

Youth and Political Participation: What Factors Influence Them?

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Abstract: *This study discusses the factors that could influence political participation among youth. The purpose of this study is to look at the impact of the main factors (such as the influence of social environment and mass media) on youth political participation. A total of 343 youths participated in this study, with a response rate of 90.5%. Findings from multiple linear regression demonstrate that the influence of social environment and the influence of mass media have a substantial influence on political participation. Studies on the influence of political participation among the youth, particularly in Malaysia, are vital yet scarce. Significantly, the findings of this study can provide insight to political parties on the importance of youth political participation. Finally, this study provides practical implications for youth political participation.*

Keywords: Political participation; Influence of social environment; Influence of mass media; Youth; Democracy

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1. Introduction

A country will be democratic if the role and activities of political parties are highlighted to engage citizens. Democracy is a participatory decision-making process that involves the people (Almond & Verba, 2015). A democratic system is defined by the people, who have the right to pick who will be the leader or representative of their government. Elected government leaders or representatives function as the legislature, enforcing the law and enacting policies in the country (Esa & Hashim, 2017). Therefore, public participation underpins citizenship in the modern democratic system, ranging from conceptions of liberal democracy based on voting, to more varied current forms of participation (Porta, 2013). Putnam (2000) claims that youth have been shown to be apathetic to politics, making current forms of participation particularly essential. For example, youths are seen to be more active in political participation involving campaigns—such as boycotts, demonstrations, or purchasing products for political purposes—than identifying with the public policymaking process or understanding in significant detail how representatives are elected (Norris, 2004).

The Commonwealth Secretariat highlights that youths between the age of 18 and 25 are still in a time of transition, and must rely on someone who is autonomous, particularly when participating in cognitive operations such as decision-making. Besides, young people are always regarded as “social groupings that are no longer fulfilling their role as children...but society still does not recognise the youth as adults” (Průcha et al., 2001). Young people have distinct ways of acting and thinking, as well as a variety of model systems, values and standards. However, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines youth on both an individual level, where they develop capabilities, and a social level, where they must be prepared for the obligation and reward of an investment as a guide to maturity. When compared to the level restricted by a set age boundary, Erkan (1985) believes that youth can be considered an important phase with its own social, psychological, economic and political attributes. Young people have the right and the opportunity to speak up about their concerns and opinions since they can receive proper justice in the community. Moreover, Mpofu (2012) states that everyone has their own autonomy, cultural independence, and philosophy, particularly when it comes to choose their path. As a result, youth participation has been

identified as essential to achieving an ideal democracy, particularly in the political process. Their creativity and innovation contribute significantly to the democratic process.

However, many young people are not drawn to political issues and hence do not participate in the democratic process (Dahlgren, 2009). Blais and Loewen (2009) demonstrate that youth do not have faith in representative institutions or politicians, and they choose to focus on education and jobs that provide them with a better living (Ahmad, 2012). Moreover, a study conducted by the United Nations (UN) Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development in August 2012 revealed that more than half of the 13,000 respondents from 186 countries expressed their opinion that there is a need to focus on the restriction on their ability to participate effectively in decision-making processes. This is due to the fact that youths are excluded and marginalised. Although political participation in general is rather healthy, youth participation in electoral politics has actually decreased (Norris, 2002; Dalton, 2009). Furthermore, according to the UN Global Parliamentary Report (2012), the average number of youths participating in formal political institutions is low when compared to senior citizens around the world.

Besides, various initiatives have been planned and put into action by the Malaysian government, election-related institutions, parties, media, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) to attract and enhance youth participation in politics. For instance, Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman, the Minister of Youth and Sports during the Pakatan Harapan (PH) government administration, attempted to submit a constitutional amendment to decrease the voting age from 21 to 18. Syed Saddiq lobbied and obtained cross-party support for the bill to be passed, so that youth would be better able to participate in the political process. On July 16, 2019, the Members of Parliament (MP) in the Dewan Rakyat cast 221 votes in favour of the constitutional amendment, which was later approved by the Dewan Negara on July 25, 2019. With the approval of this amendment, individuals 18 and above will be registered to vote automatically, eliminating the previous requirement of manual registration.

The government has also launched programmes such as Youth Parliament, Political School, and the Perdana Fellowship. The purpose of these programmes is to improve social communication and expose participants to political knowledge. In fact, one of the initiatives was to

provide the youth involved with direct exposure and funding during the programme. Many political parties also have youth wings because they understand the importance of youth to the organisation. For instance, the Puteri wing of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), and Angkatan Bersatu Anak Muda (ARMADA), founded by the Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (BERSATU), are examples of youth wings that have been introduced for young people. Political parties' earnestness in launching these party wings demonstrate their desire to win over young people, particularly in light of the Constitution's successful amendment lowering the voting age to 18-year-old. Even a youth-oriented political party known as the Malaysian United Democratic Alliance (MUDA) was also established in 2020 to attract the support and influence of the youth. The establishment of MUDA aims to increase the involvement of youth in every level of party leadership and not just limited to the youth wing alone. Political parties in Malaysia are now more interested to gain support from the youth because they need the support of young voters in order to win the 15th General Election.

To reach these groups through programmes, financing and support that can lessen their burden is one of the strategies highlighted as a main agenda for political parties today. For instance, the ruling political party leverages the machinery and institutions of the government by offering Career Builder Apprenticeship Assistance of RM1000, E-wallet Start-up Funds for Youth of RM150, and Malaysian Family Assistance for those with incomes below RM2500. These introduced programmes are crucial factors for young people to consider when choosing their voting preferences in the upcoming elections. Voters, particularly those in the youth group, are more likely to support a ruling party that can handle issues and make sure their welfare is safeguarded rather than a party that is constantly engaged in politics. To discuss further about youth participation in this article, the author will develop two hypotheses based on theory of positive youth development and theory of planned behaviour. This study also argues that there are several factors influencing youth participation in politics.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theory of positive youth development

This theory is based on looking at the development potential of youth, and

focusing on their thriving behaviours rather than their deficiencies (Peterson, 2004; Damon, 2004; Peteru, 2008). Table 1 illustrates that the five ‘Ps’ proposed by Perkins et al. (2003).

Table 1: Five ‘Ps’ of Positive Youth Development

5Ps	Explanation
Possibilities and preparation	Based on Merton and Payne (2000), this refers to opportunities that will spur youth in each part of their life, whether spiritually, physically, emotionally, socially, morally, or intellectually.
Participation	This approach strives to engage, inspire and understand youth. Not only do the youths receive their liabilities as individuals, group members, and citizens; but they also receive their liabilities as citizens (Damon, 2004).
People	Benson (2002) states that the involvement and investment of the private sector, public sector and the broader community is critical for the development of youth.
Place and pluralism	The resources that assist groups of youths in reaching their full potential and pursuing their interests (Merton & Payne, 2000).
Partnership	A sense of ownership could be fostered by involving youth in decision-making processes and engaging them in being more proactive in their development (Benson, 2002).

Source: Perkins, Borden, Keith, Hoppe-Rooney & Villarruel (2003).

Participation allows youth to express themselves *via* their upbringing by encouraging them to participate in the processes, recognising their rights, and exposing abuses of power (Brown, 2004). The positive theory of youth development shows that appreciation for youth involvement and participation in the development process is insufficient and more effort is needed for youths to channel their strength into ‘positive guidelines’ while creating a sense of accountability among youths. In addition, this theory focuses on decision-making skills and knowledge as part of the social and personal development of youth, capital base, and building the abilities of groups and individuals to enhance the spirit of togetherness between youth (Merton & Payne, 2000; Chocolate, 2004; Krauss & Suandi, 2008).

2.2 Theory of planned behaviour

According to Ajzen (1991), this theory places a high value on people’s willingness to engage in various behaviours, which demonstrates how

much effort they are willing to put in. Interactions between youth and their families on a variety of political topics improves their leadership participation in the future (McFarland & Thomas, 2006). Local communities and schools can also educate youth on leadership participation by exposing them to social network connections that shape their self-esteem, such as meetings and discussions from club activities (McFarland & Thomas, 2006). Furthermore, Ajzen (1991) notes that “personality traits and social attitudes have demonstrated a vital role in an endeavour to predict and define human behaviour.”

The theory of planned behaviour determines an individual’s—particularly a teenager’s—attitude towards a certain behaviour, whether good or bad. As a result, there will be influence of social environment and mass media on how young people can obtain relevant resources to contribute positively to the activities they participate in, particularly in politics (Ajzen, 1991). Furthermore, if youths have the opportunity to participate in political activity and their expectations for success are assured, it will further boost their morale to participate further (Simpong et al., 2017). Conversely, if their participation is contrary to their expectations, they will believe that they have been limited by political ideology and politicians, which will cause them to refrain from participation in the future.

2.3 Democracy in the context of political participation

Since democracy was first introduced in Athens in the fifth century BC, a plethora of scholars has debated the idea, including Abraham Lincoln (1863), Cohen (1971) and Syed Ahmad Hussein (1994). Without considering the debate that the scholars described above had on the concept of democracy, the discussion would not be completed.

In terms of etymology, democracy is rooted in the Greek words “Demos” and “Kratos”, which means government by the people. According to Syed Ahmad Hussein (1994), democracy emphasises not just the aspects of justice and equality in its implementation, but also the participation of the people in the electoral process. Clean elections, civil liberties, a transparent judiciary, freedom of association, a vibrant civil society, and a majority-based system of governance is frequently used to gauge a country’s level of democracy. This means that if a government overlooks the aforementioned elements, even if it is successful in bringing economic prosperity to the

people and the country, it will inadvertently convey the impression that the government is authoritarian.

Democracy is a system of government that is based on, as Lincoln stated in the Gettysburg address, a “government of the people, by the people, and for the people.” Therefore, it can be said that Lincoln believed that a government that supports and is based on the desires of the majority of the population is a true democracy. This form of democracy values opinions of the minority group, alongside the thoughts and decisions of the dominant group. Cohen (1971) asserts that democracy has to do with a government that has the support of the people. “Democracy is a system in which the people govern themselves, government by consent, rule by majority, equal rights for all, and sovereignty of the people.”

Based on the discussions on the definition of democracy carried out by the scholars mentioned above, it is determined that democracy is a system of government based on the desire of the people and the people who decide who should rule. Although there are many different definitions and interpretations of democracy, scholars acknowledge that the people themselves hold the real power in the government. This variety of interpretations creates various democratic practices in several countries in the world. For example, since independence in 1957, Malaysia has practiced the concept of parliamentary democracy with a constitutional monarch, while the concept of presidential democracy has been practiced in Singapore since 1965 (Sorensen, 2018).

2.4 Political participation

The concept of political participation has been widely discussed for at least two decades. However, recent studies have focused on political participation, particularly in the areas of people’s political behaviour, democratic legitimacy, “democratic functioning coupled with the emergence of populist emotion,” civil society, and electronic revolution (Oser & Hooghe, 2018; Sairambay, 2020). Because political participation is at the “heart of modern democracy,” it is essential to democracy’s legitimacy (Johnson, 2015; Eder & Stadelmann-Steffen, 2017). Tang and Lee (2013) define political participation as “political activities, such as joining political or civic groups, volunteering, communicating with politicians, participating in campaigns, or supporting in terms of voting or petitioning online.”

Political participation can be classified into two categories. The first is traditional or conventional participation, which can be defined as a behavioural routine within government-established institutions taking place in accordance with specific national traditions and norms (Munroe, 2002; Janda et al., 2011). Campaigning, voting and membership to a political group are examples of conventional political participation. Non-conventional or non-traditional political participation is a behaviour that is not widely performed, which challenges or opposes established institutions. This category tends to go beyond norms, is more aggressive, and may be illegal (Munroe, 2002; Janda et al., 2011). Demonstrations, revolutions, and political violence are examples of non-traditional participation.

Van Deth (2016) lists eight main characteristics to identify political participation: (i) actions or activities involving basic interests; (ii) activities that voluntary without involving encouragement and coercion; (iii) voluntary action appearing in a non-professional group; (iv) non-professional group activity that does not exclude political elements; (v) activity targeted at the sphere of government/ state/ politics; (vi) activity that is aimed at addressing community problems and fighting for issues of people's interest; (vii) activity that is oriented to political issues; and (viii) platform for the community to achieve political goals and struggles.

Kovacheva (2005) divides political participation into two main categories: level and form of participation. These two categories identify the individuals or groups engaged, the circumstances, and the ways in which they participate in politics. Kovacheva states that it is crucial to try and identify individuals or groups in order to assess how they might have a direct or indirect influence in political participation. This aligns with the discussion of others, such as Munroe (2002) and Janda et al., (2011), who distinguish between traditional and non-traditional forms of political participation.

Numerous approaches, including distributing questionnaires and in-person interviews, can be used in the context of identifying the level of political participation in a community. Many scholars use these approaches to support the discussion and integrate the theories they have chosen for their study. The data obtained from the findings of the study is then used as support for and a significant argument in the analysis of the focus group's level of political participation. Second, the form of political participation is a crucial factor in analysing the patterns and dynamics that exist in a particular society.

Political participation can be divided into two categories: direct and indirect. Indirect participation refers to certain members of society taking part in democratic activities like voting, watching or reading about politics, and having knowledge of political theory. Direct participation occurs when individuals and groups occupy positions in the party, become members, and engage in political activities full-time.

2.5 Factors influencing youths' participation

2.5.1 Influence of social environment

The social environment can be considered to have influence on youth participation in politics. Young people are influenced by their social environment, which includes peers and parents, social relationships, counsellors or role models, etc., all of which can have a long-term influence on their behaviour, such as leadership involvement (Koe & Majid, 2014; Tata & Prasad, 2008). Studies suggest that having appropriate social relationships with family members at home and peers at school might promote excellence and better behaviour among youth (Asikhia, 2009; Blair et al., 2008).

The family can have a strong influence on a young person's political participation due to the frequency of communication. Attitudes of family members influence the behaviour, attitudes, and activities of young people (Samsi et al., 2013). Many studies also suggest that peers play an influential role as well. Young people are easily influenced by their peers and can easily be persuaded to join political activities (Samsi et al., 2013). Based on the above arguments, the hypothesis of this study is as follows:

H1: The influence of social environment has a positive effect on political participation.

2.5.2 Influence of mass media

The media has a significant influence on youth political participation. Youth political participation can be influenced by two forms of media: traditional (mainstream) and social media (alternative). According to Turner (1972), traditional media includes radio, television, and mainstream newspapers, whereas alternative media includes websites, blogs, Facebook, and Twitter.

The latter are affordable and accessible channels to influence public decision-making. Dong et al. (2010) show that many youths are not exposed to traditional media, and their influence is confined to advocating political interests.

Friedman and Friedman (2008) state that the influence of new media, which includes social networking sites, has more significant influence than traditional media. Even in the context of political campaigns, political parties have been known to maximise and leverage on the usage of new media as the main strategy to ensure their propaganda, agenda and political strategies put forward, reaches the public at mass to sway the perceptions of voters. In fact, the government has an advantage when it comes to using the media to maintain social control over the public, particularly on targeted voters during election campaigns. Two methods are used to maintain social control: coercion or violence, and leadership based on moral or intellectual beliefs by social groups or those in positions of authority. Nadzri (2018) agrees with Gramsci that the concept of 'Social Control Form 1971' helps explain why voluntary compliance the dominant mode of compliance is as opposed to coercion. Based on this concept, Nadzri asserts that the internal control by the government in controlling the public by using media is predicated on hegemony, the dominant social order as manifested in norms of thought and behaviour.

Additionally, the governmental system that controls the media network frequently uses civil society groups, religious elements, and educational institutions to dominate morality and leadership. Community thinking is likewise developed through repetition, beliefs and propaganda, paralleling the development of social reality in the country. The target group becomes hegemonic as a result of this circumstance since it generates permission and intellectual agreement within the community. Whether it be opposition or the ruling party, the parties have the chance to gain power after the election if it is successful in hegemonizing the target voter group in a dominant way. The youths and young voters, who are more exposed to the disseminations of information than older voters, are the primary users of new media in the context of current political developments. Political parties seek young voters as their main target in every election due to their high level of technological sophistication and information literacy. However, the dynamic of today's politics makes it more challenging to influence young voters who, in contrast to the era of traditional media, would quickly evaluate the veracity

of information. Indeed, the election campaigns have transitioned from being physical to being digital in order to reach citizens and voters across the country more quickly.

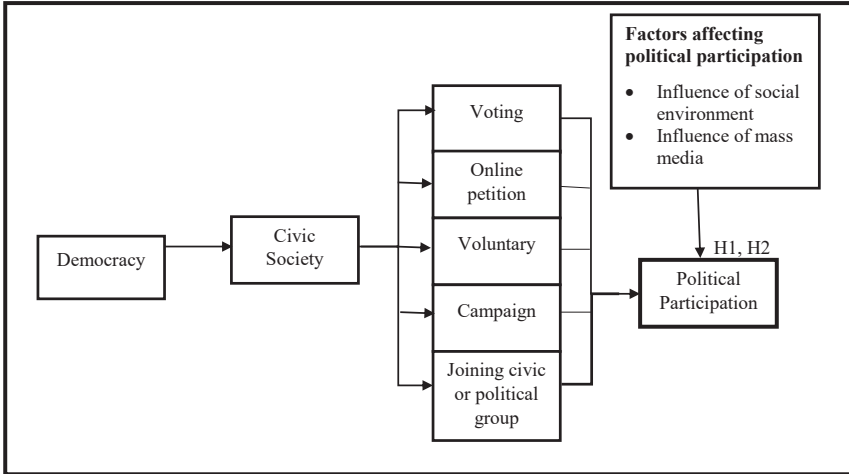
The introduction of new media has produced a virtual communication environment that encourages social interaction and an increased degree of freedom of political participation (Meijer, 2012). All parties, including political parties, are free to use the platform of freedom provided by this new media, which transcends age and geographic barriers. Even on new media platforms, dialogue and debates on current affairs are more pervasive and unrestricted compared to the mainstream media, which is frequently under government control.

Politicians in the United States (US), for instance, use new media more frequently than those in other countries (Hong, 2013). Every politician in the US has a Twitter account, which is utilised to connect with a wider audience and facilitate more open conversation about issues and campaigns. In the 2008 presidential election, the use of the Twitter platform significantly influenced the level of support given to Barack Obama. The election team's strategy was successful in broadening the scope of the campaign and informing targeted voters (Aaker & Chang, 2009). The mass media exerts a significant influence on society, particularly on youth, in terms of cultural and social issues, particularly during elections. Therefore, the following hypothesis is used in this study:

H2: The influence of mass media has a positive effect on political participation.

Figure 1 shows a theoretical model that takes into account all relationships that have been hypothesised.

Figure 1: Theoretical Model



Source: Authors' own.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

The respondents of this study were the youth from the Lembah Pantai area, located in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. This study used a cross-sectional design to collect data on the relationship between the influence of social environment, the influence of mass media and political participation among the youths. Other than that, this study applied purposive sampling to obtain opinions from the target group in studying the relationship between the influence of social environment, the influence of mass media and political participation.

The sample size was determined using a variety of approaches. Green (1991) states that the following equation can be used to calculate the regression sample size.

$$N > 50 + 8m$$

where *m* is the number of independent variables. As such, this study should include at least 66 samples.

$$N > 50 + 8(2) = 66$$

Furthermore, Harris (1985) suggests that the researcher determines an absolute minimum of 10 participants for each predictor variable when choosing sample size (n):

$$n = 10 \text{ participants} \times \text{variable}$$

$$n = 10 \text{ participants} \times 2 \text{ variables}$$

$$n = 20 \text{ samples}$$

Therefore, this study requires at least 20 samples to be analysed. Based on these two equations, the sample size of 379 in this study matches the sample size requirements for analysis. Of the 379 questionnaires distributed to youths, 36 questionnaires were deemed unacceptable due to non-usable questionnaires (33 cases) and lower outliers (three cases). Only 343 sets of questionnaires were found to be valid for coding in the study. As a result, 90.5% of the final response rate was validated.

3.2 *Data collection procedure*

The survey was developed using a self-report questionnaire that comprised four parts. The first part concerned the demographic characteristics of the respondent, including gender, age, religion, level of education, employment status and monthly income. Accordingly, the second to fourth part measured the influence of the social environment, mass media and political participation.

The data were obtained from the website of National Population and Family Development Board. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the questionnaire was distributed online *via* various media, such as email and other internet platforms. Care was taken to inform every respondent that the information collected would be confidential, with no personal information or other data that could lead to their personal or professional identification being abused.

3.3 *Data analysis*

Data analysis is the process of analysing, interpreting and evaluating data

by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software (SPSS) (Niraula, 2019). With scale measurements, Pearson correlation coefficients, multiple linear regression and hypothesis testing, are among the approaches available in the software for evaluating data.

The Pearson correlation is a bivariate analysis that can display numerous measures such as the linear relationship between two continuous variables, the strength of the linear relationship, and the direction of linear relation (i.e., increasing or decreasing) (Schober et al., 2018). It is regarded as the best method for measuring the relationship between variables of interest because it is based on the covariance method. In addition, Hemphill (2003) demonstrates that the correlation coefficient can be separated into three categories. A small correlation is between 0.10 and 0.29, medium correlation is between 0.30 and 0.49, and high correlation is between 0.50 and 1.00. Multiple regression will be utilised to analyse the relationship between a single dependent variable (political participation) and several independent variables (influence of the social environment and mass media).

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive analysis

A total of 343 respondents participated in the study. A total of 189 respondents (55.1%) were female, whereas 44.9% were male. The largest percentage of the respondents (37%) were between 20 to 25 years old (see Table 2). Meanwhile the smallest group, with only 19%, were those between 36 to 40 years old. In terms of ethnicity, most of the respondents were Malay (74.1%), followed by Chinese (almost 14%), and Indians (7.6%). The balance of respondents (3.2%) was of other ethnicities.

Table 2: Profile of Respondents

Respondents	Category	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	44.9
	Female	55.1
Age	20 to 25 years old	37.3
	36 to 40 years old	19

Respondents	Category	Percentage (%)
Ethnicity	Malay	74.1
	Chinese	14
	Indian	7.6
	Others	3.2
Level of education	Bachelor degree	38.2
	Master degree	28.9
	Others	0.9
Employment status	Student	39.1
	Government sector	25.9
Monthly income	Private sector	25.1
	RM2,000 and below	48.4
	RM8,001 and above	3.5

In terms of level of education, the largest group of respondents were Bachelor degree holders (38.2%). The second largest group was Master degree holders (28.9%). The smallest group, with only 0.9%, had other levels of education. As for employment status, most of the respondents were students (39.1%), followed by those in the government sector (25.9%) and from the private sector (25.1%). Based on this, it is understandable why the smallest percentage (3.5%) of the respondents had salaries above RM8,000 per month, while nearly half (48.4%) earned below RM2,000.

4.2 Mean score and standard deviation

The mean score and standard deviation for influence of social environment are 2.64 and 0.58 respectively. Interestingly, the mean of minimum answers given by the respondents is 1.17, which indicates that respondents answer might be between 'never' to 'sometime', while the maximum is 4.33, which refers that most respondents might answer 'often' to 'always' in the influence of social environment section. Furthermore, in terms of influence of mass media, the mean value and standard deviation is 2.74 and 0.74 respectively. The mean of minimum responses is 1.00, which implies that the youths responses might be between 'never' and 'sometime', whereas the mean of highest answers is 4.40, which means that the majority of respondents might have answered 'often' and 'always' to the statements in the influence of mass media section. Finally, political participation recorded a mean of 1.63 with

0.24 standard deviation. Subsequently, the maximum mean of respondents' interactions is 2.00, which explains that the respondents answered 'yes' while the minimum score was 1.00 ('no'). The mean scores and standard deviation of the variables as well as the maximum and minimum values are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Mean Score and Standard Deviation

Variables	M	SD	MIN	MAX
Influence of social environment	2.64	.58	1.17	4.33
Influence of mass media	2.74	.74	1.00	4.40
Political participation	1.63	.24	1.00	2.00

Notes: M - mean; SD - standard deviation; MIN - minimum; MAX- maximum.

4.3 Diagnostic testing

This study examines homoscedasticity to see whether the variance error is constant across all levels of the independent variables. The findings of Levene's test (see Table 4) revealed that the influence of social environment does not support the homogeneity of variance hypothesis ($F = 1.61$; not significant [ns]). However, the influence of mass media revealed a significant value ($F = 1.79$; $p > 0.03$). Thus, the findings indicate that the influence of mass media is homogeneous, but not for the influence of social environment.

Table 4: Homogeneity (Levene) Test

Variables	Levene's test	Standard error
Influence of social environment	1.61	0.08(ns)
Influence of mass media	1.79	0.03*

Notes: n = 343. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$, ^{ns} $p =$ not significant.

Das and Imon (2016) state that the values of skewness and kurtosis should be between -2 and 2, and -3 and 3, respectively. The values of skewness and kurtosis demonstrate that the data distribution in this study is normal because they fit within the required range (see Table 5). The quantile probability plot (Q-Q plot) reveals the normality of the data distribution (see Figure 2 and Figure 3). The results demonstrate that the data is normal

because the Q-Q plot points are on a line. This suggests that there are no normality and linearity issues with the data. This indicates that further analysis of the data is possible (Das & Imon, 2016).

Table 5: Skewness and Kurtosis

Variables	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Standard error	Statistic	Standard error
Influence of social environment	0.07	0.13	-0.23	0.26
Influence of mass media	-0.24	0.13	-0.40	0.26
Political participation	-0.52	0.13	-0.03	0.26

Note: n = 343.

Figure 2: Histogram and Normal Probability Plot

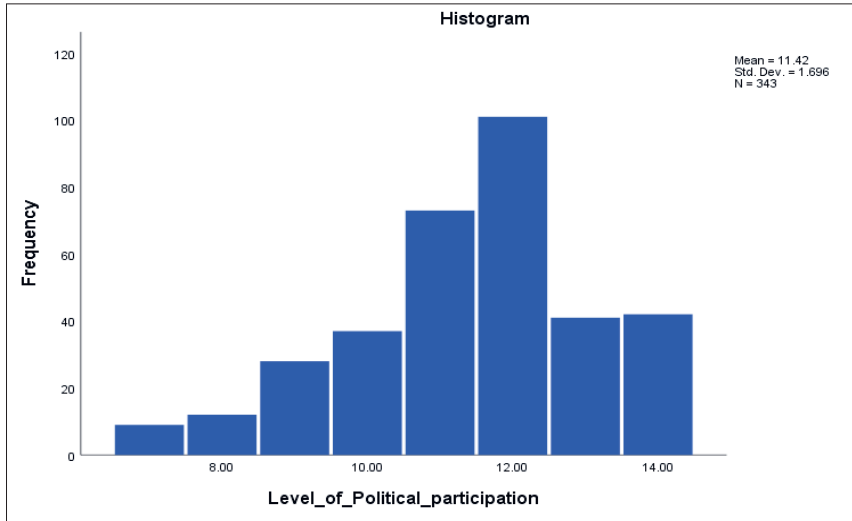
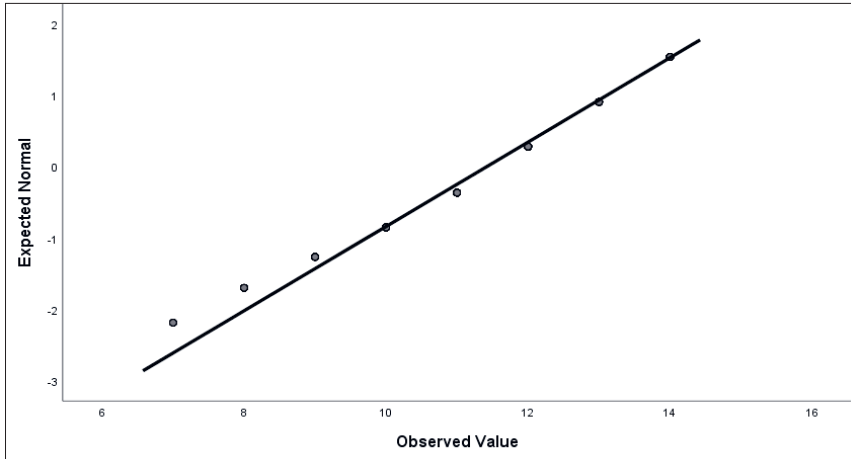


Figure 3: Normal Q-Q Plot of Political Participation



Multicollinearity in data analysis refers to the extent to which the effect of one variable can be predicted by the effect of others (Hair et al., 2017). This indicates that multicollinearity is a problem when exogenous constructs are significantly correlated with one another. For instance, a correlation value greater than 0.90 denotes a strong degree of relationship between variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2014). Therefore, multicollinearity must be analysed in this study to ensure that there is no multicollinearity among the predictor variables. The tolerance value and variance inflation factor (VIF) for each variable are displayed in Table 6. Hair et al. (2017) notes that the tolerance value for exogenous constructs is more than the cut-off point of 0.10 and the value for VIF is less than 10. As such, the variables in this study fulfil the minimum requirements. In other words, there are no collinearity problems with this research model.

Table 6: Results of Multicollinearity Test

Variables	Political participation	
	Tolerance	VIF
Influence of social environment	0.68	1.48
Influence of mass media	0.68	1.48

Note: Political participation as dependent variable.

4.4 Pearson correlation coefficient

The Pearson correlation is used in this study to examine the degree of linear correlation between each independent and dependent variable. All independent and dependent variables were measured on an interval or ratio scale. Generally, the values between 0.3 and 0.4 suggest a medium correlation between variables in this study, with the influence of the mass media being the most significant factor which influences political participation, followed by the influence of social environment.

On theoretical grounds, as expected, the influence of social environment (H1) was found to have a positive and significant relationship with political participation ($r(343) = .38$ ($p < 0.01$), and therefore, the influence of social environment is supported. Likewise, the influence of mass media (H2) was found to have positive and significant influence on youth political participation ($r(343) = 0.41$, $p > 0.01$), thus supporting H2. Furthermore, among these two factors, the influence of the mass media has the most moderate and significant influence on youth political participation. The relationship between the variables is summarised in Table 7.

Table 7: Summary of Pearson Correlation Coefficient

Variable	1	2	3
1. Influence of social environment	1		
2. Influence of mass media	0.57**	1	
3. Political participation	0.38**	0.41**	1

Note: **indicates that the correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.5 Multiple linear regression

This study used multiple linear regression to examine the idiosyncratic endowment of each independent variable in relation to diversification in the dependent variables. The model power R is 0.446, indicating that there is a low degree of correlation. Meanwhile, adjusted R² indicates that the independent variables (influence of the social environment and the influence of mass media) of the study can explain and predict (19.4%) of the variance of the dependent variable, political participation. Furthermore, other unexplained factors influence the remaining 80.6% of youth political

participation. Moreover, the R^2 value is significantly higher than 0, indicating that the predictors potentially account for a significant amount of variance in political participation. As seen in Table 8, the regression model is significant.

Table 8: Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Standard error of the estimate
1	0.446a	0.199	0.194	1.522

Notes: *p* Predictors: (Constant), Influence of social environment, influence of mass media; a: dependent variable.

Furthermore, the Anova analysis in Table 9 shows that the $p < 0.05$, indicating that the equation is a good fit, $F(97.744) = 42.171$, $p < 0.001$. This indicates that this model is significant and practical for determining the relevance of the relationship between the independent and dependent variable of the study.

Table 9: Anova Test

Model	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
¹ Regression	195.488	2	97.744	42.171	0.000 ^b
Residual	788.057	340	2.318		
Total	983.545	342			

Notes: ¹: regression model; ^b: predictors - (Constant), Influence of social environment, influence of mass media.

The influence of social environment ($\beta = 0.214$, $p < 0.05$) and the largest value of standardised coefficient is the influence of mass media ($\beta = 0.287$, $p < 0.05$), as shown in the multiple regression analysis findings in Table 10. As a result of the findings, a positive significant relationship exists between the influence of social environment, the influence of mass media and political participation. Furthermore, the results indicate that the influence of mass media has the highest β (0.287) (see Table 11), implying that it has the greatest influence on youth political participation.

Table 10: Result of Multiple Regression Analysis

Dependent variable (political participation)	Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficient		
	Beta	Standard error	Beta	t	Sig
(Constant)	7.967	0.399		19.978	0.000
Influence of social environment	0.117	0.032	.214	3.625	0.000
Influence of mass media	0.132	0.027	0.287	4.864	0.000

Note: * $p < 0.05$

Table 11: Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Pearson correlation (r)	Beta (β)	Standard error	t-values	Decision
H1	ISE \rightarrow PP	0.380	0.214	0.032	3.625	Supported
H2	IMM \rightarrow PP	0.410	0.287	0.027	4.864	Supported

Notes: ISE: Influence of social environment, IMM: Influence of mass media, PP: Political participation

In summary, both Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression results supported the proposed research hypotheses of this study, as there was a positive and significant relationship between all of the independent variables (in the form of the influence of social environment and the influence of mass media) and youth political participation. Notably, the findings of this study also revealed that the influence of mass media is the most significant factor influencing political participation.

5. Discussion

This study aims to show that the social environment and mass media impact young people's propensity to participate in politics. The findings of this study provide new perspectives, and it predicts that youth participation in politics may arise as a result from the influence of social environment and the mass media. The study found that youth can develop a tendency for political participation under the influence of social environment ($r = 0.380$, $\beta = 0.214$, $p < 0.01$). This demonstrates that individuals highly influenced by their social environment will have a tendency towards participating in politics. The findings of this study support previous studies that found that young people are easily persuaded to participate in politics because they are

quickly influenced by the behaviour and actions of family members and their peers, particularly when such behaviours and actions are related to politics (Asikhia, 2009; Shaywitz et al., 2008; Samsi et al., 2013). Additionally, this finding is in line with the theories of planned behaviour and youth development theory, which suggest that youth who are influenced by those in their social environment (such as family members or peers) are more likely to participate in political behaviour and become active in politics (Ajzen, 1991; Peterson, 2004; Damon, 2004; Peteru, 2008).

The study also demonstrates a significant positive relationship between the influence of mass media and youth political participation ($r = 0.410$, $\beta = 0.287$, $p < 0.01$). This is in line with previous studies that indicate youth more readily access political information through mass media, such as blogs, portal and media networks (Dong et al., 2010; Friedman & Friedman, 2008; Mustafa, 2002). Through mass media, young people can readily and quickly obtain political information that may have a significant influence on their political participation. The findings of this study are also in line with the theory of planned behaviour, which proposes that young people participate in political activities by obtaining relevant resources and information from the mass media (Ajzen, 1991). Youth decisions concerning their behaviour towards political participation are influenced by the resources and information they receive from the mass media.

6. Conclusion

The results of this study make a concrete contribution to politics because it offers insights into how youth political participation can be influenced by the social environment and mass media. In fact, the findings of the study indicate that the social environment and the mass media have a positive influence on youth political participation, with the demographic playing a crucial role in choosing the political parties that will be serving the interests of the country. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the influence of social environment and the influence of mass media to encourage young people to get involved in politics. Finally, this study offers valuable insights into potentially significant indicators to enhance youth political participation. It implies that addressing the fundamental psychological requirements of youth (i.e., the influence of social environment and mass media) is a specific target that can serve as a main focus for enhancing youth political participation.

However, this study has several limitations that highlight areas for future research. First, this study investigates the factors that impact young people's political participation, such as the influence of social environment and the mass media. Therefore, other variables that influence youth political participation must be considered, such as the influence of political party leadership (Samsi et al., 2013) and the influence of youth political interests (Sabu, 2020). Second, the study sample is restricted to young people in a single parliamentary constituency, which limits the generalisation of the research findings. It is recommended to broaden the application of this study in various Malaysian parliamentary constituencies. This study is cross-sectional and relies on data from a single source, which raises the possibility of common method bias. In order to confirm the causal relationship between the variables under study, research such as longitudinal or experimental studies are required.

Further to the above, this study aims to provide some helpful information for enhancing political participation among youth. The findings of this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of the factors that influence youth political participation. Therefore, it is important for political parties and policy makers to plan more effective strategies to increase youth participation in politics, especially in the 15th general election.

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