

Demographic and Developmental Factors of Participation in Peacebuilding Programs among Yemeni Youth

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Abstract

Peacebuilding programs targeting youth are expanding. It is essential to involve young people in these programs to ensure the future well-being and stability of their countries. Data were collected through a survey that aimed to identify the relationship between demographic and developmental factors and participation in peacebuilding programs. The research was carried out with 182 Yemeni students from universities in Sana'a city, selected through random sampling. The findings demonstrated significant connections between participation in peacebuilding and both demographic and developmental factors. Specifically, the results showed that self-efficacy and self-esteem were predictors of youth peacebuilding participation in Yemeni universities. These findings offer new insights into the involvement of Yemeni university students in peacebuilding programs, particularly in the context of conflict.

Keywords: Yemeni Youth, Civic Engagement, Peacebuilding, Demographic Factors, Developmental Factors, Self-Esteem, Self-Efficacy, Aggression, Peace in Yemen

Introduction

The world we live in is presently characterised by various forms of violence and protracted conflict. As conflict zones continue to expand globally, youth remain disproportionately affected, often experiencing both direct and indirect consequences of violence (Barber, 2013). In many underdeveloped and conflict-affected societies, limited economic, educational, and social opportunities can push young people toward involvement in violent

activities, protests, or alternative forms of political expression. At the same time, there has been growing recognition of youth as critical actors in peace and security processes, particularly within the broader discourse on civic engagement and sustainable peacebuilding (C. A. Flanagan & Sherrod, 1998; Özerdem & Podder, 2015; Sherrod et al., 2010).

Civic engagement represents a key dimension of positive youth development and serves as a foundation for political participation and social responsibility. It encompasses a wide range of activities, including volunteering, advocacy, political participation, and involvement in peacebuilding programs. In this study, peacebuilding is conceptualised as a form of civic engagement, as it involves active participation in addressing societal challenges, fostering dialogue, and contributing to collective problem-solving. However, despite the growing body of research on youth civic engagement, much of the existing literature has been conducted in relatively stable or post-conflict societies. This creates a critical gap in understanding how youth engagement operates in contexts of ongoing conflict, where structural instability, insecurity, and limited institutional support may significantly shape participation patterns (Abubakar, 2021; Pruitt, 2013).

Recent scholarship further suggests that youth participation in peacebuilding is not only shaped by structural and demographic factors but also by developmental and psychological dimensions, such as self-efficacy, identity formation, and emotional responses to conflict (Bathini & Vohra, 2014; C. Flanagan & Joseph, 2011; Nuangchalem, 2014). These internal factors influence whether young people perceive themselves as capable of contributing to peace processes, particularly in high-risk environments. Nevertheless, empirical studies that integrate both demographic and developmental perspectives within active conflict settings remain limited, especially in the Global South and conflict-affected Arab contexts.

Yemen represents a critical case in this regard. The country has been experiencing a prolonged conflict and humanitarian crisis while maintaining a predominantly young population, with a significant proportion under 24 (Transfeld & Heinze, 2019). Despite their demographic significance, Yemeni youth remain largely underrepresented in formal peacebuilding processes and decision-making structures (Alwazir, 2016). Moreover, the ongoing conflict has disrupted educational institutions, including universities, which traditionally serve as key spaces for civic engagement and youth development. Exposure to instability, violence, and uncertainty may influence students' perceptions, motivations, and opportunities to participate in peacebuilding initiatives.

Although some studies have examined youth in Yemen from political and sociological perspectives, there remains a lack of empirical research on the micro-level factors influencing their participation in peacebuilding, particularly within university settings. Furthermore, limited attention has been given to how developmental factors, such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, and aggression, interact with demographic characteristics to shape engagement in peace-related activities. Addressing this gap is essential for developing context-sensitive strategies that enhance youth participation in peacebuilding amid ongoing conflict.

Therefore, this study examines the demographic and developmental factors influencing Yemeni university students' participation in peacebuilding programs. Using survey data from 182 randomly selected students in Sana'a, the study investigates how variables such as self-

efficacy, self-esteem, aggression, and demographic characteristics predict civic engagement in peacebuilding contexts. By integrating structural and psychological perspectives, this study aims to provide empirically grounded insights into how youth in conflict-affected Yemen engage in peacebuilding efforts and to identify key factors that may enhance or hinder their participation.

Youth Civic Engagement and Participation in Peacebuilding Programs

Civic engagement has been a cornerstone of youth development, providing young people with meaningful ways to participate in shaping their communities and futures. It covers a broad range from volunteering and grassroots activism to participation in political processes and community decision-making (Carpini & Keeter, 2000; Marsh et al., 2007). Although many young people in different societies participate in various forms of civic engagement, many do not join (Ballard, 2014). Scholars have sought to understand this phenomenon by analysing a range of social and structural influences. Demographic factors such as gender, age, race, and socioeconomic status have emerged as significant predictors of civic participation patterns (Leighley & Nagler, 2016).

However, understanding civic engagement requires more than just demographic factors. Psychological and developmental elements, such as how young people see themselves, their confidence in their abilities, and how they handle emotions like frustration or aggression, also play a role. Studies indicate that higher self-esteem boosts the sense of belonging and motivation to participate in various activities. (Keyes, 2002), while self-efficacy, believing one can make a difference, emerges as a significant factor in creating the action (Schunk et al., 1987). In high-stress environments such as conflict zones, aggression can either discourage involvement or, in some instances, promote political expression and activism (Qaisy, 2014). In such a context, youth programs have become increasingly valued as settings that promote youth development and youth civic engagement (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2016). Youth programs have been shown to strengthen these developmental factors by enhancing leadership skills, participation in political and social events, building confidence, and promoting pro-social attitudes (Achinstein et al., 2016; Scales et al., 2016).

In the context of conflict-affected societies, the discourse on youth civic engagement takes on heightened importance. While youth are often portrayed as passive victims of violence, recent scholarship recognises their dual role as both vulnerable actors and potential agents of peace (Mhike, 2018). Armed conflicts limit democratic space, and systemic inequalities have led some youth to join militias, gangs, or extremist movements. However, many others have demonstrated resilience and actively contributed to local peacebuilding initiatives. International frameworks such as the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 have highlighted the strategic importance of involving youth in peace and security processes, emphasising that their participation is not only beneficial but essential for achieving sustainable peace (Quintilla, 2016).

Peacebuilding is broadly understood as a set of measures aimed at reducing the risk of conflict recurrence by addressing underlying causes and strengthening social cohesion. It extends beyond merely halting violence to encompass reconciliation, trust-building, and the reconstruction of societal institutions (Brahimi, 2000). Within this framework, young people are increasingly recognised as vital stakeholders whose views, energy, and innovation can

contribute to lasting peace. Engaging youth in national peacebuilding efforts enhances democratic accountability, promotes inclusive development, and empowers marginalised groups to play a positive role in shaping their futures (Sloam, 2014).

Although there is growing recognition of youth agency in peace processes, research on the factors influencing youth participation in peacebuilding remains limited, especially in conflict-affected Arab regions such as Yemen. Most studies have focused on stable or post-conflict societies, creating a substantial gap in understanding how young people in ongoing war zones view and participate in peace initiatives. Our study seeks to address this gap by analysing the demographic and developmental factors of peacebuilding participation among university students in Sana'a, thereby contributing to a more detailed understanding of civic engagement during prolonged crises settings.

Theoretical Background

The Theory of Civic Voluntarism Model (CVM) is extensively utilised in political behaviour research, proposed by Verba et al. (1995). The focus of CVM is to identify specific "pre-requisites" of civic participation, that is, to understand why people choose to engage or not in political activity. They have argued that available resources offer a coherent theoretical explanation of the link between socioeconomic status and participation. CVM elaborates on three key motivating factors of political participation: (1) resources, (2) psychological engagement with politics, and (3) recruitment networks (Verba et al., 1995). In this study, we concentrate on demographic factors as indicators of resources to examine the relationship between demographics and participation in peacebuilding programs.

Various demographic factors, including age and gender, are also systematically linked to engagement patterns. Demographic factors such as gender, age, and education have all been implicated as factors conditioning students' participation in peacebuilding programs (Burde, 2014). Gender differences in the literature appear in civic interest, political action, and participation in voluntary organisations (Galligan, 2014). For example, males are more likely to be highly educated and employed more than females, enhancing their ability to access resources and social capital for peacebuilding participation. These differences highlight how structural inequality can shape young people's decision to participate, especially in fragile states.

Another major influence on civic engagement and participation is education. Some of the connections here arise directly from enhancing the specific knowledge, skills, or motivations targeted by the school curriculum. For example, civic knowledge can be increased through civics education if a practical academic approach is adopted (Cromwell, 2019). Exposure to political topics in class often boosts students' interest in national issues and promotes discussion beyond school. In some cases, urban schools may lack the civic resources available in rural or suburban areas due to overcrowding or underfunding. University influences students in numerous ways. According to Verba et al. (1995), students gain factual knowledge, cognitive skills, and develop values, attitudes, and psychosocial perspectives important for civic life. Therefore, education can act as both a structural and developmental factor influencing peacebuilding participation.

Another theory used in this study was the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), an extension to socially learned attitudes and norms (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Ajzen and Fishbein have suggested that behaviour is determined by intentions, attitudes (beliefs about a behaviour), and subjective norms (beliefs about others' attitudes toward a behaviour). These two factors, personal evaluation and perceived social pressure, together determine whether a person intends to act. The theory was later extended into the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), which added perceived behavioural control as a third influence on intentions. According to TRA, the two types of factors that describe an individual's behaviour are personal and social factors. Personal factors can be considered as developmental factors as they reflect individual cognitive and psychological processes. Social factors can be identified either as demographic or contextual factors, such as educational background or other external socialisation influences (Abeyasinghe, 2009).

Developmental factors are generally concerned with individual behavior along with specific dimensions of psychological or cognitive development. In the current study, these factors include self-esteem, self-efficacy, and aggression. Self-esteem becomes one of the most commonly studied social psychology concepts (Baumeister, 1993). This close attention to self-esteem stems from its association with positive outcomes for individuals and their communities. According to Keyes, (2002), Self-esteem is recognised as a core element of personal well-being, closely connected to civic engagement. Youth with high well-being will be highly engaged in civic engagement activities and volunteer work (C. Flanagan & Joseph, 2011). Researchers found that youth feel better when they fit in, and especially when they feel recognised or rewarded for their actions. These findings suggest that self-esteem may play a role in shaping both the motivation and confidence needed for peacebuilding participation.

Having high self-esteem does not mean high involvement as it combines with other factors that influence youth decisions. Schunk et al. (1987) have debated that self-efficacy affects a person's choice and action. Individuals with higher self-efficacy are more likely to engage in tasks they believe they can successfully complete. Bandura (1986) defines self-efficacy as an individual's belief in their ability to organise and execute actions needed to achieve goals. It is not about the skills themselves, but rather the judgment of what one can do with those skills. Self-efficacy is closely tied to cognitive and motivational engagement (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003). When youth believe in their abilities, their engagement in social and civic activities is more likely to increase (Nuangchalem, 2014). This suggests that building self-efficacy may be a key strategy for motivating youth participation in peacebuilding programs. While self-esteem and self-efficacy encourage positive involvement, aggression is frequently viewed as an obstacle. As reported by Robert et al. (2005), Participation in peacebuilding is affected by various structural factors such as war, limited protection of human rights, and weak democratic institutions. Bandura (1997) has indicated that individuals learned aggressive behaviours from the social environment. In a university setting, aggression among students may develop as a result of psychological or social pressures (Qaisy, 2014). University students are often at the center of political and social change, and their aggression may sometimes motivate them to engage in activism or social movements (Abeyasinghe, 2009). Therefore, exploring the role of aggression is essential for understanding the full range of youth responses to conflict. While not traditionally considered a driver of civic participation,

aggression, when understood contextually, can reveal deeper emotional and social motivations.

The conceptual framework for this study incorporates both developmental and demographic factors to explain youth participation in peacebuilding programs. The core aim of this research is to examine the extent and nature of Yemeni youth participation in peacebuilding programs. It also considers how the objectives of these programs may differ from the realities and affiliations youth face in conflict settings. Youth's willingness to participate is shaped by their intentions, which are in turn influenced by both internal beliefs and external conditions. While peer influence and social norms are important, this study focuses specifically on individual (developmental) and structural (demographic) predictors of participation. In this framework, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and aggression serve as developmental indicators, while demographic variables such as gender, age, and education level function as predictors of structural access and opportunity. By examining the interaction of these internal and external variables, the study aims to provide a more holistic understanding of what drives or hinders Yemeni youth participation in peacebuilding efforts.

Research Framework

The framework of this study was developed by considering both demographic and developmental factors that may influence youth participation in peacebuilding programs, based on previous literature in the field. As shown in Figure 1, the selected variables aim to explain peacebuilding participation among undergraduate students from public and private universities in Sana'a, Yemen. These variables are grouped into two categories: demographic and developmental. Peacebuilding participation is treated as the dependent variable, whereas the predictor variables include developmental factors such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, and aggression, along with demographic characteristics including gender, age, faculty, field of study, and current academic year, all outlined in Figure 1. The relationships between these variables are indicated in Figure 1.

The study aims to examine the relationship between these independent variables and students' participation in peacebuilding efforts, and to interpret the nature of these relationships. The framework was tested statistically using multiple regression analysis to determine the extent to which demographic and developmental factors, separately and collectively, explain variations in youth participation in peacebuilding programs.

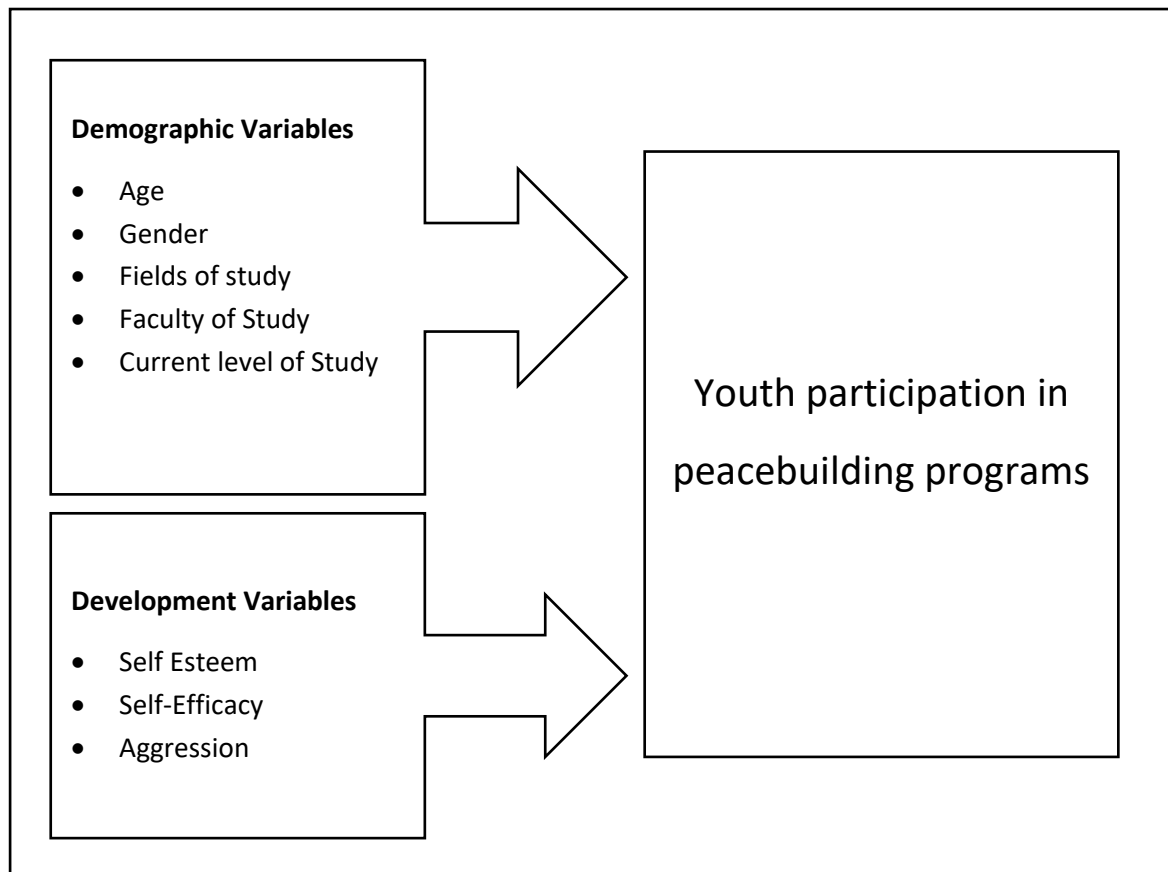


Figure 1 Research Framework of Demographic and Developmental Factors of Participation in Peacebuilding Programs Among Yemeni University Students

Research Questions

To address the above research gaps, this study poses the following research questions:

RQ1: What is the level of Yemeni youth participation in peacebuilding programs?

RQ2: Are there significant differences in the level of participation in peacebuilding programs according to demographic factors such as gender, age, current year of study, and course and faculty of study?

RQ3: What is the association between developmental factors (self-esteem, self-efficacy, aggression) and youth participation in peacebuilding programs?

RQ4: What is the contribution of selected demographic and development factors on participation in peacebuilding programs?

Methods

Participants and Procedure

This study's target population was university students from public and private institutions in Sana'a, Yemen's capital city. One might argue that university students, representing a large share of Yemen's youth, are not only tomorrow's leaders but also active players in today's peacebuilding efforts. The sampling technique employed in this study was proportionate probability sampling. In line with the definition by Yemen's Ministry of Youth, participants aged 20 to 30 were included in the study. Statistical analyses were performed on data collected from 182 participants. It was found that most respondents (86.8%) were between 20 and 25 years old, categorised as younger youth. The respondents' gender distribution

showed that the majority (84.1%) were male, while females represented 15.9%. Most of them were single, with only 13.2% married.

Most of the respondents came from Sana'a University, accounting for 78%, followed by Alyemenia University. The Faculty of Business accounted for 44% of participants, followed by Law and Islamic Studies at 19.2%. In terms of course of study, the respondents were spread across various courses, with the majority studying Islamic Sciences at 15.90%, followed by Political Science at 13.2%. The majority (29%) were in their third year, with only 8.2% in their final year of study. Therefore, the respondents' profile, defined by age, gender, and academic background, offers a fair representation of Yemeni youth in Sana'a universities.

Instruments

At the outset, respondents provided demographic information, including age, gender, current year, course of study, and faculty. To assess self-esteem, the study utilised the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), which defines self-esteem as an individual's general perception of their worth and value (Baumeister et al., 2003). Among the various available instruments, RSES remains one of the most widely adopted tools in social science research. The scale measures a single dimension and has been used in many previous studies with Cronbach alpha scores ranging from .61 to .90 (Schmitt & Allik, 2005). Students' self-efficacy was measured using the Self-Efficacy Scale, which served as one of the study's independent variables. Unlike general confidence assessments, this scale emphasises personal capability within supportive or challenging environments (Abeyasinghe, 2009). In prior research, the scale reported a Cronbach's alpha reliability score of .68, indicating moderate internal consistency. The students were asked to answer the question using a five-point Likert format from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

One of the most used scales to measure the individual's aggression is the Aggression Questionnaire developed by Bryant & Smith (2001). A 12-item version has been proposed based on intensive investigation and confirmatory studies. That reduced version has shown an improved fit in Bryant and Smith's research, and it has also presented good psychometric properties in other studies (Vitoratou et al., 2009). The Cronbach's alpha value reported ranged from .60 to .90. The measurement used in this study was the short version of BPAQ. Participation was assessed using a 24-item section designed to explore students' levels of engagement in peacebuilding activities. The Activism Orientation Scale (AOS) was utilised to measure participation (Corning & Myers, 2002). AOS is reliable with a sample of college students. The AOS has shown strong reliability across studies involving university populations, with reported alpha coefficients ranging from .87 to .97 (Ponterotto & Ruckdeschel, 2007). Respondents were asked to indicate their level of participation on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "extremely low engagement" of a person to "extremely high" engagement". For analysis, we categorised participation into three levels: low, moderate, and high.

Validity of Instruments

Reliability Test

The instrument for measuring participation in peacebuilding programs was adopted using Abeyasinghe's (2009) measurement of social activism orientation. These items were selected, and experts agreed upon them. Seven independent variables were utilised: gender, age, faculty, fields of study, and current year of study. The developmental variables (self-esteem,

self-efficacy, and aggression) were adopted from previous research and developed by the researchers. The levels of participation in the peacebuilding program, as well as self-esteem, self-efficacy, and aggression, were measured using Likert scale instruments. All items used in this study were adopted, as mentioned earlier in the instrument section. The original scales were written in English. Because most respondents could not understand English, the researchers consulted the translation office at Sana'a University to translate the items into Arabic.

A pilot study was conducted with 25 respondents. The questionnaire Google link was sent to them by email. All the questions are automatically set up as compulsory, and the respondent needs to finish the current section to move to the next. Respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire and submit it.

Table 1
Reliability Test (Cronbach's Alpha) Results

Scale	Number of Items	Reliability Pilot	Actual study
Self-Esteem	10	.734	.802
Self-Efficacy	11	.663	.723
Aggression	12	.812	.905
Peacebuilding programs	24	.903	.912

Results

Analysis 1: The Level of Youth Participation in Peacebuilding Programs Among Youth in Yemen

The first research question examines the level of youth participation in peacebuilding programs. As shown in Table 2, the respondent's level of participation in the peacebuilding program was categorised as low, moderate, and high. These categories were derived from the composite mean scores of participants' responses to items measuring participation in peacebuilding programs. The participation score, based on a Likert scale from 1 to 5, was divided into three equal parts of roughly 1.33. As a result, a mean score below 2.34 was regarded as low participation, scores from 2.34 to 3.67 were seen as moderate participation, and scores above 3.67 indicated high participation. Most youth respondents (83.0%) reported a moderate level of participation in peacebuilding programs.

On the other hand, a smaller proportion (14.3%) fell into the low participation category, with only 2.7% of respondents identified as having a high level of participation. These findings suggest that while most youth are moderately involved in peacebuilding, few are highly engaged, which can be attributed to the uncertainty that the country is currently experiencing.

Table 2

Level of Participation in Peacebuilding Programs

Level of participation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low (<2.34)	26	14.3
Moderate (2.34 – 3.67)	151	83.0
High (> 3.67)	5	2.7
Total	182	100.0

Analysis 2: Level of Participation in Peacebuilding Program and Demographic Variables.

This analysis addresses the second research question of the study. The respondents' participation levels in the peacebuilding program were examined with selected demographic variables. The outcomes given in Table 3 demonstrate a change in the level of participation in peacebuilding programs according to gender. 70.3% of the male respondents moderately participated in peacebuilding programs, while just 12.6% of the female respondents did the same. Comparative rate flows were shown for the high-level participation in the peacebuilding program among males and females. In any case, 12.1% of the male respondents were involved at the lower level of participation in the peacebuilding program, while 2.2% of females participated at a similar level. The Chi-square test for independence indicated that there is no significant association between the three levels of participation in peacebuilding programs and the gender of the respondents ($\chi^2 = 2.223$, $p = .329$, Cramer's $V = .111$).

The respondents' proportion by the three levels of participation in peacebuilding programs concerning their age group is presented in Table 3. According to the findings, Yemeni youth's participation within the age of 20 to 25 at the higher (2.7%) level of participation in the peacebuilding program is larger than the older youth in the age range of 26 to 30 years (0.7%). On the other hand, the 26–30-year-old youth group participation at the moderate level is lower than that of the 20–25-year-old youth group. However, the Chi-square test of independence results showed no significant difference in the proportions of engagement by different age groups ($\chi^2 = .890$, $p = .641$, Cramer's $V = .070$).

The study population comprised first- to fourth-year students. The levels of participation in peacebuilding programs based on the respondents' year of study are shown in Table 3. As indicated by the outcomes acquired, a greater proportion of second-year respondents (23.6%) participated in peacebuilding at the moderate level, followed by third-year students (22.5%) and fourth-year students (20.9%) with moderate levels of engagement. The Chi-square value indicated no significant distinctions between the year of study and the participation level in the peacebuilding program ($\chi^2 = 9.156$, $p = .406$; Cramer's $V = .130$).

Table 3

Level of Participation in Peacebuilding Program and Gender, Age, Year of Study

Demographic variables	Participation			X^2	Sig- X^2	CV	Sig.
	Low	moderate	high				
Gender				2.223	.329	.111	.329
Male	12.1%	70.3%	1.6%				
female	2.2%	12.6%	1.1%				
Age				.890	.641	.070	.641
20-25	12.6%	71.4%	2.7%				
26-30	1.6%	11.5%	0.7%				
Year of study				9.156	.406	.130	.406
1st	3.3%	15.9%	1.1%				
2 nd	1.6%	23.6%	0.5%				
3 rd	5.5%	22.5%	1.1%				
4 th – final years	3.8%	20.9%					

The distribution of respondents' participation in peacebuilding programs by faculty and course of study is presented in Table 4. Consistent with the overall results in Table 2, the majority of students (83.0%) reported moderate participation, followed by 14.3% reporting low participation and only 2.7% reporting high participation. While the overall high-participation rate was low, variation emerged within faculties and courses. For instance, within-faculty analysis showed that Law (16.7%), Political Science (6.1%), and Computer Science (9.1%) had relatively higher proportions of students in the high participation category compared to other programs. Conversely, low participation was most common among students in Biology (33.3%), Law (33.3%), and Marketing (31.3%). Moderate participation dominated across most courses, with Civil Engineering (60.0%) and Business Management (23.8%) showing the highest within-course proportions. These findings indicate that although certain programs exhibit relatively higher or lower participation levels internally, the overall engagement profile across faculties is heavily skewed toward moderate participation. The Chi-square test for independence revealed no statistically significant association between either faculty or course of study and the level of participation in peacebuilding programs ($\chi^2 = 43.643, p = .244$), suggesting that academic background may not be a determining factor in shaping students' engagement with peacebuilding initiatives.

Table 4

Level of Participation in Peacebuilding Program by Course of Study

Faculty and Course of Study	Level of Participation in Peacebuilding Programs			Total n (%)
	Low n (%)	Moderate n (%)	High n (%)	
Business	15 (20.2%)	58 (78.4%)	1 (1.4%)	74 (100%)
Accounting	3 (18.8%)	13 (81.3%)	0 (0.0%)	16 (100%)
Business Administration	4 (19.0%)	16 (76.2%)	1 (4.8%)	21 (100%)
Business Management	3 (14.3%)	18 (85.7%)	0 (0.0%)	21 (100%)
Marketing	5 (31.3%)	11 (68.8%)	0 (0.0%)	16 (100%)
Engineering	2 (16.7%)	10 (83.3%)	0 (0.0%)	12 (100%)
Architecture Engineering	2 (28.6%)	5 (71.4%)	0 (0.0%)	7 (100%)
Civil Engineering	0 (0.0%)	5 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (100%)
Law and Islamic	3 (8.6%)	31 (88.6%)	1 (2.9%)	35 (100%)
Islamic Science	1 (3.4%)	28 (96.6%)	0 (0.0%)	29 (100%)
Law	2 (33.3%)	3 (50.0%)	1 (16.7%)	6 (100%)
Political Science	1 (3.0%)	30 (90.9%)	2 (6.1%)	33 (100%)
Political Science	1 (3.0%)	30 (90.9%)	2 (6.1%)	33 (100%)
Sciences	5 (17.9%)	22 (78.6%)	1 (3.6%)	28 (100%)
Biology	2 (33.3%)	4 (66.7%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (100%)
Computer Science	1 (9.1%)	9 (81.8%)	1 (9.1%)	11 (100%)
English	2 (18.2%)	9 (81.8%)	0 (0.0%)	11 (100%)

Analysis 3: Correlation of Peacebuilding Program Participation and Developmental Variables

Table 5 shows the correlation relationships between selected developmental variables, including self-esteem, self-efficacy, and aggression, and youth participation in peacebuilding programs. The results show a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and participation in peacebuilding ($r = .303, p < .01$) as guided by Cohen's (1988) Guidelines. Based on that, it represents a small effect size, suggesting that increases in self-esteem are moderately associated with higher levels of participation in peacebuilding programs. This suggests that self-esteem may serve as a psychological asset that encourages youth participation in peacebuilding initiatives.

A stronger and significant positive correlation was found between self-efficacy and participation in peacebuilding programs ($r = .689, p < .01$). This represents a large effect size, indicating that self-efficacy is a significant factor in participation in peacebuilding. Youth who believe in their capacity to take action are more likely to be involved in peace-related programs. This finding reinforces the idea that enhancing youths' confidence in their abilities can foster greater civic and social engagement. In contrast, aggression was found to be negatively correlated with participation in peacebuilding programs ($r = -.101$). Still, this correlation was not statistically significant at the $p < .05$ or $p < .01$ levels. Therefore, the direction of the relationship suggests that more aggressive students may be less likely to be involved in peacebuilding.

Table 5

Correlation Between Developmental Variables and Participation in Peacebuilding Programs

Variables	Mean	SD	Peacebuilding	Self_esteem	Self_efficacy
Peacebuilding	2.7468	.41996			
Self_esteem	2.4725	.43875	.303**		
Self_efficacy	2.4905	.66494	.689**	.530**	
Aggression	3.0224	.64881	-.101	-.134	-.190*

N = 182. $p < .05$ (*), $p < .01$ (**). Correlations are based on Pearson's r (2-tailed).

Analysis 4: Regression results

The final step in the analysis was to examine the contribution of each variable to participation in peacebuilding programs. Preliminary checks confirmed that the assumptions for multiple regression were met. As noted by Pallant (2013), a Tolerance value above .10 and a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) below 10 indicate no multicollinearity. In this study, tolerance values ranged from .924 to .968, and no correlation between the predictors exceeded 0.80, confirming that multicollinearity was not a concern (Hair, 1998). Multiple regression can be influenced by extreme scores (Pallant, 2013), so data were screened for outliers before running the model.

The analysis used the Enter method with eight predictors: self-esteem, self-efficacy, aggression, age, gender, year of study, faculty, and course of study (Table 6). The unstandardized coefficients (B) indicate the direction and size of the relationship between each predictor and participation in peacebuilding programs. Among the developmental variables, self-efficacy ($B = 0.477$) was positively associated with participation, as was self-esteem ($B = 0.390$). Aggression ($B = -.077$) showed a negative relationship with participation. For demographic variables, age ($B = .059$, $p = .705$), gender ($B = -.054$, $p = 0.226$), year of study ($B = 0.022$, $p = 0.569$), faculty ($B = -0.006$, $p = 0.739$), and course of study ($B = 0.007$, $p = 0.455$) were not statistically significant predictors.

When looking at the standardised coefficients (Beta), self-efficacy made the strongest contribution to predicting participation ($\beta = .399$, $t = 4.696$, $p < .001$). Self-esteem was the second strongest ($\beta = 0.230$, $t = 2.809$, $p = .006$). Other predictors, including aggression, age, gender, year of study, faculty, and course, did not make a statistically significant contribution ($p > .05$).

These findings highlight the central role of self-efficacy in shaping students' participation in peacebuilding programs, with self-esteem also emerging as an important factor. The results suggest that initiatives aimed at improving students' confidence in their abilities and their self-worth could have a strong impact on their participation in peacebuilding activities.

Table 6

Multiple Regression Model for Peacebuilding Programs

Predictors	Un-standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig
	B	Std Error	Beta		
Constant)	.513	.611	–	.838	.403
X1 Self_esteem	.390	.139	.230	2.809	.006
X2 Self_efficacy	.477	.102	.399	4.696	.000
X3 Aggression	-.077	.085	-.058	-.911	.364
X4 Age	.059	.156	.024	.379	.705
X5 Gender	-.054	.083	-.078	-1.215	.226
X6 Course	.007	.009	.047	.748	.455
X7 Faculty	-.006	.019	-.021	-.333	.739
X8 Year of study	.022	.038	.036	.571	.569

Dependent variable: participation in peacebuilding programs. B = unstandardized coefficient; Beta = standardized coefficient; Sig = significance level ($p < .05$).

Based on the model summary in Table 7, the R -value is **.595**, indicating a moderate to strong positive correlation between participation in peacebuilding programs and the combined predictor variables. The R^2 value is **.354**, meaning that approximately 35.4% of the variance in participation is explained by these independent variables. According to Cohn et al. (1994), an R^2 value of .40 is considered large, .25 medium, and .02 small. Therefore, the obtained value of .354 is considered a medium-to-large effect size for the model. The adjusted R^2 value of **.324** shows that the model retains good explanatory power after adjusting for the number of predictors included.

Table 7

Model Summary of Regression Analysis

R	R^2	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.595 ^a	.354	.324	.695

Predictors: (Constant), self-esteem, self-efficacy, aggression, age, gender, year of study, faculty, and course.

The analysis of variance presented in Table 8 shows that the overall regression model is statistically significant, $F(8, 173) = 11.85$, $p < .001$, indicating that the set of independent variables significantly predicts participation in peacebuilding programs. While the overall model is significant, the results from earlier tables demonstrate that not all individual predictors contributed significantly; some showed significant effects while others did not. Nonetheless, the overall trend points toward a positive inclination for peacebuilding participation among university youth. Furthermore, the correlation and regression findings support the theoretical foundations of participation theory and the theory of planned

behaviour. Therefore, it can be concluded that developmental factors play an essential role in contributing to youth participation in peacebuilding efforts in Yemen.

Table 8

The Result of the Analysis of Variance

Model	Sum of	df	Mean Square	R square	F	Sig.
Regression	46.15	8	5.77	.354	11.85	.000 ^b
Residual	84.27	173	.487			
Total	130.42	181				

a. Dependent Variable: Peacebuilding

b. Predictors: (Constant), self-esteem, self-efficacy, aggression, age, gender, year of study, faculty, and course

Discussion and Recommendation for Further Research

The main aim of the current study was to examine Yemeni youth's participation in peacebuilding programs by investigating the relationship between demographic and developmental factors and their involvement in peacebuilding initiatives. Five demographic factors were analysed in this study: age, gender, field of study, faculty, and current year. Additionally, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and aggression were assessed as developmental factors. The findings are presented according to each research objective.

The participation level of peacebuilding programs among Yemeni youth showed a moderate participation level (83%) among the overall sample. 14.3% of the study participants indicated a low level of participation in peacebuilding programs, while only 2.7% participated at a high level. These findings align with those of Özerdem & Podder (2015) and Wilton (2016), who demonstrated that university training fosters political progression among students and enhances their participation in various peacebuilding programs. Participation in peacebuilding is a result of the current socio-political and economic circumstances. Youth who have previously served in various peacebuilding programs can review the problems encountered in the peacebuilding process and create a road map to improve peace and prevent the re-occurrence of conflict in Yemen.

These findings indicate no significant differences in the demographic factors in predicting participation in peacebuilding programs. The gender distribution showed that the majority were males (84%), which is higher than the 30% reported from Burundi's conflict zone (Jobbins & Ahitungiye, 2015). Moreover, Strickland & Duvvury (2003) reported equal participation among genders. The low female participation in this study might be associated with a disproportion of females in the various universities. As stated by Smock & Crocker (1995), excluding women disregards a significant opportunity to participate. Females bring alternate perspectives on peace and conflict issues and have demonstrated the ability to contribute effectively. The Chi-square Linear Association showed no significant gender difference ($p = .329$). Similarly, there was no significant difference by age ($p = .541$) or current year of study ($p = .406$). Second, third, and fourth-year students participated at a moderate level with percentages of 23.60%, 22.50%, and 20.60%, respectively. Educational content varies from one program to another; thus, incorporating civic learning, community abilities,

and civic attitude, as highlighted by the United Nations Development Program (Ellison, 2014), could further enhance youth participation.

The correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between both self-efficacy ($r = .689, p < .01$) and self-esteem ($r = .303, p < .01$) and participation in peacebuilding programs, consistent with the findings of Pruitt (2013). This indicates that as self-esteem and self-efficacy increase, students' participation in peacebuilding programs also increases. These results suggest that enhancing self-esteem and self-efficacy may help promote greater engagement in such programs among university students in Yemen. In contrast, aggression showed a negative but non-significant relationship with participation in peacebuilding programs ($r = -.101, p > .05$), indicating that while higher aggression scores were associated with lower participation, this relationship was not statistically reliable. Overall, these findings demonstrate that developmental factors, particularly self-esteem and self-efficacy, are essential in understanding students' involvement in peacebuilding initiatives and support Ajzen's theory of planned behaviour, specifically the role of perceived behavioural control, in this context.

The final objective of this study was to determine the contribution of the selected variables to participation in peacebuilding programs. The regression model was statistically significant, $F(8,173) = 11.85, p < .001$, explaining 35.4% of the variance in participation (adjusted R square = .324). Among the developmental variables, self-efficacy ($B = .477, p < .001$) showed the strongest positive association with participation, followed by self-esteem ($B = 0.390, p = .006$). Aggression ($B = -.077, p = .364$) had a negative but non-significant association. For demographic variables, age ($B = .059, p = .705$), gender ($B = -.054, p = .226$), year of study ($B = .022, p = .569$), faculty ($B = -.006, p = .739$), and course of study ($B = .007, p = .455$) were not significant. These findings indicate that both developmental and demographic factors play a role, with self-efficacy and self-esteem standing out as the most influential predictors of participation in peacebuilding programs.

University students, as a significant part of youth, should be included in youth policies and the development of youth-focused programs. University authorities need to introduce more activities to address youth needs in accordance with the Yemeni youth policy. Further research is necessary to examine youth behaviours and motivations for participating in such programs, as well as to identify which programs are required during the current conflict and in the post-conflict period. This study aimed to categorise the factors influencing youth participation but could not encompass all, such as peer groups, family, mass media, and other social factors. Such research is vital in Yemen, where youth make up 65% of the population. This sizable proportion could lead to instability if young people feel marginalised. Empowering youth, providing them with opportunities, and recognising their role as key contributors to national development will have positive impacts on both individuals and their communities. Female students should be considered equal partners in peacebuilding. The high level of male domination in student engagement has discouraged female participation. Research on barriers facing females is scarce and insufficiently addressed. Studying female behavior and the factors affecting their participation will help in understanding these barriers, which currently undermine gender equality. There are no open records on student engagement in peacebuilding across universities in Yemen. Establishing a national-level center to collect and maintain data on student participation in peacebuilding is essential. Such initiatives could

support longitudinal studies to track trends and enhance the role of university students in peacebuilding. Many significant changes are needed, and several questions remain unanswered.

Ethical approval and informed consent statements

Ethical approval for this survey was obtained from the University Ethics Committee of Universiti Putra Malaysia (JKEUPM). All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their rights and provided voluntary informed consent before completing the questionnaire.

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