

Electoral competence of students

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an empirical study with regard to National Council elections in Austria

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This study can be from an information science point of view assigned to the subject area of information literacy. It examines the electoral competence of students on the basis of questions in which the positioning of the most important political parties in Austria regarding selected subject areas has to be assessed. The electoral competence is measured as the difference between this assessment and the actual positioning and is higher the smaller this difference is. In addition, we analyze whether there are differences in competence according to the branch of study, gender, age and political interest. The data regarding the positioning of the parties was taken from the voting advice application “wahlkabine.at”, and those for assessing this positioning were collected by means of a structured survey of 620 students. Our results indicate that students are politically quite competent. On average, the error rate was between 24.7 and 36.6 percent, depending on the methodology used. Students indicating a high interest in politics showed significantly better results.

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