



SOCIAL MEDIA POLITICAL USAGE AND POLITICAL INTEREST OF
UTAR STUDENTS

LEE RONG WEI

A RESEARCH PROJECT

SUBMITTED IN

PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR

BACHELOR OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

(HONOURS)

FACULTY OF CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN

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LEE RONG WEI

APPROVAL FORM

This research paper attached hereto, entitled Social Media Political Usage and Political Interest of UTAR Students prepared and submitted by Lee Rong Wei in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Corporate Communication (Hons) is hereby accepted.

xinyi

Date: 28th April 2023

Supervisor

Ms. Yong Xin Yi

ABSTRACT

Social media which plays a part in people's lives can create impact on others by their way of thinking, attitude, and political views to young adults especially University students that are highly relying on it. As the trend of social media and electronic devices has grown rapidly, being able to influence other people's thoughts and enhance their perspective of political thinking has also increased (Cogburn & Espinoza-Vasquez, 2011). This study focuses on the social media political usage and political interest of UTAR (Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman) students. More precisely, this study looks into social media components that can increase UTAR students' general political interest. The data collected was analyzed by descriptive analysis in this study. Considering all the findings, it can be concluded that political issues are not the priority to students when they browse through social media. However, the various elements of social media can spark their political interest. For instance, short videos, social media influencers, podcasts, social blogs, and others. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that social media influencers have credibility when they publish something related to the politic field and it influences students' views. It is advised that future study be done with more in-depth research.


Keywords: Politics, University students, Political interest, social media

DECLARATION

I declare that the material contained in this paper is the end result of my own work and that due acknowledgement has been given in the bibliography and references to ALL sources be they printed, electronic or personal.

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Social Media Political Usage and Political Interest of UTAR Students

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The preferences of UTAR students towards obtaining political information and the elements that enhance their political interest are examined in this study. The background of study, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, the key concepts, the significance of the study are all outlined in this chapter.

1.1 Background of Study

The art of social decision-making and the division of power in a society is called politics. Political processes affect every part of life and affect every individual. Politics are essential to the advancement and development of society and the economy (Higa, 2022). Every vote has an impact on how we live. It's critical to always express our viewpoint. Our choice will have an impact on a lot of individuals and their daily lives (Mortenson, 2022). Politics, which also establishes the foundation for morality and ethics, is the basis for human rights. Without politics, there would be human rights violations because people would lack a clear standard and understanding of their rights as citizens of a country or community. Having legislative texts and political practises that define human rights helps people comprehend their rights in the political and social landscape (Higa, 2022).

The younger generation of today accepts the use of new media for political reasons, including the world wide web and other applications. For instance, clips of political information and other political movements are downloaded and uploaded using Youtube as a platform for personal video sharing (Abdullah et al., 2021). A key role in the political context is also played by other social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and instant messaging

applications like WhatsApp (Abdullah et al., 2021). This situation explains why and how online political information-seeking activities can be viewed as a substitute for offline methods that can be used to communicate with friends, converse, ask questions or engage in practises, share beliefs with others, or obtain information about topics related to politics.

Young people actively engage in politics on social media. The way and reason why young people express themselves and get involved in politics online determines how likely they are to engage in political activity. The internet has changed politics from web 1.0 technology to web 2.0 technology (Cogburn & Espinoza-Vasquez, 2011). It is a very democratic "deliberation place," making it a popular political platform in society. As a result, it acknowledges it as a powerful platform for political engagement (Abdullah et al., 2021).

The most accessible and significant form of communication in today's globalized world is social media. Users can participate, reply honestly, and share information quickly and efficiently using these Internet-based tools. Among the more popular social media platforms are Whatsapp, Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, TikTok and so on (Joyce, 2022).

In Malaysia, 89% of the population used social media as of January 2022. It was an increase of 43% from 2016, when only 62% of Malaysia's population used social media.situation (Joyce, 2022). Therefore, the objective of this research is to examine what platforms UTAR students use to learn about politics and what elements might increase their interest in politics. Data collection for this study will be conducted using quantitative research methodology.

A questionnaire will be utilized as a tool to gather information about the political interests of UTAR students as well as their choices for various platforms to learn about politics. This study makes an effort to measure how UTAR students behave when it comes to obtaining political views via various platforms, particularly social media, using the Uses and Gratification Theory. Additionally, the way in which people use various social media platforms

for varied purposes is heavily influenced by their needs and level of satisfaction. This suggests that social media does give students a forum for political discourse, increasing their level of political awareness.

1.2 Research Problem

Social media, which are important information sources, are responsible for informing the public about political news and information, which has an impact on political support in Malaysia (Salman et al., 2020). In recent research about social media as a political information source, researchers demonstrated how the use of social media affects political knowledge by facilitating online dialogues across various social media platforms (Intyaswati et al., 2021). It is proven that the more frequently students engage in political discourse on social media, the more knowledgeable they are (Intyaswati et al., 2021). But they did not investigate which platform students prefer to access political information. As a result, researchers are not focusing on the behavior of students when it comes to obtaining political information.

Due to the limited studies that focus on studying how youth and students obtain political information, UTAR students did not contribute as part of the studies. This study will focus on what and why students prefer certain media platforms to obtain such information. Furthermore, political awareness is vital to students because it can affect their daily lives. Thus, this research will provide useful insights to various platforms regarding how student groups obtain political information.

This research will study the elements that might enhance the political participation of UTAR students. For instance, comedy, political related videos, campaigns, dialogue, politicians' online interaction and so on. Therefore, this study can provide insights into the education system regarding what are the elements that may influence the political awareness

of university students, and they might be convenient when it comes to future educational information.

1.3 Research question

RQ 1: What platforms do UTAR students use to obtain political information?

RQ 2: What are the elements that can enhance the political interest of UTAR students?

1.4 Research objectives

RO 1: To examine which platforms UTAR students prefer to obtain political information.

RO 2: To determine the elements that enhance political interest of UTAR students.

1.5 Significance of study

1.5.1 Practical significance

This topic will provide insights to the phenomena of political impact on social media, particularly among UTAR students. The 14th General Election in Malaysia served as a proof to the influence of all these platforms, as a significant portion of younger voters who obtained their political knowledge from social media cast their ballots for Pakatan Harapan (Salman et al., 2020). Overall, the information in this article will be helpful for politicians, governments, corporations, education organizations, and society at large when it comes to social media. For instance, the findings of this study can be used to inform future educational goals, as students' interest in politics will increase their desire to learn about politics.

1.5.2 Theoretical significance

In this study, uses and gratification theory will be implied in it. The Uses and Gratification concept explores how the media affects people's lives. It discusses how individuals use the media to further their own objectives and experience satisfaction when those needs are met. In other words, the approach emphasizes what users of media do with them rather than what media exposes users to. Since the research is primarily concerned with which platforms UTAR students favor for gaining political viewpoints, it is crucial that we incorporate the uses and gratification theory to fully comprehend why students prefer various platforms for obtaining various types of information, opinions, and experiences.

1.5.3 Methodology significance

In this study, we will be using a quantitative approach by distributing survey questionnaires to UTAR students. The reason for selecting UTAR students is because we want to gain more insights regarding how students nowadays obtain political information and the elements that can influence political awareness. This chapter will discuss the instrument for data collection for each variable, the survey questionnaire will be designed with the objectives to determine how UTAR students obtain political information and what are the elements that influence the political awareness of UTAR students.

The structure of quantitative research makes it possible to conduct larger investigations, which improves the accuracy of generalization about the topic matter. Because this research is working with closed-ended data rather than open-ended questions, there are also fewer factors that can bias the results. Small sample sizes must be used in qualitative research since the researchers must gather several detailed data points. This reduces the number of participants by producing a time-consuming resource. Next, this study mainly focuses on how students

obtain political information and what element they prefer to enhance their political interest. Without doubt, politics can be a sensitive topic in a **fairly** conservative country like Malaysia. Hence, a quantitative approach will allow us to get anonymity involved. People are not required to identify themselves with specificity in the data collected. Even if surveys or interviews are distributed to each individual, their personal information does not make it to the form. This setup reduces the risk of false results because some research participants are ashamed or disturbed about the subject discussions which involve them.

1.6 Definition of Keywords

1.6.1 Political interests

Political interest, which is a key element of political motivation in terms of political sociology, is a variable that indicates the potential for ideological conceptualization, which is necessary for engaging in the democratic process (Rebenstorf, 2004).

1.6.2 Social media

The phrase "social media" refers to a computer-based technology that makes it possible to share concepts, ideas, and knowledge through online groups and networks (Dollarhide, 2022).

1.6.3 Politics

Politics has an impact on nations and the people who live in them all over the world because it allows individuals to decide on laws and policies that will allow them to coexist peacefully (Wilda, 2014).

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter covers the topic's overall theme, which is related to politics and which platform students learn about politics. Additionally, it has been stated that the basis of the study consists of two research questions: what platforms UTAR students utilize to get political information, and what factors can increase UTAR students' interest in politics. Moving on to the study's objectives, it will look at the platforms UTAR students choose to learn about politics and identify the factors that influence their political interest. Next, this chapter goes into detail about how the research might be beneficial to various sectors, such as lawmakers, governments, businesses, educational institutions, and the general public. The approach of uses and the gratification theory will be thoroughly explained in the following chapter, including how applicable they are to this study.

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This Chapter highlights previous research on how university students usually obtain political information from various platforms, how aware they are when it comes to politics and what elements could possibly enhance their political interest. The purpose of this review is to explore scholarly literature on the themes explored in this study, which also covers conceptual framework and the theoretical framework.

2.1 Political interaction on social media among young adults

Political culture is a very broad concept that refers to how community members behave, get involved in politics, perceive it, and have expectations of it (Salman et al., 2020). There are three types of political involvement: spectators, who are just moderately active in politics, gladiators, who are heavily involved in politics, and apathetics, who do not participate in politics or have withdrawn from the political process (Salman et al., 2020). Internet-based democracy today adds a new dimension to the communication and information-dissemination process, particularly among young people. Politicians seized on this phenomenon to advance their political agenda by deploying a variety of political messaging that could sway young people (Salman et al., 2020).

Social networking websites are becoming increasingly popular among youth these days. The most prevalent websites used for social networking are Facebook and Twitter when it comes to politics (Khan et al., 2019). Politicians now use social media to further their political agendas. Social media are consequently viewed as a sort of unrestricted information access that facilitates information distribution. Even users have the freedom to communicate, express their

thoughts, and become more politically active. For the benefit of the party they endorse, "keyboard warrior" groups are eager to argue on Facebook and Twitter (Mohamad et al., 2018).

However, it is commonly acknowledged that using Facebook for political purposes, particularly to promote current events, has lowered the barriers to youth participation in political activities and expanded the range of informal activities (Mohamad et al., 2018). Similar to this, the popularity of Facebook, particularly among young people, has created an environment where politicians may openly support themselves and interact with their constituencies in a variety of ways. Facebook has similarly enabled young people to communicate with one another on political issues and to share and consider their perspectives. Political interaction online has a good impact on political participation, according to studies on the use of Facebook in politics (Mohamad et al., 2018).

2.2 Youth are not interested in politics

On the other hand, the political life cycle model asserts that young people are uninterested in politics because they are preoccupied with the pursuit of careers, jobs, intimate relationships, and other goals; they are either viewed as preoccupied with planning for the future or as drawn to other pursuits that occupy their free time, such as sports or partying (Russo & Stattin, 2016). However, the psychological aging perspective contends that youths' lack of interest in politics is a result of their perception that politics has no impact on their daily lives (Russo & Stattin, 2016).

Regardless of whether conventional or unconventional political participation is included, research demonstrates that youth are politically apathetic (Ting & Wan Ahmad, 2021). Their disinterest in electoral politics supports research from other countries including Malaysia. Although 36% of young people say they are interested in politics, none of them are involved in the youth wings of political parties. Only 20% of them had gone to an election rally,

where passionate speeches are used to spark people's interest in politics (Ting & Wan Ahmad, 2021). It is unlikely that young people will actively be involved in political parties or elections given the findings on their participation in politics both conventional and unconventional.

Most young adults and their parents do not even submit letters to government organizations asking them to fix issues like transportation and drainage. While half of the youth's parents participate in village-level organizations, once they graduate from high school or college, they do not participate together. Membership in an organization is a crucial non-political space that has been discovered to encourage young people to take part in protests and petition signing events and serves as a forum for the distribution of political news (Ting & Wan Ahmad, 2021).

Going back in time, in the early nineties, there has been a low level of participation of university students in politics compared to today. During 2017, a study found that in Malaysia, only 43 per cent of 18 to 29-year-old Malaysians have voted in General Elections compared to 87 percent of those in the age range of 50 years and older (Zainon et al., 2017). Other indications of young people's poor political participation exist in addition to this.

Although voting is a key participatory act of a representative democracy, the political situation in the world in 2000 is that young people are less engaged and there are fewer young people who voted for their representative. Similar problems are present in Malaysia's local political environment. Malaysian adolescents participate in politics at the lowest rate among Commonwealth nations, coming in at position 47 out of the 51 member countries, according to the Youth Development Index (YDI) study (Zainon et al., 2017). This has grown to be a concern for national policy. The reason is that young people's voices count and that their actions could push a corrupted nation to become better in the coming future through their courageous opinions and daring suggestions.

2.3 Elements that enhance political interest among young adults

The result showed children whose parents talk about politics frequently fond towards politics and wish to become engaged in politics (Dostie-Goulet, 2009). However, the impact of other socializing agents should not be underestimated. For instance, friends and teachers. Peers were frequently explored to be similar with parents in terms of their power to influence a shift in political opinion, and findings relating to teachers imply that specific subjects, in this case history, can have a significant civic impact (Dostie-Goulet, 2009).

At least for adolescents, parents are often seen as the most significant socialization facilitators. The earliest research on political socialization, carried out during 1960s and 1970s. The research previously focused on the relationship between parents and children and revealed the impact of the former on the latter. While these studies do not always attribute all a person's political socialization to their parents, most people would place them among the most significant influences (Dostie-Goulet, 2009).

Parents' political interests should become less strongly correlated with their children's interests as time passes and kids become more disengaged from the family. Teenagers learn the value of their friends as they get older. According to Berndt, talking with peers is the most significant activity teens engage in. "Close friends and other peers become the key partners in adolescents' social interactions," (Dostie-Goulet, 2009). At this age, peers or peer groups are very important since they serve as a helpful tool for resolving identity problems. Teenagers are frequently influenced by their peers since they place such a high value on belonging to a group. While the value of friends is well recognized, it is less obvious that friends affect political awareness.

The teacher is the final socialization agent. Every weekday, students spent lots of hours in the lecture hall listening to their teachers or lecturers. They often show up to discuss politics issue as one of the course requirement or just because a professor or student feels like talking

about it. These conversations ought to influence how political interest grows (Dostie-Goulet, 2009). There may be minor differences between schools and between teachers within each school. This effect ought to be less significant than that of parents or friends, who continue to have an emotional bond with teenagers.

Social media such as podcasts, social blogs, weblogs, news portals, internet forums, Facebook, Twitter, and others enable the creation of a public sphere for communication by enabling greater application through user-generated content that alters the form of communication and interactions between people in order to support the democratization of knowledge and information (Zainon et al., 2017). The way that Gen Y participates in politics has evolved because of various social and digital media. The typical activities of social media users, who range in age from 18 to 29, include publishing opinions on political and social topics, following political leaders, distributing news, and watching videos relating to politics (Zainon et al., 2017).

2.4 Theoretical Framework

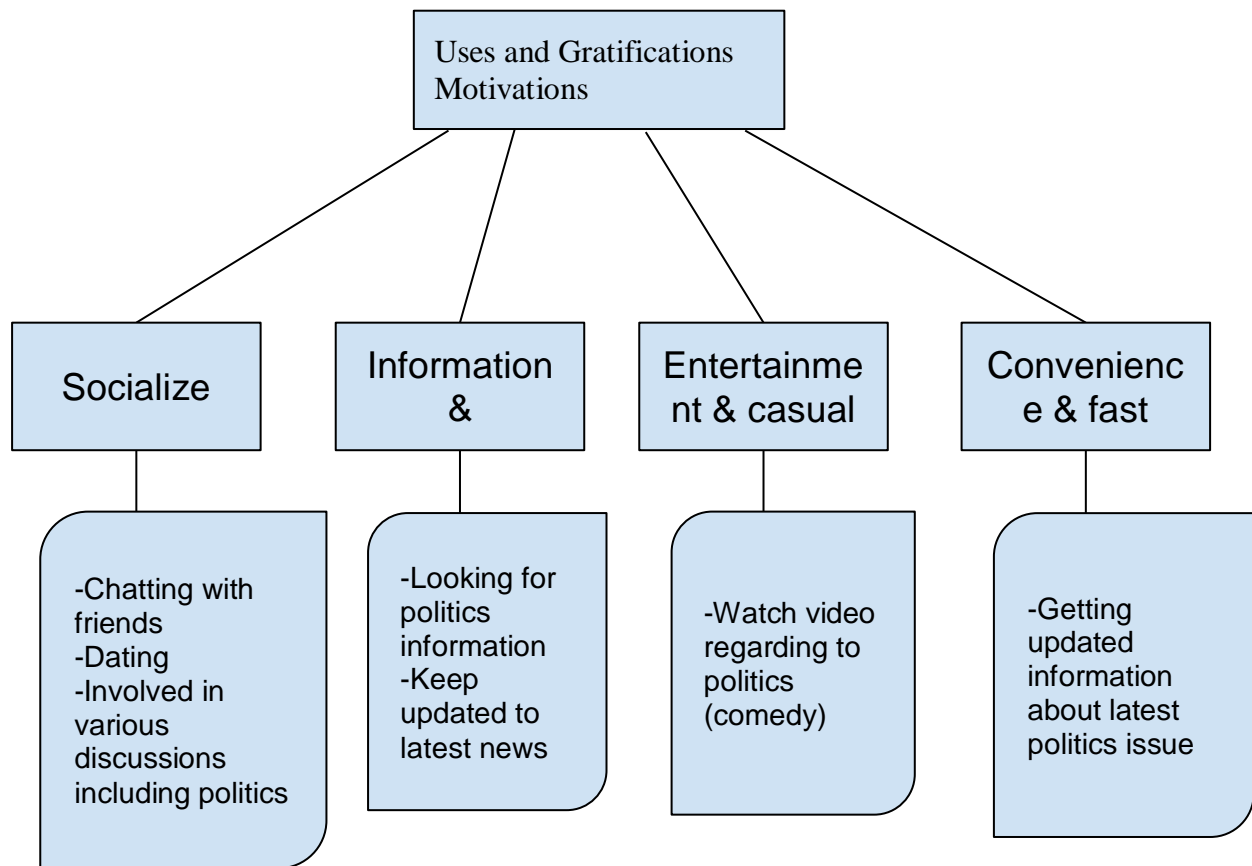


Figure 2.0 Theory of Uses and Gratifications

Source: (Moon et al., 2022)

Uses and gratification were first used in the 1940s as researchers started discovering the intentions behind media consumption (Vinney, 2019). The research on uses and gratifications during the following few decades mostly focused on the gratifications that media users wanted. Researchers started focusing on the effects of media consumption and the social and psychological requirements that media satisfied in the 1970s (Vinney, 2019).

Research on the uses and gratifications hypothesis is more crucial than ever for understanding people's motivations for selecting media and the gratifications they derive from it as media technologies continue to expand. The uses and gratifications approach is built on presumptions about media consumers. The way media consumers are portrayed is that they are

proactive in the media they select to consume (Vinney, 2019). People's usage of the media is not passive from this perspective. They select their readings with enthusiasm and drive.

People are also aware of the factors influencing the media they choose. They depend on their understanding of their motivations to determine a media platform that is appropriate for their desires and wants. Numerous typical motives for watching media have been identified by research on uses and gratifications. The need for routine, companionship, ease of use, entertainment, passing the time, escape, and political knowledge are a few of these (Vinney, 2019). Additionally, a more recent piece of research (Vinney, 2019) explores how people use media to meet higher order needs like meaning-finding and moral reflection. Studies on the uses and gratifications of all these media, from radio to social media, have been done.

Uses and gratifications theory is applied to various Internet-based political communication activities in research. The empirical proof that young people interpret political participation differently than their older counterparts is the most ground-breaking discovery in this study (Weaver Lariscy et al., 2011). This group considers more isolated political activity to include reading blog posts or searching for political information. There are less pessimistic viewpoints that can be held, even though some people may find this reason for concern about the future of civic engagement. The perspective may change as campaigns interact more online with voters and this segment that views political involvement online as legitimate, and strategies this study currently consider (such as attending a debate or placing a sign in the front yard) may become outdated (Weaver Lariscy et al., 2011).

The development of better scales and measurement tools for social media-related research can benefit greatly from the uses and gratifications theory, which has its roots in communications literature. According to the uses and gratifications theory, people look for media that satisfy their needs and provide the greatest amount of gratification. The idea of uses and gratifications is particularly relevant to social media, yet it has not received much attention

in literature on politics. Therefore, the purpose of this essay is to use the concept of uses and gratifications to clarify the way UTAR students use particular social media channels to find out about politics.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

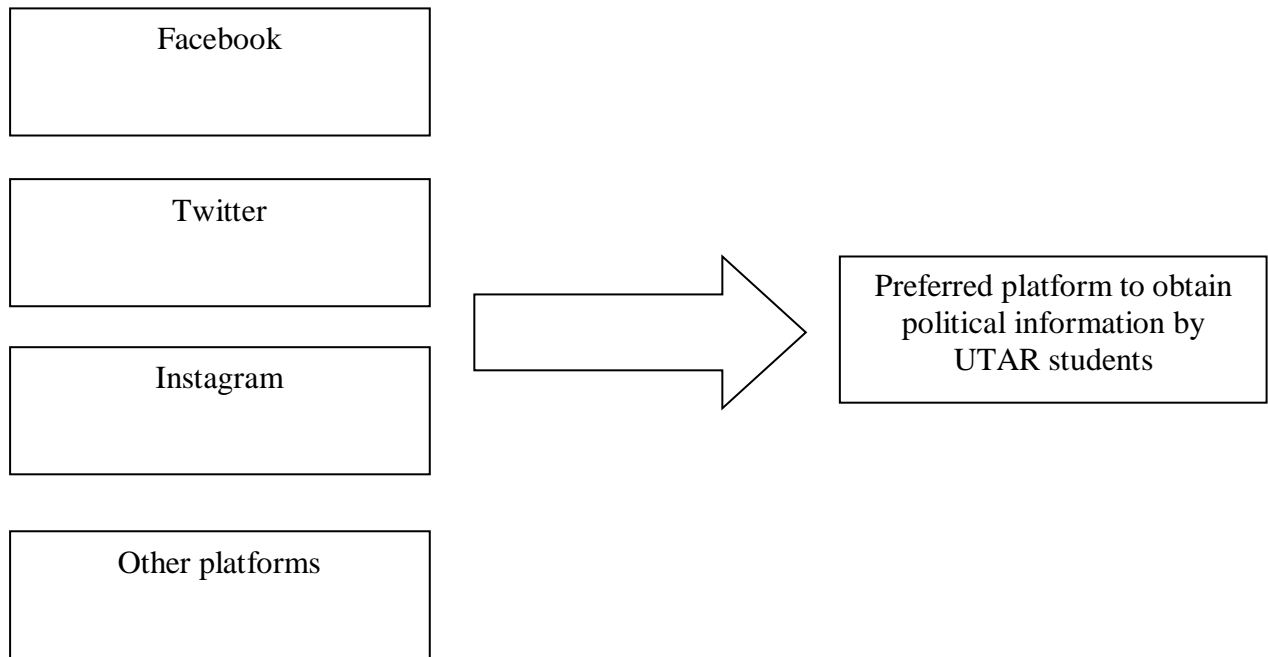


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

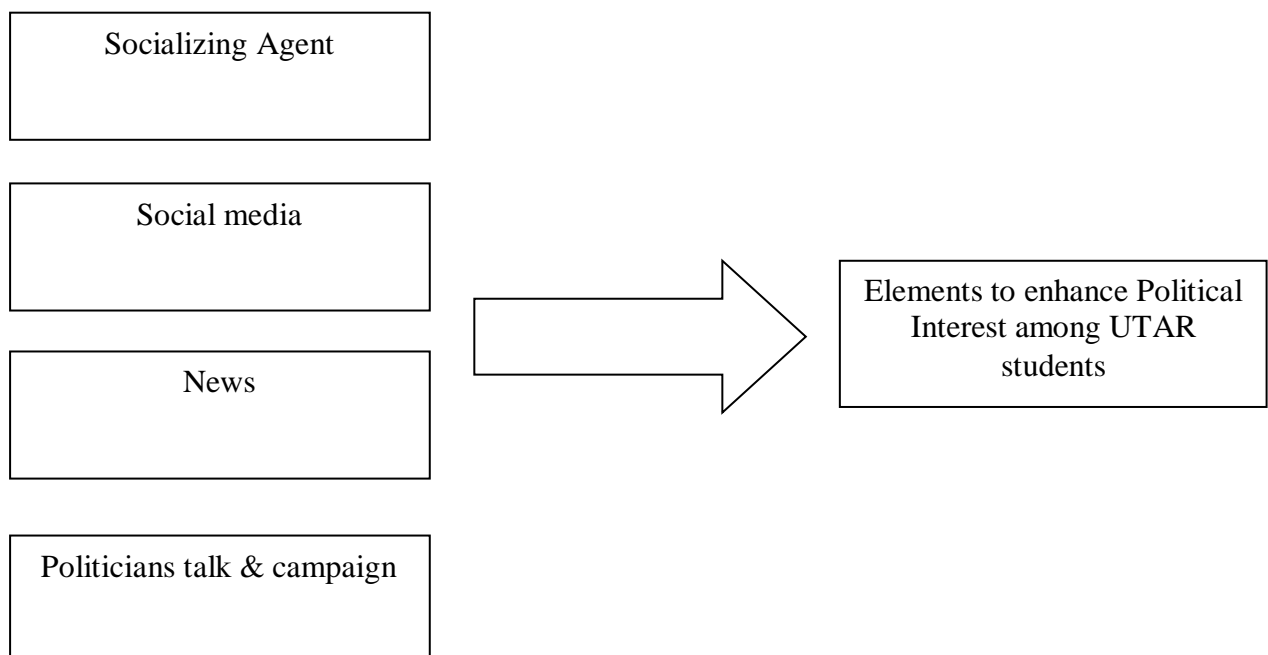


Figure 2.2 Conceptual Framework

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter concluded the previous study on elements that enhance political interests of young adults and political interaction on social media among young adults, most studies conclude that youth generally do not have high interest towards politics. Next, conceptual framework and the theoretical framework by using the Theory of uses and gratification are also covered in this chapter. The methodology of this study will be the main topic of the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter will describe the methodology used in this research which consists of research design, research instrument, research sampling, data collection method, construct measurement and data analysis method.

3.1 Research Design

A research design is a set of procedures for gathering, analyzing, evaluating, and reporting data in research initiatives. According to Sacred Heart University, the goal of the research design is to provide an appropriate framework for a study (Gimblett & Barbara, 2006). Although there are many interrelated decisions to be made during the research design process, the choice of research approach is a crucial one because it determines how pertinent data for a study will be acquired.

3.1.1 Quantitative Research

Quantitative research methods are concerned with gathering and evaluating structured data that may be represented quantitatively. The creation of precise and dependable measurements that enable statistical analysis is one of the main objectives (Goertzen, 2017). Quantitative research is particularly efficient at addressing the "what" or "how" of a specific issue since it focuses on data that can be measured. Direct, quantitative questions frequently use expressions like "what percentage," "what proportion," and "to what extent" (Goertzen, 2017). Hence, quantitative research methods can be defined as the act of gathering data in

numerical form and interpreting it using mathematical techniques, notably statistics, to identify a problem or phenomenon. In quantitative research, statistical methods are employed to gather and analyze numerical data. The data gathered for this quantitative research will be statistically analyzed to measure the aim of the study.

Quantitative research is applicable to this research to identify the social media political usage and political interest of UTAR students. This is because it gets quite a number of samples data collection and quantitative data analysis can be used to analyze data from a large pool of samples.

3.1.2 Descriptive Research

Through descriptive research, a population, circumstance, or phenomenon is supposed to be accurately and methodically explained (Grimes & Schulz, 2002). Questions about what, where, when, and how can be figured out, but not why. Using a variety of research methods, a descriptive research strategy can examine one or more variables. In contrast to experimental research, the variables in this sort of study are simply seen and measured by the researcher. Descriptive research is the ideal choice when the objective of the study is to identify features, frequencies, trends, and classifications (Grimes & Schulz, 2002). This method is advantageous when little is known about the topic or issue. Before looking into why anything happens, researchers must first understand how, when, and where it happens.

3.2 Research Instrument

A survey questionnaire will be used in this quantitative study to **investigate** The social media political usage and political interest of UTAR students. We may gather enormous volumes of data through the online survey, which can then be analyzed for trends, averages,

and frequencies. The target population for this study, UTAR students between the ages of 18 and 30, was sent the online survey through Google Form. The study methods and the personal data protection declaration were adequately explained to the target respondents before they started answering. The respondents also received a portion of a consent form for participating in the study. They are told that the information they give will be kept private and anonymous.

3.2.1 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire consists of 3 sections which included Demographic Profile, Social Media Influence and Role of Politics: Elements that enhance political interest.

Section A was created under the section of Demographic Profile, it consists of 4 multiple choice questions such as name, age, academic qualification, courses, and state.

Section B was created to find out the data regarding if UTAR students approach political information via social media. They are required to answer all 7 questions under this section such as “Which social media do you use frequently?”, “How many hours do you spend on social media daily?”, “How often do you read political information via social media?” and so on.

Section C was created to identify Roles of Politics: Elements that enhance political interest between UTAR students. This section consists of 3 sub-sections which include shaping political interest by social media influencers, shaping political interest by social media trends and the influence via peers, parents, and surroundings. In section C, all questions are required to be answered with a 5-Point Likert scale. Respondents were asked to rate how much they agreed or disagreed with each statement, with scale ranging from: (1) "Strongly Disagree," (2) "Disagree," (3) "Neutral," (4) "Agree," and (5) "Strongly Agree." Samples of the questions

include “I am more likely to read political news when seeing a social media influencer’s post.”, “I perceived social media influencers as opinion leaders who are trustworthy and credible when it comes to political statement.”, “I prefer to watch political related information on reels “short video”.” and so on.

3.3 Population and Sampling

3.3.1 Target Population

The target population can be defined as the entire population or set that we consider qualified for data analysis (Whaley, 2022). Determining the target population for the study is a crucial first step in planning a research study and thinking about goals and objectives. It is crucial to specify the target population, also known as the theoretical population, since it is the total population that any type of study aims to investigate. In this research, the target population will be UTAR students aged between 18 to 30 years old.

This age group was chosen since it is among those that faces the greatest odds of becoming a university student. Students who have reached the age of 18 may enroll in colleges or polytechnics for certificate and diploma programmes. When a student turns 18 years old, they can start taking classes at teacher training colleges. Bachelor's degree programmes begin around the age of 19 or 20 and run for three to five years. After receiving a bachelor's degree, postgraduate programmes need one to five years of master's or PhD research ("A Glance at the Malaysian education system", 2022).. Not only that, because of MCO that happened two years ago, university students in Malaysia access social media more than usual. Students' access to social media is crucial for spreading the most recent information (Kamisan & Abu Bakar, 2021). To facilitate learning and help students finish their assignments, it enables the sharing of

academic materials between students and professors. The importance of social media is further highlighted during the Movement Control Order (MCO) time since students can use it to stay in touch with their families, get the most recent information on the state of the world, find entertainment, and learn about educational and academic issues. Consequently, university students are highly active when it comes to social media (Kamisan & Abu Bakar, 2021).

3.3.2 Sampling Location

The sampling location conducted in this research will be focusing in Malaysia, as long as the respondents are UTAR students, they can be involved in this research no matter where they are. Based on research, nearly all of the students—more than 90%—own laptops, along with different kinds of mobile telecommunications equipment like cell phones and smartphones (Yusop & Sumari, 2013). They can all access the Internet, and most of them use it to check, send, and receive emails and access social media. This result supports the initial hypothesis that the groups in this study are tech-savvy and they spend time on social media using their devices. In most countries, including Malaysia, internet, social media, and mobile technology have become societal phenomena, particularly among the Millennial generation of young people, or those between the ages of 18 and 29 (Yusop & Sumari, 2013).

3.3.3 Sampling Element

To ensure that the data gathered from the questionnaire is reliable and precise, the respondents in this research must be UTAR students with the age of 18-30.

3.3.4 Sampling Size

In any research, it is crucial to choose the appropriate sampling techniques and measuring the precise sample size. Sometimes, a well-conducted study might also fail to recognize significant impacts or relationships if the sample size is too small, the result will be

vague and loose (Ajay S & Micah B , 2014). But at the same time, a study would be more complicated and would potentially produce inaccurate results if the sample size was too high. Furthermore, a huge sample population would raise the overall cost of the study. As a result, the sample size is a crucial component of every investigation. Hence, the sampling size in this research will be targeting 150 UTAR students.

3.4 Data Collection Method

3.4.1 Primary Data

Data developed by the researcher themselves, such as surveys, interviews, and experiments created especially for comprehending and resolving the current research problem, are considered primary data (Hox & Boeijs, 2005). In this research, the target population was surveyed using an online form since it can reduce research costs by conserving time and resources and allows respondents to respond at their own preference and time, which is more convenient for both sides. Additionally, Google Form was used to disseminate a total of 150 questionnaires. The responders were contacted through a variety of channels, such as Microsoft Teams and private messaging on WhatsApp.

3.5 Data Analysis

3.5.1 Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis helps to describe, illustrate, or efficiently summarize data points (Kemp et al., 2018). It is one of the most essential processes in analyzing statistical data. Descriptive

analysis will therefore be employed in this study to characterize, summarize, and identify trends among the various variables.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter overall covers the research design, research instrument, population and sampling, data collection method and data analysis. In the upcoming chapter, we will be discussing the result of the gathered data.

CHAPTER 4 - FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

The data and result collected from 100 sets of questionnaires by using Google Form will be elaborate and analyzed in this chapter. This chapter will analyze and explain every statement and response that was asked for in the survey questionnaire.

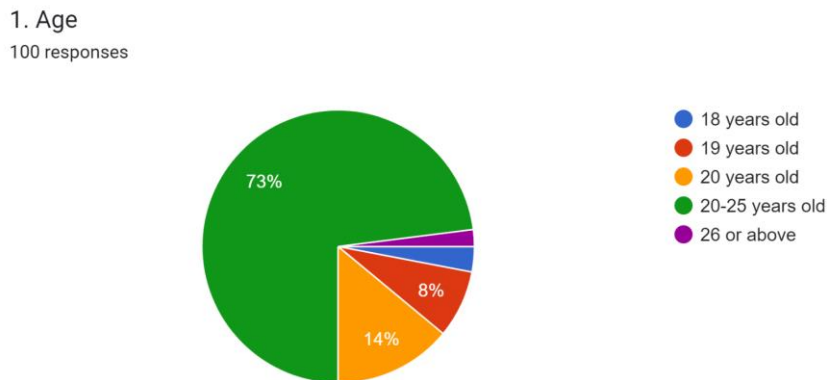
*4.1 Descriptive Analysis (Section A Demographic Profile)*4.1.1 Age

Figure 4.1: Age of the respondents

The age range of the survey participants is shown in the figure above. The age group with the highest percentage of respondents, accounting for 73% of all 100 respondents, is between 20 and 25 years old. The second highest consists of 20 years old, followed by 8% of those who are 19 years old. Lastly, 18 and 26 years old above consists of 5%, which is the least age group in this survey.

4.1.2 Academic Qualifications

2. Academic Qualification (Current studies)

100 responses

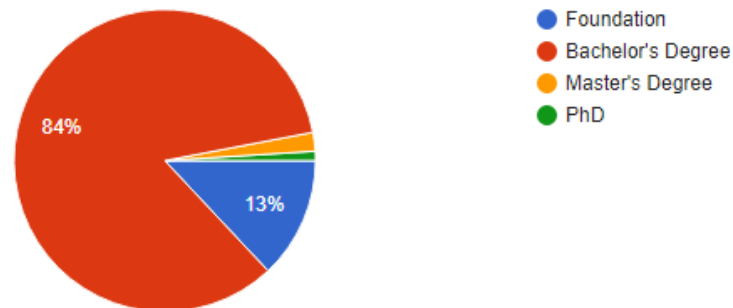


Figure 4.2: Academic Qualifications of the respondents

According to the accompanying chart, the majority of respondents are still working toward their bachelor's degree. Out of 100 responses, 84% of respondents are still enrolled in bachelor's degree programs. 13% of respondents, who are based on Foundation studies responded as well. Only 2% have a master's degree. Last but not least, 1% of PhD students make up the entire chart.

4.1.3 Academic Courses

3. Course

100 responses



▲ 1/7 ▼

Figure 4.3: Academic Courses for each respondents

According to the chart, 29% of respondents who enrolled in UTAR and participated in this research major in corporate communication, hence they are the biggest group of respondents in this aspect. Bachelor of Broadcasting earned the second-highest ranking, which consists of 13% . Students studying journalism and game development make up the third group, each with 3% of the total. Followed by other courses, each having a 1% to complete the chart.

4.1.4 State

4. State
100 responses

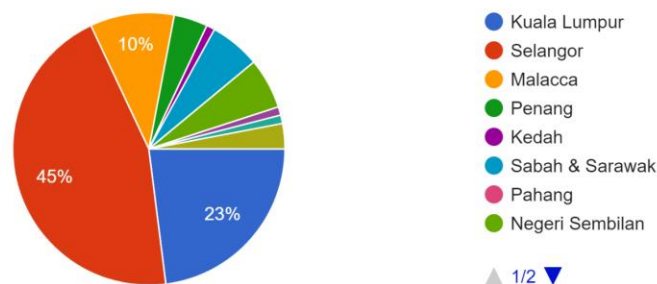


Figure 4.4: States

According to the diagram, Selangor, which accounts for 45% of the participants, is where the majority of responses come from. Second, 23% of the respondents are from Kuala Lumpur, which is expected, given that this study was conducted primarily on the UTAR campus in Selangor. The third is next, with 10% of responses are from Malacca. Penang, Kedah, Negeri Sembilan, Johor, Perak, and East Malaysia make up 22% of the respondents.

4.2 Section B: Social Media Influence

4.2.1 Frequently Used Social Media Platforms

5. Which social media do you use frequently?

100 responses

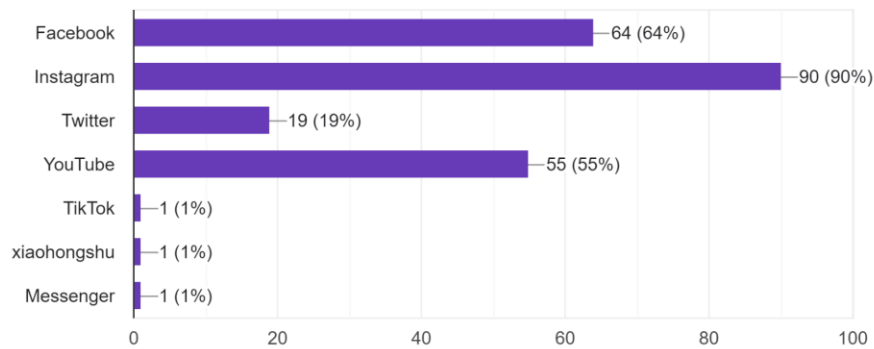


Figure 4.5: Frequently used social media

According to the bar graph above, 90% (90 respondents) of UTAR students use Instagram as one of their main channel, making it the most widely used social media platform overall. With a total of 64%, Facebook comes in second place and is the most commonly utilized network. 55% of the respondents were active on YouTube at the moment. Furthermore, 19% of respondents regularly used Twitter. TikTok, XiaoHongShu (RED), and Messenger are all given 1% each in that order.

4.2.2 Time spent on social media daily

6. How many hours do you spend on social media daily?

100 responses

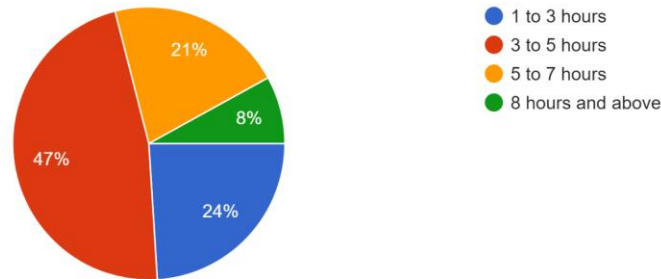


Figure 4.6: Time Spent on social media daily

Figure 4.6 displays the overall daily time spent by respondents on social media. The majority of them (47%)—which includes 47 out of 100 respondents—will spend at least 3 to 5 hours per day on social media. The second-highest percentage is 24%, or 24 respondents, who spent 1 to 3 hours per day on social media. Using social media for 5 to 7 hours is something that 21% of the respondents intend to do. Finally, 8% of the respondents spent 8 hours or more per day on social media, making up the overall percentage.

4.2.3 Frequency of respondents reading political information

7. How often do you read political information via social media?

100 responses

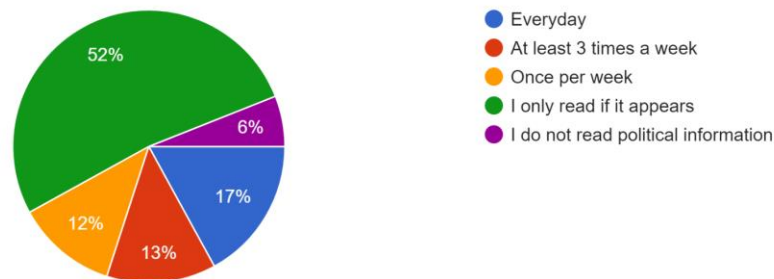


Figure 4.7: Frequency of respondents reading political information

Based on the result above, 52% of the respondents only read political information whenever it appears on social media. Followed by 17% of the respondents, they read political information on a daily basis. Not only that, 13% of the students read at least 3 times a week. Next, 12% of the students read once per week. In contrast, students who do not read political news at all consist of 6%.

4.2.4 Forms of political information students prefer to receive

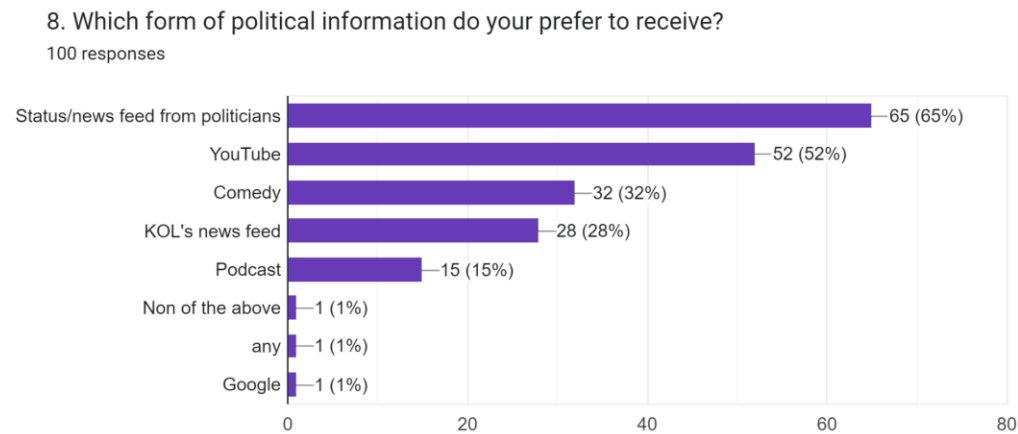


Figure 4.8: Forms of political information students prefer to receive

According to the results, it is clear that students prefer to learn about politics from politicians, particularly through their social media newsfeeds. 65% of students select this option, making it the most popular choice. Second, 52% of the responses are from YouTube. 32% of respondents believe they will be able to perceive political material in a humorous way, which is comedy. Additionally, 28% of respondents said they prefer to get political news from KOL's newsfeed, while 15% said they prefer to get it via podcast.

4.2.5 Political channels that UTAR students follow on social media

9. Which of the candidates/political commentators/channel below do you follow on social media?

100 responses

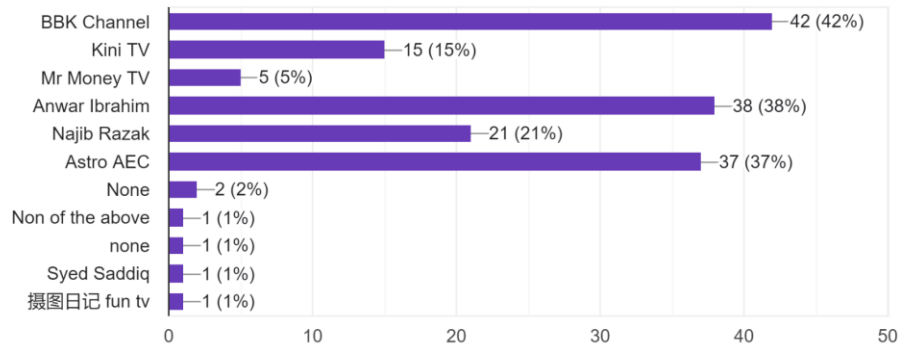


Figure 4.9: Political channels that UTAR students follow on social media

This statistic demonstrates that BBK Channel is well-known among UTAR students, as evidenced by its 42% share of responses. Anwar Ibrahim, the present prime minister, came in second, drawing 38% of the students. Astro AEC ranks third among all channel with 37% of students as subscribers. Among the respondents, 21% are supporters of Najib Razak. Mr. Money TV has 5%, and Kini TV has 15%. Last but not least, Syed Saddiq only makes up 1% of the list.

4.2.6 Percentage of UTAR students whether if they follow any political parties

10. Do you follow any political parties on social media?

100 responses

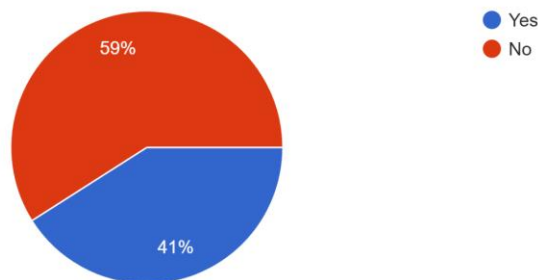


Figure 4.10: Diagram of UTAR students whether if they follow any political parties

This graph demonstrates that 59% of respondents, or more than half of the sample, do monitor political parties on social media. 41% of those surveyed do not participate or follow in political organizations.

4.2.7 Reason why UTAR students follow political parties on social media

11. Why do you follow political parties on social media?

41 responses

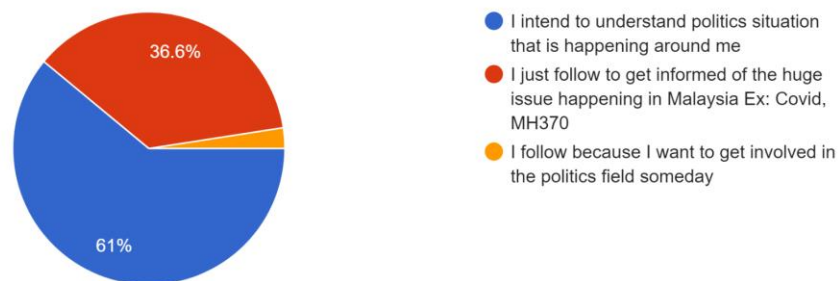


Figure 4.11: Reason why UTAR students follow political parties on social media

According to this graph, 61% of political party followers do so in order to better comprehend the political environment in which they live. While 36.6% of people simply follow them to learn about major problems or crises like the Covid epidemic or the MH370 case. Only 2.4% of people support political parties because they hope to eventually work in politics.

4.2.8 Reason why UTAR students does not follow political parties on social media

12. Why do you not follow political parties on social media?

59 responses

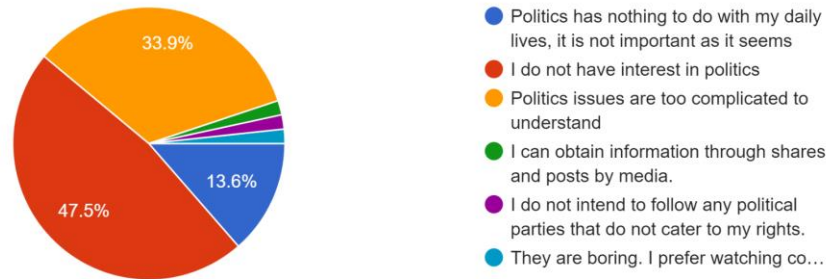


Figure 4.12: Reason why UTAR students does not follow political parties on social media

Based on the chart, the main reason why UTAR students do not follow political parties on social media is because they do not have interest in politics, 47.5% out of 59 respondents do not have interest. Followed by those who think political issues are too complicated to understand, it consists of 33.9%. 13.6% of the students think politics has nothing to do with their daily lives, it is not important as it seems. Other reasons are people think it is boring, they do not intend to follow any political parties that do not cater to their rights and they can obtain information through shares and posts by the media, each consisting 1.7%.

4.3 Section C: Roles of Politics: Elements that enhance political interest

4.3.1 In this section, students are required to determine different elements that enhance their political interest by using a 5 point Likert scale. The respondents were required to respond to each question in the section, which included “ I am more likely to read political news when seeing a social media influencer’s post.”, “I perceived social media influencers as opinion leaders who are trustworthy and credible when it comes to political statements.”, “I prefer to watch political related information on reels “short videos”.”, “I prefer to watch political related information on informal YouTube videos.”, “I prefer to obtain political information from

podcasts.”, “I prefer to obtain political information from social blogs.”, “I tend to pay attention on politics during general election.”, “I tend to get attracted by petition signing, petition organizing or any opportunity to get involved in local politics.”, and lastly “My parents/peers influence me whenever they talk about politics.”

Q1. I am more likely to read political news when seeing a social media influencer’s post

mMoreLikelyReadPoliticNewsFromSMInfluencer

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	7	7.0	7.0	7.0
	Disagree	14	14.0	14.0	21.0
	Neutral	24	24.0	24.0	45.0
	Agree	44	44.0	44.0	89.0
	Strongly Agree	11	11.0	11.0	100.0
Total		100	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.13: Elements that enhance political interest

Based on the Figure above, 11% respondents strongly agreed, and 44% of the respondents agreed that they become more aware to read political news when seeing a social media influencer’s post. 24 out of 100 respondents said that they had no opinion on the statement, in short, they were neutral. There were 14 respondents who disagreed with the statement and 7 strongly against the statement.

Q2. I perceived social media influencers as opinion leaders who are trustworthy and credible when it comes to political statements.

nPerceivedSMInfluencersAsTrustworthyPoliticalSource

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	14	14.0	14.0	14.0
	Disagree	14	14.0	14.0	28.0
	Neutral	28	28.0	28.0	56.0
	Agree	38	38.0	38.0	94.0
	Strongly Agree	6	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.14: Elements that enhance political interest

Next, when asked whether they would perceive influencers as someone who are trustworthy and credible when it comes to political statements, 6% of the respondents chose “Strongly Agree” and 38% respondents chose “Agree”, 28% students are neutral. Only 14% of respondents disagree with the statement and another 14% strongly disagree with it.

Q3. I prefer to watch political related information on reels “short videos”.

oPreferToWatchPoliticalNewsOnReels_ShortVideo

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	6	6.0	6.0	6.0
	Disagree	11	11.0	11.0	17.0
	Neutral	23	23.0	23.0	40.0
	Agree	40	40.0	40.0	80.0
	Strongly Agree	20	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.15: Elements that enhance political interest

In the third statement, the results show that 20% of the students choose “Strongly Agree”, 40% of the respondents agree with the statement. 23% of respondents were neutral, only 11% of the people disagreed with it and 6% of them strongly disagreed.

Q4. I prefer to watch political related information on informal YouTube videos

pPreferToWatchPoliticalNewsOnYouTube

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	6	6.0	6.0	6.0
	Disagree	12	12.0	12.0	18.0
	Neutral	20	20.0	20.0	38.0
	Agree	46	46.0	46.0	84.0
	Strongly Agree	16	16.0	16.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.16: Elements that enhance political interest

When people are being asked whether they prefer to watch political information on YouTube, 16% of the respondents strongly agreed with it, 46% of the students agreed and 20% of them are neutral. Overall, only a total of 18% are going against this statement.

Q5. I prefer to obtain political information from podcasts

qPreferPoliticalNewsFromPodcasts

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	11	11.0	11.0	11.0
	Disagree	28	28.0	28.0	39.0
	Neutral	27	27.0	27.0	66.0
	Agree	25	25.0	25.0	91.0
	Strongly Agree	9	9.0	9.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.17: Elements that enhance political interest

In this question, students are being asked if they prefer to obtain political information from podcasts. 9% of the students chose “Strongly Agree”. 25% of the students chose “Agree”. 27% of the respondents were neutral. A total of 28% disagree with the statement and 11% of them are strongly against this statement.

Q6. I prefer to obtain political information from social blogs

rPreferPoliticalNewsFromSocialBlog

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	6	6.0	6.0	6.0
	Disagree	24	24.0	24.0	30.0
	Neutral	26	26.0	26.0	56.0
	Agree	33	33.0	33.0	89.0
	Strongly Agree	11	11.0	11.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.18: Elements that enhance political interest

In this question, this study intends to see if students are keen to obtain political information from social blogs. 11% of the students chose “Strongly agree”, 33% of the students chose “Agree”. Whereby 26% of them are neutral. 24% of the respondents chose “Disagree” and only 6% of them chose “Strongly Disagree”

Q7. I tend to pay attention on politics during general election

sPayAttentionToPoliticalNewsDuringGeneralElection

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	2	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Disagree	4	4.0	4.0	6.0
	Neutral	13	13.0	13.0	19.0
	Agree	46	46.0	46.0	65.0
	Strongly Agree	35	35.0	35.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.19: Elements that enhance political interest

Based on the graph, 35% of the respondents tend to pay extra attention to politics when it comes to the general election. 46% of the students chose “Agree” to this statement. 13 of the respondents were neutral whereby 6% of them disagreed with the statement.

Q8. I tend to get attracted by petition signing, petition organizing or any opportunity to get involved in local politics

tAttractedByPetitionSigningAndPetitionOrganizing

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	8	8.0	8.0	8.0
	Disagree	23	23.0	23.0	31.0
	Neutral	25	25.0	25.0	56.0
	Agree	33	33.0	33.0	89.0
	Strongly Agree	11	11.0	11.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.20: Elements that enhance political interest

In this question, 11% of the respondents chose “Strongly agree”, whereas 33% of the students chose “Agree”. 25% of respondents were neutral. Next, 23% of the respondents chose to disagree with the statement and 8% of them were strongly against it.

Q9. My parents/peers influence me whenever they talk about politics

uInfluencedByParentsAndPeers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	5	5.0	5.0	5.0
	Disagree	11	11.0	11.0	16.0
	Neutral	19	19.0	19.0	35.0
	Agree	36	36.0	36.0	71.0
	Strongly Agree	29	29.0	29.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.21: Elements that enhance political interest

From the graph, 29% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement, “My parents or peers influence me whenever they talk about politics.” Most people agreed with the statement, 36% of the respondents agreed. Additionally, 19% of the respondents were neutral. On the other hand, 11% of the respondents disagreed with this statement and 5% of them chose “Strongly disagree”.

4.4 Conclusion

In total, 100 sets of responses to this questionnaire were received. We got 100 complete sets of responses to this questionnaire. The research findings and data analysis are clearly illustrated in this chapter using the descriptive analysis technique. The subsequent chapter will include the analysis and conclusion.

CHAPTER 5 – DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter, discussion of the research results and analysis of the data will be shown. Last but not least, the study's limitations, suggestions for additional research and conclusion will be elaborate.

5.1 Discussion on Major Findings

5.1.1 Social Media platform

According to the research, UTAR students frequently use Instagram to gather information. As a result, the survey questions enabled the identification of the components, which allowed for the fulfillment of the first research objective, which was to investigate which platforms UTAR students prefer to get political information. According to the findings, Facebook is used by 64% of respondents as their primary social media site, followed by Instagram by 90%. Finally, **the majority of the students** used social media for 3 to 5 hours per day. Therefore, they have lots of possibilities to become exposed to political information.

5.1.2 Student's interest towards politics

Unexpectedly, the result shows that most of the students do not take initiative to search for political information, the majority only read it when it appears. This finding is inconsistent with the previous research which shows young people actively engage in politics on social media because it is a very democratic "deliberation place," making it a popular political platform among youngsters. Despite all the findings, but result also proved there are still some students that are fond of political news and read it everyday, so we can conclude that some

UTAR students are still well aware of political issues nowadays, even if they do not take initiative to search for political news, the news itself will pop out often and they are on their devices for hours a day.

But looking at other research, it mentioned young people are not interested in political issues because they are busy with all the assignments, jobs, careers and other goals. This proved that young adults like UTAR students are mainly politically apathetic. It is unlikely that young people will actively be involved in political parties or elections given the findings on their participation in politics, this aligns with our findings. In the early nineties, participation of university students involved in politics was very low. A study found out only 43 percent of 18 to 29-year-old Malaysians have voted in General Elections compared to 87 percent of those in the age range of 50 years and older.

In conclusion, even though some UTAR students do follow political news and they take initiative to do so, more than half of them do not think the same, they do not feel that politics is something important and it could possibly affect their daily lives.

5.1.3 Elements that enhances political interest of UTAR students

According to the survey results, most people prefer to obtain political news from the status of a politician. This aligns with previous study mentioning that social media enables the creation of a public sphere for communication by enabling better user-generated content that alters the form of communication and interactions (Zainon et al., 2017). The way that students in UTAR participate in politics has evolved because of various social media. These include following political leaders, watching political videos, commenting on political posts and so on. In short, we can conclude that UTAR students' political interests are driven by political leaders that often post about social issues on their news feed.

Not only that, almost all respondents show agreement when it comes to learning political information via political commentators' videos or YouTube channels that are related to politics. This study tells that many of the students like it when they perceive political information in a video rather than text. By watching a political commentator, students sense something more relatable with the current situation that is pictured by the commentator and they tend to understand it in an easier way. Aside from YouTube videos, most students also find watching reels (short video) is convenience as it provides lots of information within a short period of time, it is suitable for students especially when they are busy with their studies.

Besides, **when seeing a social media influencers post about politics**, most people find it reliable and they tend to approach political information via social media influencers. It brings a significant impact which might influence students' willingness to get involved in politics. Furthermore, they tend to believe the opinion from social media influencers rather than a politician when it comes to political information. Due to the era of advanced technology, social media are getting very common and influencers are often being portrayed as credible sources to their own target audience.

This study also found out that during general elections, UTAR students tend to pay more attention to the news and political issues. This is because most students believe that having the power to vote can actually change their lives in many aspects. For instance, if their favorite candidate has been appointed as a new prime minister, they will feel a sense of relief because they really worry about their own country. On the other hand, some students also said that they get attracted to petition signing or any opportunity to get involved in politics. Compared to purely reading and relying on online news or newspapers, students preferred to actually involve themselves to get a chance and interact with anyone related to the politics sector.

Lastly, parents and peers are also one of the elements that can possibly enhance the interest of politics for UTAR students. This is because they stay with each other most of the time, if people around them are fond of politics, they tend to discuss it in a casual conversation. Hence, creating awareness and knowledge in the political field.

5.2 Limitations of the Study

The findings of this research are somewhat constrained, and all the limitations will be explained further in this section.

One of the limitations was the bias of locations. As a result, there were a total of 68% respondents from Klang Valley. There is a possibility that the difference of state's feedback might affect the results in this study as different states have different management practices due to the number of parties involved. Hence, affecting their perspectives towards politics.

Next, even though respondents can easily access the questionnaire and fill it out, but the researcher cannot possibly tell if the respondents are doing it with full attention. It has the possibility that the respondents were not focused when answering all the questions or they might misunderstand the questions that they are not expert in. Additionally, they might face any interruptions when responding to the questionnaire. In short, these factors will affect the result quality of this data, creating a result that is not precise. Besides, some respondents might give the same answers in order to finish the questionnaire faster, which would also lead to false results.

Not only that, the small sample size of respondents is another limitation in this study. It is not possible to assume that a sample of 100 respondents from UTAR can precisely represent all individual students in the campus. For further elaboration like accurate results, a bigger sample size is compulsory. Only 100 UTAR students could be gathered by the researcher. Such issues generate disadvantages like the result is not generalized, and reduce the accuracy of the data.

Moreover, the respondent's veracity is also one of the limitations. The researchers were unable to study their backgrounds or if they are suitable for this study by using an online questionnaire. Results show that 59% of the respondents to this survey are actually invalid which they answered they do not follow any political parties on social media.

Lastly, in this quantitative research, the researcher cannot follow-up on any feedback if he/she has any questions to ask. There is a small chance to investigate in depth, which creates fewer data points to examine when compared to other methods due to its anonymity. Furthermore, there is no way to verify the validity of the data.

5.3 Recommendation for Future Research

This research will provide a variety of recommendations to elaborate the limitations mentioned above in order to improve the quality of future studies.

In order to have a more reliable and veracity of the responses, future researchers are advised to apply a filtered method to collect the response. The researchers should ignore the respondents that stated they do not follow any political parties on social media. They should just take the responses that stated they followed political parties, it will create more accurate data and have a group of veracity respondents that provide precise responses in the study.

Next, it is suggested that in future studies, researchers can apply qualitative research methods to gather data from the respondents. By using online survey questionnaires and distributing them over the internet, respondents can just provide any answers even if they do not think that was a correct answer, for instance, they will just choose the same answer for likert scale and tick every option in a tick box question. In future, researchers are advised to interview face-to-face before they come out with the data. In this study, the researchers are using quantitative methods to conduct the research, this can lead to several issues like respondents not paying attention while doing the survey, misinterpretation and so on. In contrast, face-to-face interviews provide an opportunity for all researchers to explain the topic in a bigger picture, giving them clear guidelines so that they understand the topic and what they should do. Without doubt, qualitative methods like face-to-face interviews provide more accuracy and prevent false answers.

Not only that, future researchers are encouraged to get a bigger sample of respondents when conducting their research on certain topics. Having a bigger sample size allows them to have more credible answers as the answers are based on a different variety of perspectives. 100 respondents might not be enough to generate accurate results on politics perceptions as it may be too generalized.

5.4 Conclusion

This study concluded and provided better insights regarding the social media political usage of UTAR students and also the social media trends that enhance their political interest. This study highlighted two main research objectives which covered what platforms UTAR students use to obtain political information and what elements that can enhance the political interest of UTAR

students. There are few variables which include that socializing agent, social media, news and politicians talk and campaign are the contributing factors to the interest of UTAR students towards political information. Based on the findings, all these factors contributed to the interest, and it makes UTAR students fond of political information. Future research can be proven and suggested to add on more variables when conducting research that is relevant to the student interest of the political field. In addition, the findings provide some useful insights for future education purposes in the politics sector because they give them a thorough understanding of how and what they can do in order to trigger student interest towards a specific topic. In addition, the results also generate how University students perceive information from various elements and platforms. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the research data, few study limitations and suggestions for further research.

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