and engagement toward public participation among students. Therefore, understanding the students' cognisance of their rights and degree

of engagement in public activities is paramount, particularly across various universities in developed and developing regions.

This study provides theoretical and practical insights into the impact of students' personal experiences in public awareness and engagement on public social participation. This study has two primary questions: Firstly, how do demographics, including gender, academic grade level, institution attended, field of study, taking courses in politics, law, or sociology, and public participation, influence students' public management consciousness? Secondly, how do experiences of public participation influence students' awareness, engagement, and sense of responsibility? The study's findings shed light on the contextual and institutional factors influencing students' willingness to participate in public activities and their sense of responsibility towards public management issues.

Literature Review
Advancement of Tertiary Education and Public Awareness
China's political landscape is shifting toward democracy and the country's political evolution. This shift has led to the decline of traditional theories of unique power relations and the promotion of "students as educational subjects." Germany's "importance theory" has influenced the proposal to apply the principle of legal reservation to the relationship between public schools and students. In the early stages of traditional education in the United States, "student rights" did not garner significant societal attention, and students did not specifically assert public awareness. Public attention to student rights only emerged in the late 1960s with the advent of student movements on various college campuses. Rights are fundamental components of life in modern liberal democratic societies, and rights awareness implies an individual's interest in understanding their entitled rights and their basis (Bryson et al., 2024; Filho et al., 2024).

Relationship between personal and public participant experience on students' awareness
Empowerment's central focus is cultivating the capacity to function within a pre-existing system and power structure and evaluate and resist structures that challenge power critically (Lu & Wen, 2024). The preceding part discussed how a context of unique power relations shaped the early years in China. Within this context, the educational relationships and legal norms within schools limit the exercise of students' rights (Ho et al., 2023). Traditionally, schools have viewed students as objects of "discipline" and recipients, with their sense of subjectivity yet to develop fully. This makes it challenging to discuss further this aspect, which resembles the empowerment process that emphasises the development of public management consciousness (Hong et al., 2024). The evolution of youth empowerment has been summarised into four primary objectives: fostering a caring attitude among participating youth (Jie et al., 2023; Ngo, 2024), aiding participating youth in understanding that social and community issues stem from the unequal distribution of resources and power, nurturing a participatory democratic spirit among youth, and teaching them how democracy operates.

Personal and student public participants influence awareness towards the effort to see and understand information cues in the task stimulus in the school (Jia et al., 2023; Korhonen et al., 2024; Panigrahi et al., 2021). Students' awareness of public management requires more cognitive resources to encode and respond to than simple cues to produce cognitive overload due to limited cognitive resources. This suggests that both students and public participants can retain positive and negative information simultaneously. Students' personal experience and public participation during the learning process reduce students' cognitive strain. Students'

awareness emerges when they are mature in their psychology and have a sense of belonging (Kumari & Sharma, 2021; Rodriguez et al., 2020).

H1: Personal factor has a positive and significant effect on students' awareness
H2: Public participation has a positive and significant effect on students' awareness

Students' awareness and engagement in a sense of responsibility

The interactions and communication during the academic process are crucial in influencing students' and lecturers' attitudes toward social issues and a sense of responsibility (Al Issa et al., 2024). For instance, a study with students from political science discovered that law school students exhibited greater social tolerance than students from liberal arts colleges (Silvola et al., 2021). However, students' awareness of social problems, such as the environment and unfair action, can vary depending on their personal experiences as public participants and interaction patterns during social activities (Jie et al., 2023). Zhao and Lu (2012) examined students' interactivity, focusing on Pearson and social interactions. Person interaction highlights the importance of interpersonal communication and the capacity to adapt to social and environmental contexts. In contrast, social interaction emphasises features that are customary and technological. Four constructs were utilised to represent the perceived interaction dimensions among students: responsiveness, fun, control, and connectivity. Control refers to the reflection of personal factors, while social interactivity involves recognising social and technological features towards conventional and social media services (Rodriguez et al., 2020). Responsiveness reflects the extent to which students perceive how fast and frequent their social interaction. Students share information and knowledge based on reciprocity, aiming to boost class engagement (Zhao & Lu, 2012).

H3: Personal factor has a significant and positive effect on students' engagement
**H4:** Public participation experience has a significant and positive effect on students' engagement

The mediating role of students' awareness and engagement

According to Al Issa et al. (2024), personality, public experience, and public participation significantly influence students' sense of responsibility and several personal factors, including gender, grade, institution of origin, and major fields. Furthermore, Dhaliwal et al. (2024) found that students' perceptions of social function, academic performance, and sense of responsibility towards public participants experiences, awareness and engagement. It demonstrates that frequent public participation has increased the humanism factor in education and social value. When both participants in the education and social activities were aware of the students' public participation, this effect became stronger. Interpersonal students' public participation experience, awareness, and engagement strongly correlate to a sense of responsibility (Muliadi et al., 2024; Hong et al., 2024). Furthermore, the literature on education and social literature suggests that students should engage in class and public participation with greater friendliness, treat others with respect and obey others. It has become a valuable personal experience that positively connects to social concern and a sense of belonging (such as perceived prosperity and togetherness). It is a predictor of a sense of responsibility for public management issues. Therefore, the following hypothesis is developed:

H5: Awareness has a positive effect on mediating the relationship between public management experience and a sense of responsibility among students
H6: Engagement has a positive effect on mediating the relationship between public management experience and a sense of responsibility among students
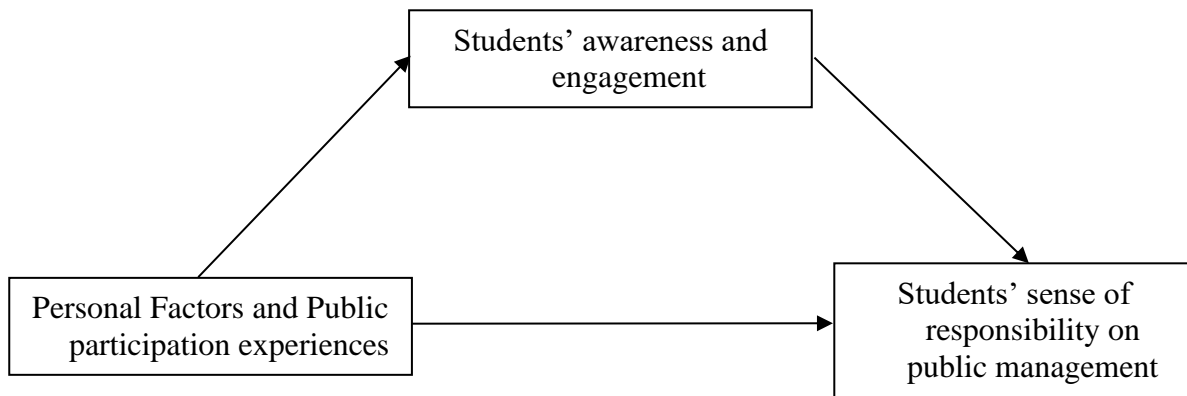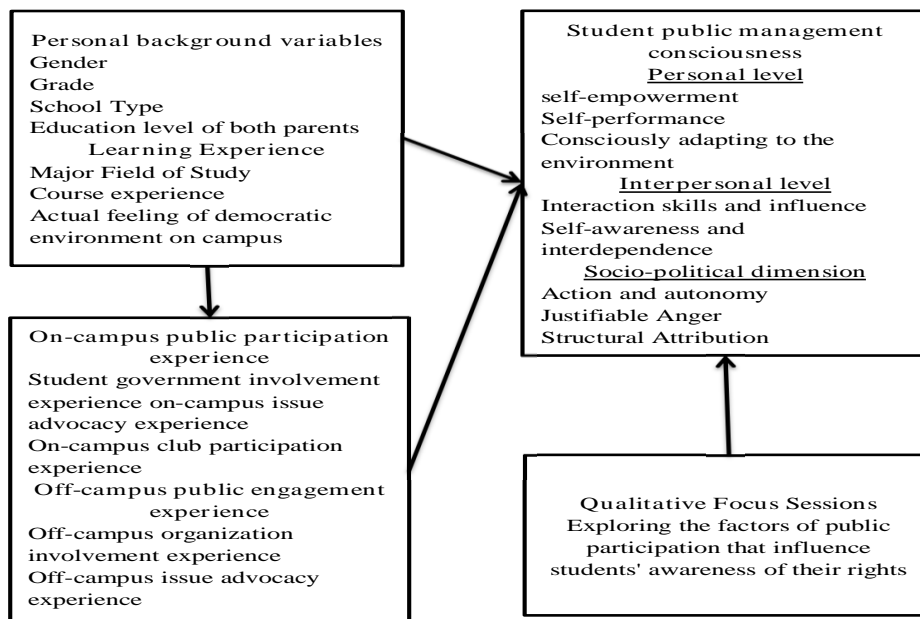
Figure 1. Research framework

Methodology

Research Design

This research adopts a quantitative design to investigate the influence of students' public participation on public management. It selected 800 samples from undergraduate students across 38 institutions in Guangxi.

Figure 2 Research architecture diagram

Participants and settings

This study focuses on students in Chinese universities. This study conducted an initial sampling using a random cluster sampling technique, targeting undergraduate students in Guangxi Province. Given a maximum questionnaire item count of 37 questions, the preliminary sample size is ideally 3 to 5 times the number of participants in the preliminary testing phase (Hair Jr. et al., 2019). Therefore, this study initially selected four schools for the sample and distributed

200 questionnaires. A total of 194 valid questionnaire copies after discarding two incomplete ones, yielding an effective response rate of 97%. Furthermore, from November 1st, 2023, to December 31st, 2023, 26 universities in China received a total of 910 formal online questionnaires.

Table 1: Formal Research Sample Sampling Situation

No.	University Name	Distribution Size	Number of Responses
1	Guangxi University	35	32
2	Guangxi University of Science and Technology	35	31
3	Guilin University of Electronic Technology	35	28
4	Guilin University of Technology	35	32
5	Guangxi Medical University	35	31
6	Youjiang Medical University for Nationalities	35	26
7	Guangxi Traditional Chinese Medical University	35	30
8	Guilin Medical University	35	28
9	Guangxi Normal University	35	30
10	Nanning Normal University	35	35
11	Guangxi University for Nationalities	35	35
12	Hechi University	35	30
13	Yulin Normal University	35	30
14	Guangxi Arts University	35	33
15	Guangxi University for Nationalities	35	29
16	Baise University	35	35
17	Wuzhou University	35	31
18	Guangxi University for Science and Technology	35	30
19	Guangxi University of Finance and Economics	35	33
20	Beibu Gulf University	35	25
21	Guilin Aerospace Industry Institute	35	30
22	Guilin Tourism University	35	27
23	Hezhou University	35	30
24	Guangxi Police College	35	34
25	Guangxi Agricultural Vocational and Technical College	35	35
26	Guangxi Vocational College of Teachers Education	35	30
Total	**26**	**910**	**800**

Table 1 provides some information about the study. Firstly, 87.91% of students from 26 universities participate in the current study. Secondly, the research participants hail from a variety of educational institutions. Therefore, a comprehensive result can be obtained by studying students' public participation and management issues related to awareness,

engagement, and sense of responsibility. Secondly, data collected in the Guangxi region of China focused on the students' understanding of awareness and engagement with individual public participation experiences. This data provides valuable insights for educators and legislators who aim to enhance community education and awareness among students. Hence, education stakeholders are now addressing the need to develop mature policies and regulations within the context of education.

Instrument

This study divides the questionnaire into three parts. Part 1, Basic Information, focuses on student public participation as a personal factor in students' awareness, engagement, and sense of responsibility. It highlights students' involvement experiences during the learning process and considers factors such as gender, grade, and family background that can influence their public participation. Part 2 discusses students' public participation experience and social networks as contacts among students and lecturers. These networks, formed through interpersonal contacts, explain individuals' social behaviours and attitudes. Community participation can foster trust and self-confidence, leading to higher civic virtue and engagement. Part 3, which focuses on the development of student awareness and engagement, draws upon the empowerment theory in psychology and assesses the development of general students' self-efficacy from the perspectives of "individual," "interpersonal community," and "social politics" (Junaidi et al., 2024; Muliadi et al., 2024). It combines the development of self-efficacy with student awareness and engagement to construct a scale for assessing student sense of responsibility. The students' interpersonal community level includes interactive knowledge and skills, self-perceived influence, and interdependence. The social politics level includes dimensions of action and autonomy, legitimate anger, and structural attribution. These factors contribute to forming and maintaining students' community relationships through trust, shared interests, language and vision, reciprocity, sense of communion, and sociability, all of which subsequently influence knowledge exchange. One can use the social motivation of students as a predictor of their sense of responsibility. The results show that empowerment and social learning theories are the primary motivators. Consequently, this behaviour paves the way for the ultimate success of students' virtual communities by fostering a sense of responsibility in maintaining close relationships between students and lecturers.

Table 2: The Instruments of students' personal factors

	On-campus public participation experience
	Off-campus public participation experience
1.Gender	Personal level
	Interpersonal level
	Socio-political dimension
	Student public management consciousness
	On-campus public participation experience
	Off-campus public participation experience
2.Grade	Personal level
	Interpersonal level
	Socio-political dimension
	Student public management consciousness
	On-campus public participation experience
	Off-campus public participation experience
3.Institutions	Personal level
	Interpersonal level
	Socio-political dimension

| 4.Major fields	Student public management consciousness
	On-campus public participation experience
	Off-campus public participation experience
	Personal level
	Interpersonal level
	Socio-political dimension
	Student public management consciousness

Data collection and analysis

The study on student rights awareness in higher education institutions employs a comprehensive quantitative data analysis approach. This includes the use of descriptive statistics for initial data management and understanding of the dataset's general distribution and basic metrics, such as mean scores and standard deviations. The data were analysed using two statistical programs, namely SPSS 22 and AMOS 22 software. Furthermore, we applied the structural equation model (SEM) to carry out hypothesis testing. Furthermore, descriptive statistics using frequency distribution were generated. Pearson correlation coefficient was also used to determine the relationship among constructs. Third, standard method variance (CMV) was adopted as a prevention and post-detection technique, followed by an analysis of mediation effects.

Structural model

The fit of data to the proposed model was adequate (Hair *et al*., 2019): $\chi^2 = 1{,}170.52$, df =246, χ^2/df = 4.758, GFI = 0.866, NFI = 0.890, CFI = 0.911, IFI = 0.911, and RMSEA= 0.076.
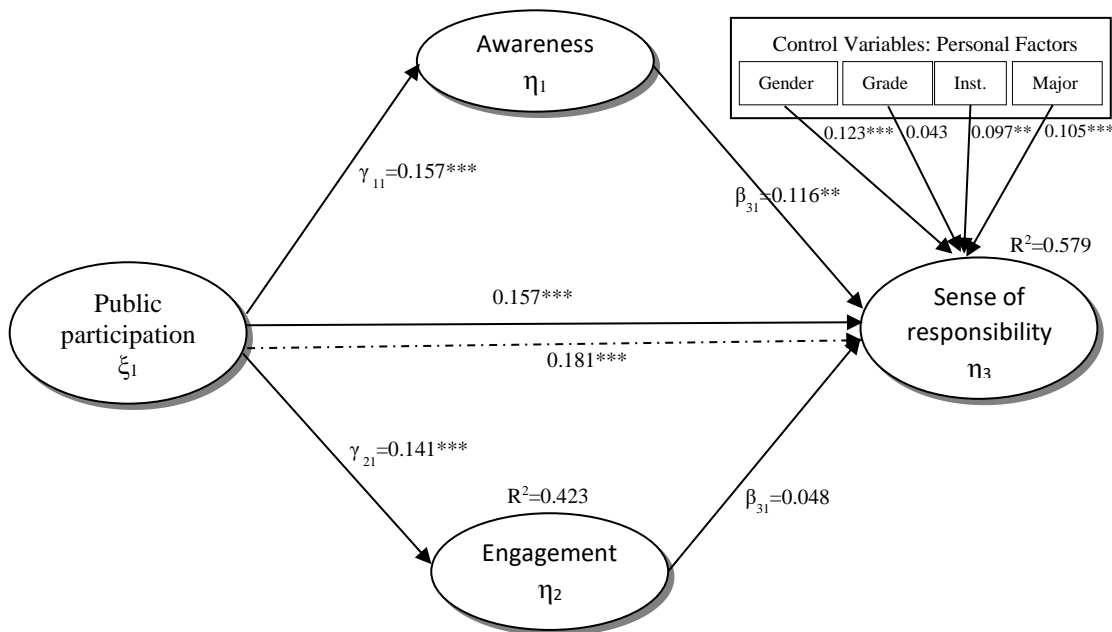
Significant at *: $p<0.05$, **: $p<0.01$, ***: $p<0.001$

Figure 3: Structural model result

The regression analysis results, as shown in Figure 3, indicate that both on-campus and off-campus public participation experiences positively and significantly influence students' awareness and engagement. The frequent personal public participation experience will enhance students' sense of responsibility in public management. These outcomes highlight the crucial

role of both on-campus and off-campus students' public participation in bolstering students' awareness and engagement with a sense of responsibility; H1 and H2 are supported. It also demonstrates that students' awareness has a positive and significant role in influencing their sense of responsibility. In contrast, students' engagement in public participation does not significantly impact their sense of responsibility. These findings underscore the distinct role of on-campus experiences in fostering interpersonal understanding of public management issues. At the same time, off-campus activities seem to have limited influence. Hence, H3 is supported, and H4 is unsupported. Interestingly, the students' demographic and personal backgrounds positively and significantly affect their sense of responsibility toward public participation, awareness, and engagement. Notably, gender differences are evident in on-campus participation and at the personal level, indicating that the student's gender influences engagement and consciousness in these areas. However, gender does not significantly affect off-campus participation, interpersonal relationships, or socio-political dimensions.

Grade level emerges as a more consistent predictor of public participation and consciousness, with significant variations across both on-campus and off-campus experiences and at the personal and interpersonal levels. However, the socio-political dimension and overall student public management consciousness remain largely unaffected by the grade level, implying that factors beyond academic standing may influence these aspects. Enhancing students' public management participation both on-campus and externally is crucial. This suggests that engagement in public activities, whether within the campus environment or externally, contributes to shaping students' awareness and engagement on public management issues. It also proves that students' awareness and engagement play an important role in mediating the relationship between students' public participation in social activities and their sense of responsibility for management issues. Figure 2 illustrates how students' awareness and engagement partially mediate the relationship between students' public participation and sense of responsibility. The results of the regression indicate that all variables are partial mediators. Therefore, the students' public participation significantly influences their sense of responsibility toward awareness and engagement, both directly and indirectly. Hence, H5 and H6 are supported.

Discussion
The research findings illuminate the complex interplay between students' personal public participation experiences on and off campus and their understanding of public management issues. This study found that balanced and active communication in public activities may foster a holistic awareness and engagement in social care towards a sense of responsibility. The research also reveals a significant positive correlation between students' on-campus experiences and external public activities, significantly enhancing their understanding of public management. However, on-campus experiences have a greater impact on public management awareness and engagement than off-campus activities. This underscores the crucial role of the educational environment in shaping students' awareness and engagement. This result aligns with preliminary studies that demonstrate the crucial role of students' public participation as a personal factor in shaping their awareness (Al Issa et al., 2024; Chang et al., 2022) and engagement towards worldview transformation and knowledge sharing (Rodriguez et al., 2020; Silvola et al., 2021). Additionally, these studies confirm that students' public participation experience significantly enhances their sense of belonging, both with and without awareness and engagement (Panigrahi et al., 2021; Shamad et al., 2023). Hence, family and community are crucial in building students' awareness and engagement on public management issues (Dhaliwal et al., 2024). This emphasises how crucial a student's interactions and personal factors are in developing their sense of responsibility (Bryson et al., 2024; Junaidi, 2024), as

well as discussions during the study about social phenomena such as political, unemployment, poverty, and social well-being issues. This shows that fostering community consciousness may take place in the classroom in addition to academic learning about social responsibility (Stagg & Bossu, 2024). These experiences equip students with a practical understanding of public duties, rendering the feeling of responsibility more tangible and relatable. This highlights the significance of experiential learning in civic education.

Practical implications
The current study suggests that education stakeholders such as government and university leaders should enhance students' public participation as a personal factor to promote positive outcomes, as they can heighten their awareness and engagement of the learning process and its quality. Furthermore, experiences as public participants may facilitate students' engagement in career activities and contribute to their cognitive awareness. The study also found that on- and off-campus learning and activities affected students' attitudes, work experience, career awareness, and engagement in social activities. Hence, these results have practical implications. Firstly, it aids students in gaining educational experiences, particularly within the educational system, that align with the academic field. Second, all actions supportive of career awareness and engagement are important. Higher education institutions frequently incorporate career planning activities and a sense of social responsibility for social issues. Therefore, lecturers should encourage and guide students to reflect on the environment and identify factors, such as economic and social values, that positively or negatively impact learning outcomes.

Conclusion and recommendations
The research findings shed light on the intricate relationship between students' experiences in public participation, both within the campus and beyond, and their comprehension of a sense of responsibility towards public management issues. This uncovers a moderate level of students' awareness and engagement across various dimensions of public participation, suggesting an active yet balanced involvement in public life with a particular emphasis on interpersonal communication and interactions. This level of awareness and engagement is instrumental in nurturing a comprehensive consciousness of public management issues and an understanding of student attitudes among college students. The study highlights the significant impact of gender and educational levels on students' experiences in public participation and sense of responsibility. It also proves that students from less academically privileged backgrounds tend to excel in areas such as participation in public activities both on-campus and off-campus, awareness of individual and interpersonal rights, and awareness of sociopolitical and public management issues. Our research provided practical implications for students' face-to-face and virtual community management interactions. Education managers or practitioners should focus on the major dimensions of empowerment theory to maximise their interactions in school. To provide reliable information, they should investigate what prompts users to create interesting posts or discuss social issues. In addition, university leaders should pay particular attention to their reference groups, especially active virtual community members, to broaden students' bases.

This implies that students from less academically privileged backgrounds may have cultivated a stronger sense of responsibility and awareness, potentially due to diverse life experiences or motivations. Furthermore, the research reveals a moderately positive correlation between students' experiences in campus activities and their participation in public activities. This indicates that these experiences significantly contribute to the understanding of issues related to public management. However, the impact of these experiences varies across different areas of awareness, with experiences on campus having a more substantial influence on the

awareness of public management than activities off campus. This variation highlights the importance of the educational environment in shaping the perceptions of students' awareness and engagement with concepts of public management. This study used cross-sectional data among students in Guangxi, China, to test the formulated investigation premises. Therefore, this result cannot be generalised. A longitudinal study must also gather comprehensive data on the factors influencing students' public participation in social phenomena, including education, health, unemployment, and mental health among youth. It could assist researchers in observing students' communication and interaction patterns under dynamic conditions, enabling them to elaborate on the content and impact of these interactions based on the social context and economic perspective. Secondly, the study solely focused on the social and personal factors influencing students' information exchange, leading to increased awareness and engagement, shaping their sense of responsibility. Future research should also investigate students' internal factors, such as institutional authority, economic and social factors, and external factors, such as culture, regions, and inter-organisation relationships, from an education perspective.

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