

Factors Influencing Young Malaysians' Political Information Seeking Behaviour on Twitter

AZMIERA IZZATI AZWAR
Star Media Radio Group, Malaysia

KHO SUET NIE
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

ABSTRACT

Youth participation in political discourses is an important element that needs to be looked into urgently in Malaysia. This is especially so with the historical milestone of the Undi18 constitutional amendment allowing youth from 18 years old to vote in the 15th General Election. This research was initiated to investigate the youth's behaviour in terms of attitude, awareness, and involvement in politics via social media, specifically Twitter. In this study, involvement in politics is described as youths' political information seeking behaviour on Twitter in relation to political attitudes such as political self-efficacy, situational political involvement, government trust, and processing of information, that is perceived information quality. An online survey form was disseminated across Twitter using snowball sampling for Klang Valley Twitter users aged between 18 to 30. The results garnered from 314 respondents revealed significant relationships between independent variables (self-efficacy, situational, political involvement, government trust, and information quality) and the dependent variable (Twitter motivation). It was hoped that this study would help researchers better grasp the pattern on how Malaysian youth use Twitter to get political information. This study may also provide important information on the online diffusion and consumption of political information through social media like Twitter.

Keywords: *Political information-seeking behaviour, processing information, youth, Twitter, Malaysia.*

INTRODUCTION

A true democracy must have the attributes of citizen participation, whereby citizens of a country take an active role in its government and manage it through elected representatives (Gillin, 1919). Better democracy and active citizen involvement result from a well-informed public, with citizens able to make informed decisions regarding their country's government. A citizen, for example, may be disinclined, but their access to information may motivate them to participate. A citizen motivated to participate in political decisions, on the other hand, may actively seek out relevant opportunities and information (Nur Rusydina & Zainal, 2018).

With that said, there has been an increasing focus on young people's political participation. Youth's marginalisation from the political process demonstrated itself through low election turnout, low numbers of party membership, as well as a significant drop in other types of institutionalised political participation (The Economist, 2017). However, these youths who do not have access to established political institutions and institutionalised methods of engagement may find digital media to be particularly useful. Digital media, particularly social media, has been discovered to give alternative civic and political participation mechanisms for young people (Zhu, Chan & Chou, 2019; Lee, Shah, & McLeod, 2013).

Twitter, in particular, encourages numerous forms of participation, such as posting and sharing of information, as well as following, viewing, and reading hashtags, all of which could help the youth become more informed and involved (Gleason, 2013). Twitter allows young people to join in political discussions that they might not be able to have offline. According to Yaqub et al. (2017), the penetration of information and communication technologies combined with an increasing youth population has resulted in an increase of protests against the government, implying that youth-oriented forms of communication as such have effectively intensified calls for movement.

Use of such social media platforms to seek information on politics has now become a worldwide phenomenon. In Malaysia, the number of people utilising social media grew by 2.0 million (+7.7%) between the year 2020 and 2021, reaching 28.00 million in 2021 (Kemp, 2021). Malaysia's political landscape is currently changing as a result of the new media evolution, which is largely promoting political liberalisation, which implies the growth of freedom and civil rights. This change is also plausible, considering that Malaysian youths are more politically aware and engaged than in previous years, as they grow more concerned with current events and how much they can contribute (Zalinah & Zawiyah, 2021). The evolution of online movements including Undi18, which advocated for laws to reduce the legal age limit for voting in the general elections from 21 to 18 years old and to allow Automatic Voter Registration (AVR), demonstrates how inclined Malaysian youths are to participate in decision-making. According to Friedrich Naumann Foundation (2021), when the Automatic Voter Registration was approved, the Election Commission (EC) projects a 50% increase in a number of voters by the year 2023, because it could bring in 4.5 million voters aged 21 and up who have yet to register for voting in the upcoming elections. According to Malaysia's former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, this effort is critical in ensuring that young people have the opportunity, and participate to define Malaysia's democracy through elections (Tirtayana, 2021).

In recent years, Malaysian society has suffered uncertainties with the country's political processes due to a lack of understanding and reliance on public perceptions, leading to poor political involvement. According to Medina (2021), the political crisis in Malaysia began in February 2020, when parliamentarians switched party allegiances, resulting in the loss of parliamentary majorities and the disintegration of two consecutive coalition governments, Pakatan Harapan (BH) and Barisan Nasional (BN). This was the beginning of more serious concerns, especially during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Malaysia's ruling government has struggled with policy ineptitude and incoherence ever since then. Confusion in government and political internal strife impeded the country's response to Covid-19 (Kurlantzick, 2021). This political partisanship has also put Malaysia's democracy in crisis.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Observing the Malaysian Parliament, more than 70% of parliamentarians are above 50 (Voo, 2018). When it comes to political participation, Malaysian youths have faced many forms of cultural and institutional resistance. Legislative barriers also discourage young people from getting active in politics. Students in Malaysia, for example, are restricted from participating in politics by the Universities and University Colleges Act (UUCA) (Chang, 2019). The UUCA's specific clause was determined to be unlawful in court, and the Act has since been amended. Students at the tertiary level can now legally participate in and engage in politics. However, aggressive political activity is still prohibited by the Act.

According to Nor Ain (2019), despite recent reforms to reduce the voting age to 18 years old, former Education Minister Dr. Maszlee Malik stated in recent Parliament sittings that political discussions are not appropriate in school settings. As a result, it is possible to conclude that no official progress has been achieved in increasing political literacy and education among students and that the youth must simply rely on informal sources such as social media, as these restrictions imposed on Malaysian youth will eventually motivate them to seek for political information online. The search for political information will influence their awareness, attitudes, and behaviours, increasing youths' political literacy (Mohamed Azmi & Chinnasamy, 2019). Several publications (Salman et al., 2018b; Chang, 2019; Nurzihan et al., 2020) appear to have researched trends in youth participation in the most recent Malaysian general elections, however, there are few studies that addressed political knowledge and the relevance of political information, both of which will have an impact on the aforementioned issue.

Traditionally, people relied on information without challenging its accuracy, legitimacy, or trust, especially when it was conveyed in magazines and other forms of mass media (Hassan & Azmi, 2018). Now, information attributes such as credibility, facts, and reliability of information as well as comprehension are becoming more important (Marquart, Ohme & Möller, 2020). In order to read political information, individuals must be politically literate. The ability to comprehend the information sought is a key measure of the success of the information search process in the setting of social media. Yet, the significance of literacy and political information-seeking in Malaysia, particularly among youth, has not been fully explored.

Furthermore, the role of social media as a mediator in motivating youths' political information-seeking behaviour has not been demonstrated empirically. According to Moeller, Kuhne and Vreese (2018), to better understand the challenges surrounding information seeking on social media, as well as the quality of the information, credibility, and reliability of the information, more extensive research on social media usage is needed. Although recent international studies on youths' use of social media and their search for political information found a broad scope of focus, limited research on youth's searches for political information in the local setting has been done. Therefore this research focuses on the factors that influence youth's political information-seeking behaviour to address a gap in scholarly research on political information-seeking in Malaysia.

The following objectives were pursued with this research:

- i. To evaluate the motivation of Malaysia's current political situation on youths' political information-seeking behaviour (Self-efficacy, Situational Political Involvement, Government Trust) on Twitter.
- ii. To determine the relationship between Malaysian youths' perception of information quality and political information-seeking behaviour on Twitter
- iii. To explore the relationship between Twitter as a social media platform and the motivation of political information-seeking behaviour among youths in Malaysia.

LITERATURE REVIEW OR RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Social Media, Youth, and Politics

A few studies on youth participation in politics have indicated that youth engage effectively in politics through social media (Abdullah et al., 2021). For instance, during the 2008

presidential election in the United States, then-Senator Barack Obama effectively used a social media platform that included apps like Twitter and Facebook to provide a variety of self-organising resources to young users. Then there are the significant events in Egypt, Tunisia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, which demonstrated that the use of modern technology in youth political mobilisation is not limited to the Obama paradigm (Theocharis, 2011). In Malaysia, internet trolls and keyboard warriors led by the younger generation had a big impact on political campaigns during the 2008 General Elections. Multiple states had fallen to the opposition as a result of the ruling party's unwillingness to acknowledge the influence and potency of new media, according to Deputy Prime Minister Dato' Seri Najib Razak (Salman & Saad, 2015).

Past studies have found that respondents were concerned with views shared regarding social media politics (Salman et al., 2018a). Other studies indicated that respondents had varied preferences for political information and interest in reading information about political candidates shared on social media (Salman et al., 2018b). This implies that in today's society, individuals have doubts concerning what they see on social media, particularly when it comes to political topics. As a result, studying the quality of information and sources on social media is critical to filling gaps in research on political information-seeking behaviour on social media. Given the rapid adoption of new media by today's youth population, Moeller, Kuhne and Vreese (2018) underlined the importance of additional research on social media's influence in information seeking and its implications for political decision-making in their study.

Twitter as a Social Network for Information Seeking

To obtain a better understanding of the platform Twitter as an information source to the public, researchers from various fields of study explored questions like how trending topics on Twitter fit into mainstream media narratives, who are the prominent individuals on Twitter and how much they influence other Twitter users and what content and contextual characteristics influence post engagement (Jain & Sinha, 2020). While these researches revealed "who says what to whom" on Twitter, they did not investigate the impact.

Researchers discovered how individuals' social cognitive characteristics, like assertiveness and the need for information processing, may influence the specific motivations for using Twitter (Oyibo & Vassileva, 2019), when comparing information seeking on Twitter using the uses and gratifications paradigm. Early uses and gratifications research, for example, suggested that people utilise information to fulfil their needs, such as seeking political information when political polarisation and scepticism of politicians are on the rise, and the media has been increasingly being accused of contributing to this political unrest (Fallows, 1996).

Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development

In the earliest and most comprehensive studies on the link between media gratifications and political effects, McLeod and Becker (1974) observed that the addition of gratification and avoidance measures contributes a number of political effect variables, such as voting probability, information accuracy, campaign interest and activity, and perceived differences between candidates after conscription.

Political attitudes like political involvement (voting intention and political interest), trust in politics, and self-efficacy have been shown to predict informational instead of entertainment needs in using media (Sheetz et al., 2020). As a result, this study of the factors

influencing young Malaysians' political information-seeking behaviour on Twitter, through uses and gratifications, examined what needs will be addressed by utilising Twitter for political information, as well as how effectively factors like voting intention, political interest, trust in politics, and self-efficacy predict Twitter use motivations. In addition, because the need for information processing determines specific motives for using Twitter, this study also looked at the quality and credibility of political information on Twitter.

Political Information Seeking and Decision Making

Previous research has linked internet use to political outcomes such as political efficacy, situational political involvement, participation, and knowledge (Ahmad, Alvi & Ittefaq, 2019). Internet use for campaign information, on the other hand, is predicted to be positively linked to situational political involvement, and political self-efficacy. The aforementioned link could be extended to social media, particularly Twitter. Political self-efficacy is described as the degree to which citizens believe they can influence and contribute to political and social change (Campbell, Gurin & Miller, 1954). Since using media-rich social media applications for political information, such as streaming live videos of campaign rallies and microblog updates, gives users the impression of increased engagement with ideal candidates, social media attention is positively related to political self-efficacy (Ahmad, Alvi & Ittefaq, 2019).

Hypothesis 1:

There is a significant positive relationship between

Self-efficacy and Twitter Motivation. For political information, youth mostly rely on the Internet and their friends (Abdullah et al., 2021). They can perceive politics on a more familiar and personal level through posts from friends or tweets from followers. These interactions make political information better accessible to youth, allowing them to integrate it into their daily lives and influencing their interests and decisions in politics. The intention to contribute (through voting) and influence a change in political process, particularly in view of Undi18 and Malaysia's 15th General election in 2023, necessitates this information for decision-making. According to Ahmad, Alvi, and Ittefaq (2019), social media has become the primary source of political efficacy, increasing greater perception of voting and politics.

Hypothesis 2:

There is a significant positive relationship between Situational Political Involvement and Twitter Motivation.

Political Information Seeking and Trust in Government

Governmental trust is the ability to put faith in those who are responsible for making decisions and acting in the areas of the economy, technology management, and other areas of public safety and health. Loss of trust can increase an individuals' perception of risk (Sheetz et al., 2021), implying that the greater the risk, the greater the need for information to assess it. For example, in the context of Twitter, a lack of trust in government may motivate youths to seek political information on Twitter in order to account for their lack of understanding of the situation's risks and benefits.

Hypothesis 3:

There is a significant negative relationship between Government Trust and Twitter Motivation.

Trust and Information Seeking Behaviours

Information Quality influences behaviour, particularly information-seeking behaviour, in addition to attitudinal trust (Abdullah et al., 2022). Based on Abdullah et al. (2022), it is natural to conclude that information-seeking behaviour and how the recipient reacts to information are both influenced by trust in the individual sharing the information. According to Salman & Salleh (2020) and Attia et al. (2011), individuals typically perceive any information offered by members of social networks to be reliable. These two researches opined that, to some degree, individuals who connect in social networks and form relationships with others who share a common interest have established an informal mutual understanding of the source's credibility. Individuals may perceive political information shared by mutual or other users on Twitter, for example, to be trustworthy and credible, and thus of high quality, motivating political information seeking behaviour on Twitter.

Hypothesis 4:

There is a significant positive relationship between Twitter Information Quality and Twitter Motivation.

METHODOLOGY

An online survey was disseminated through the platform Twitter. Demographics were used in the first section to establish the socio demographic backgrounds, such as gender, age, educational level, ethnicity, location, monthly income as well as Twitter use frequency and political information seeking interest. The second section, political attitudes, includes questions concerning political self-efficacy, situational political involvement, and governmental trust drawn from previous research (Austin et al., 2008). To evaluate governmental trust, eight items were used to assess respondents' trust or distrust of the following government bodies: (1) "The Prime Minister," (2) "The Malaysian judiciary," (3) "Legislatures," (4) "The Malaysian Exec," (5) "Monarchy," (6) "The courts," (7) "The Parliament," and (8) "Your affiliated political party".

The third section, which focuses on Twitter use motivation for political information, incorporated 13 statements from Kaye and Johnson's (2004) work on the uses and gratifications of the Web for Political Information. The final and fourth section of the questionnaire focused on the perception of information quality, to comprehend how Malaysian youths' perceptions of information quality influence their search for political information on Twitter. 20 items were adapted from Gaziano and McGrath's study measuring the concept of credibility in old media such as newspapers, radio, and television (Gaziano & McGrath, 1986).

A pilot research using 40 respondents was done to verify the reliability of quantitative survey questions. The overall reliability score was at .922, deeming the instrument as valid and reliable. For the actual data collection, the researchers applied snowball sampling, asking youth between 18-30 years old living in Klang Valley to answer the survey between March-July 2021. At the end, 314 responses were gathered. To explore the relationship between different variables, the data in this study were analysed using a bivariate Pearson correlation. The Pearson correlation was conducted to analyse the influence of factors such as political

attitudes (self-efficacy, Situational Political Involvement, Government Trust), Twitter use motivations, and information quality on Malaysian youths' motivation for seeking political information on Twitter.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 314 respondents in the Klang Valley answered the survey questionnaire. 53% (167) were female and 47% (147) were male. Respondents were between the age 18 to 30, with significantly more people in the higher age bracket of 24 to 30 years accounting for 229 (73 %) of the total. Malays accounted for the majority of respondents 51% (160), followed by Chinese 26% (83), Indians 21% (66) and others 2% (5). When it came to the frequency of Twitter usage, the majority of respondents used it more often, with 73% (230) reporting they used it daily, while only 22% (68) reporting they used it weekly, and only 5% (16) reporting they use Twitter less often.

Self-Efficacy

The mean score and standard deviation for the respondents' degree of self-efficacy are shown in Table 1. The construct of self-efficacy was assessed using four items for the independent variable. Item 1: *My vote makes a difference* (M= 4.44, SD= 0.845) has the highest level of agreement, followed by Item 3: *I can make a difference if I participate in the election process* (M=4.38, SD=0.846) and Item 4: *Voting gives people an effective way to influence what the government does* (M=4.32, SD=0.905). The item with the lowest mean score is Item 2: *I have a real say in what the government does* (M= 4.00, SD=1.208). However, the results revealed that all of the items had an above-average mean score, indicating that respondents are tending toward high agreement on all of the items in the self-efficacy variable.

Table 1: Mean and std. deviation for self-efficacy

Items	Mean	SD
1. My vote makes a difference	4.44	0.845
2. I have a real say in what the government does	4.00	1.208
3. I can make a difference if I participate in the election process	4.38	0.846
4. Voting gives people an effective way to influence what the government does	4.32	0.905

Situational Political Involvement

Four items were used to measure respondents' extent of situational political involvement. Table 3 shows that all of Items 1–4 had a high level of agreement among the respondents. The highest level of agreement was Item 2: *I like to stay informed about the elections* (M=4.41, SD=0.754), followed by Item 1: *I pay attention to election information* (M=4.38, SD= 0.763) and Item 3: *I'm interested in election information* (M=4.38, SD=0.812), which had similar average scores among respondents. The item with the lowest mean score is Item 4: *I actively seek out information concerning the elections* (M=4.09, SD=1.020). Overall, the findings indicate that all of the items in the situational political involvement variable had a high mean score, indicating that respondents have a high level of agreement on all of the items.

Table 2: Mean and std. deviation for situational political involvement

Items	Mean	SD
1. I pay attention to election information	4.38	0.763
2. I like to stay informed about the elections	4.41	0.754
3. I'm interested in election information	4.38	0.812
4. I actively seek out information concerning the elections	4.09	1.020

Government Trust

Eight items were used to measure respondents' degree of trust in government, with 1 indicating the least amount of trust and 5 indicating the highest level of trust. According to Table 4, results revealed that the majority of mean scores on each item in this section are below average, demonstrating a lack of trust in government sectors. Respondents affiliated political party in item 8 has the highest mean score of all the items, Item 8: *Your affiliated political party* (M=2.57, SD=1.083), followed by Item 6: *The courts* (M=2.04, SD=1.079), and Item 3: *Legislatures* (M=1.92, SD=1.018). Item 1: *The Prime Minister* (M=1.63, SD= 0.863) has the lowest mean score.

Items	Mean	SD
1. The Prime Minister	1.63	0.863
2. The Malaysian judiciary	1.85	0.982
3. Legislatures	1.92	1.018
4. The Malaysian Exec	1.82	0.958
5. Monarchy	1.76	0.945
6. The court	2.04	1.079
7. The Parliament	1.79	0.933
8. Your affiliated political party	2.57	1.083

Table 3: Mean and std. deviation for government trust

Information Quality

As shown in Table 4, twenty items were used to assess the quality of information on Twitter. The mean scores of the items in this area vary from below average to above average, indicating low to a high agreement on the items. The item with the highest score in mean is Item 20: *Overall, does national and international political news seem more reliable to you when you read it on Twitter?* (M=4.21, SD=0.838), followed by Item 18: *If there is a political situation in the national news that is hard to understand or is controversial, would you trust Twitter the most to help you understand it?* (M=4.20, SD=0.842) and Item 17: *If there is a political situation in your local area that is hard to understand or is controversial, would you trust Twitter the most to help you understand it?* (M=4.15, SD=0.867), as well as Item 10: *The information shared on Twitter regarding politics is concerned about the public interest* (M=4.15, SD=0.890). This indicates that the vast majority of respondents agree that information published on Twitter is credible, comprehensible, and considerate of the public's interests.

The items with the lowest score in mean are Item 2: *Are the information shared on Twitter regarding politics biased?* (M=2.72, SD=1.253), followed by Item 6: *The information shared on Twitter regarding politics does not watch after viewers' interests* (M=2.74, SD= 1.218), and Item 16: *As far as you can recall offhand, have you ever heard conflicting reports*

of the same story from different sources on Twitter? (M=2.80, SD=1.223). The low mean score suggests that the majority of respondents disagree with the statements in these items. Respondents disagree that political information on Twitter is biased, implying that they believe it is fair. The majority of respondents also disagree with the statement in Item 6 "The information shared on Twitter regarding politics does not watch after viewers' interests," as evidenced by the high score in mean mentioned previously in Item 10 "The information shared on Twitter about politics is concerned about the public interest." When inquired about conflicting reports of the same story on Twitter, the majority of respondents answered with a below-average mean score of 2.80, indicating that they disagree with the statement. As a result, it is possible to conclude that there are no conflicting reports of the same story on Twitter.

Table 4: Mean and std. deviation for information quality

Items	Mean	SD
1. Are the information shared on Twitter regarding politics fair?	3.98	1.019
2. Are the information shared on Twitter regarding politics biased?	2.72	1.253
3. Are the information shared on Twitter regarding politics tells the whole story?	3.78	1.179
4. Are the information shared on Twitter regarding politics accurate?	3.92	1.022
5. Are the information shared on Twitter regarding politics invading people's privacy?	2.83	1.261
6. The information shared on Twitter regarding politics does not watch after viewers' interests	2.74	1.218
7. The information shared on Twitter regarding politics is concerned about the community's well-being	4.10	.948
8. The information shared on Twitter regarding politics does not separate fact and opinion	3.75	1.087
9. The information shared on Twitter regarding politics can be trusted	3.97	.987
10. The information shared on Twitter regarding politics is concerned about the public interest	4.15	.890
11. The information shared on Twitter regarding politics is factual	3.99	.937
12. The information shared on Twitter regarding politics are written by well-trained reporters	3.64	1.114
13. The information shared on Twitter regarding politics sensationalises	3.76	1.023
14. Are the information shared on Twitter regarding politics is morally acceptable?	4.02	.909
15. If you got conflicting or different reports of the same political information from traditional media sources, would you be the most inclined to believe the same information on Twitter?	4.05	.897
16. As far as you can recall offhand, have you ever heard conflicting reports of the same story from different sources on Twitter?	2.80	1.223

17. If there is a political situation in your local area that is hard to understand or is controversial, would you trust Twitter the most to help you understand it?	4.15	.867
18. If there is a political situation in the national news that is hard to understand or is controversial, would you trust Twitter the most to help you understand it?	4.20	.842
19. Overall, does local and state political news seem more reliable when you read it on Twitter?	4.13	.874
20. Overall, does national and international political news seem more reliable to you when you read it on Twitter?	4.21	.838

Twitter Motivation

To measure this variable, thirteen items were used. From Table 5, it could be seen that Items 1– 8 showed a high agreement among the respondents. Item 6: *I use Twitter for political information, because information is easy to obtain* recorded a high value in mean (M=4.44, SD=0.782). followed by Item 8: *I use Twitter for political information, to keep up with main issues of the day* (M=4.39, SD=0.825), and Item 2: *I use Twitter for political information, to help me decide about important issues* (M=4.36, SD=0.831). This demonstrates that respondents agree on using Twitter for information seeking as it is easily accessible, instructive for staying up to date on topics, and valuable for decision making.

Item 9 – 13 showed moderate agreement among the respondents. The item with the least score in mean, is Item 13: *I use Twitter for political information, to use as ammunition in arguments with others* (M= 3.15, SD= 1.347), followed by Item 10: *I use Twitter for political information, because it helps me relax* (M=3.70, SD=1.323). This shows that, in addition to information seeking, Twitter is used for entertainment purposes such as relaxation or debating with others. However, as shown in table 5, it is mostly agreed that Twitter is mostly utilised for information seeking by respondents in this study.

Table 5: Mean and std. deviation for Twitter motivation

Items	Mean	SD
1. I use Twitter for political information, to help me decide how to vote	4.22	0.948
2. I use Twitter for political information, to help me decide about important issues	4.36	0.831
3. I use Twitter for political information, to see what a candidate will do if elected	4.31	0.888
4. I use Twitter for political information, to judge personal qualities of candidates	4.33	0.853
5. I use Twitter for political information, for unbiased viewpoints	4.31	0.874
6. I use Twitter for political information, because information is easy to obtain	4.44	0.782
7. I use Twitter for political information, to find specific political info I'm looking for	4.23	0.915
8. I use Twitter for political information, to keep up with main issues of the day	4.39	0.825
9. I use Twitter for political information, because it is entertaining	4.17	1.048
10. I use Twitter for political information, because it helps me relax	3.70	1.323
11. I use Twitter for political information, because it is exciting	4.04	1.174

12. I use Twitter for political information, because it gives me something to talk about with others	4.04	1.104
13. I use Twitter for political information, to use as ammunition in arguments with others	3.15	1.347

Hypotheses Testing

For analysing the survey data, the study used a bivariate Pearson correlation test on SPSS to test the correlation effects of the independent variables (i.e. Self-efficacy, Situational Political Involvement, Trust in Government, and Twitter Information Quality) on the dependent variable Twitter Motivation. Results are revealed in the correlation tables below.

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant positive relationship between Self-efficacy and Twitter Motivation

As shown in Table 6, correlated at 0.541, based on the results of the study, there is a moderate but significant positive relationship between self-efficacy and Twitter motivation ($r = .541$, $P < 0.01$). Those who believe they have an ability to affect change in political processes are more inclined to utilise the platform Twitter for information.

Table 6: The correlations between self-efficacy and Twitter motivation

		Self-efficacy	Twitter Motivation
Self-efficacy	Pearson Correlation	1	.541**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	314	314
Twitter Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.541**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	314	314

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant positive relationship between Situational Political Involvement and Twitter Motivation

As shown in Table 7, correlated at 0.568, based on the results of the study, there is a moderate but significant positive relationship between situational political involvement and Twitter motivation ($r = .568$, $P < 0.01$). Individuals who are interested in politics are eager to share whatever they find on Twitter about politics with their peers, and they use Twitter to actively seek out political information.

Table 7: The correlations between situational political involvement and Twitter motivation

		Situational Political Involvement	Twitter Motivation
Situational Political Involvement	Pearson Correlation	1	.568**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	314	314
Twitter Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.568**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	314	314

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant negative relationship between Government Trust and Twitter Motivation

As shown in Table 8, correlated at 0.257, based on the results of the study, there is a weak but significant negative relationship between government trust and Twitter motivation ($r = -.257, P < 0.01$). When people have less trust in the government, they are more likely to turn to Twitter for political advice or to read what others have to say about candidates or topics.

Table 8: The correlations between government trust and Twitter motivation

		Government Trust	Twitter Motivation
Government Trust	Pearson Correlation	1	-.257**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	314	314
Twitter Motivation	Pearson Correlation	-.257**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	314	314

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesis 4: There is a significant positive relationship between Twitter Information Quality and Twitter Motivation

As shown in Table 9, correlated at 0.729, based on the results of the study, there is a strong and significant positive relationship between information quality on Twitter and Twitter motivation ($r = .729, P < 0.01$). People are more likely to use Twitter for information if the quality and credibility of the information is perceived to be higher.

Table 9: The correlations between information quality and Twitter motivation

		Information Quality	Twitter Motivation
Information Quality	Pearson Correlation	1	.729**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	314	314
Twitter Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.729**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	314	314

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The figure below summarises the findings of this research.

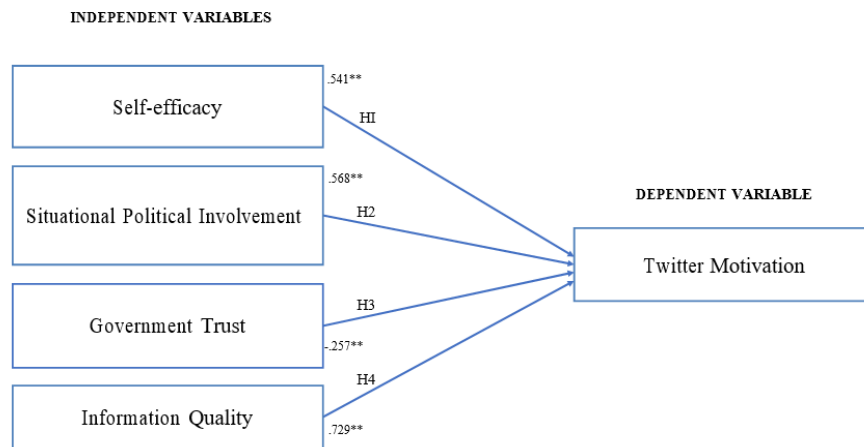


Figure 1: Summary of Hypotheses

Through examining the uses and gratifications of Twitter in this study, it was discovered that political attitudes like self-efficacy, situational political involvement, and government trust, influence motivations for using Twitter for political information. Individuals' motivation to use Twitter for political information was also revealed to be influenced by the quality of information available on the platform.

The findings of this research supported previous research that political attitudes, instead of entertainment, are more closely correlated with measures of information seeking and guidance. Respondents prefer to use Twitter for information gathering, decision-making guidance, and surveillance of important issues, rather than for entertainment purposes such as relaxation and debating with others. These results could be attributed partly to the type of content that respondents frequently consume. Respondents of this research are followers of political-related content on Twitter. Individuals who follow specific types of content on social media are more likely to do so with an objective in mind, than for the purpose of the entertainment gratifications provided by social media in general. As a result, more purposeful uses of Twitter, rather than just scrolling for entertainment, may be correlated to guidance and information-seeking needs. These findings back up the work of Ahmad, Alvi and Ittefaq (2019), who argue that individuals use the Internet, comparably social media, as a source, instead of a pastime.

Situational political involvement and self-efficacy were proven to have a significant positive relationship with Twitter motivation, whereas trust in government was proven to have a significant negative relationship with Twitter motivation. Many factors influence political opinions; for the most part, the majority of respondents' opinions were formed long before they started using Twitter. For instance, the respondents in this study are Malaysian youth aged 18 to 30, with more than half of them reporting that they belong to the bottom 40% of the income distribution in Malaysia. The income disparity may be one of the factors influencing these political opinions.

Huijsmans, Rijken, and Gaidyte (2020) opined that when economic inequality is higher, higher-income groups have more political power, which causes lower-income people to believe that the political system is incapable of protecting their interests, and as a result, they stop participating in politics. To challenge that notion, the findings of this study, on the other

hand, imply that people may seek to reform the political system because of its perceived incapability. Individuals seek information in order to bridge the gap between the situation they are in and the information needs they require. As a result, self-efficacy was revealed to have a significant positive relationship with Twitter motivation, because individuals with high self-efficacy believe they can influence the political process and bring about change, and they rely on Twitter for information and decision-making. These findings do support that people with a high feeling of self-efficacy are more motivated to seek out information regarding politics.

Respondents showed a high level of interest in remaining informed and paying attention to election information, indicating a high level of awareness in social situations. The more significant and engaging an issue is thought to be, the stronger the need for information, which leads to increased use of information-oriented media. The introduction of Undi18, which reduces the legal age for voting from 21 to 18, is seen as a significant development in Malaysia, therefore, there is a great need for information for knowledge and decision-making, which drives Twitter use for political information, as evidenced by the findings of this study. When the Undi18 amendment is finally integrated into the Constitution, the Government estimates that the number of voters will increase to 22.7 million by Malaysia's 15th general elections, up from 14.9 million registered voters in 2018 (Matdura, 2020). The Undi18 is a great democratic achievement that brings youth empowerment to life, and since this research focuses on youth, with 27% of respondents falling into the age bracket of 18 to 23 years old, who will be considered first-time voters in the upcoming election, it is safe to presume that respondents have a desire to vote and a need for information for voting guidance. As a result, it is revealed that situational political involvement has a significant positive relationship with Twitter motivation. When viewed from the standpoint of uses and gratifications, it is possible to conclude that respondents' strong sense of situational political involvement leads to a desire for knowledge regarding politics and elections, which may push them to seek out information to meet these needs.

Government trust and Twitter motivation have a significant negative relationship. The reason for this is that the majority of respondents had little trust in the government, as seen by low survey item scores indicating a lack of trust in government sectors. According to early uses and gratification research, it is reasonable to conclude that respondents' distrust in government motivates their use of Twitter for political information, as individuals use the information to gratify their needs, including seeking political information at a time when political distrust is prevalent and the media is increasingly accused of contributing to this discontent (Fallows, 1996). It is reflected in the findings, as seen by the majority of respondents agreeing that they use Twitter for political information to help them make important decisions, such as how to vote, assessing personal behaviours of candidates, and obtaining objective and fair viewpoints.

These findings support the study's primary research objective, which was to evaluate the motivation of Malaysia's current political situation on youths' political information-seeking behaviour (Self-efficacy, Situational Political Involvement, Government Trust) on Twitter. Ultimately, the current political situation in Malaysia has an influence on individuals' personal aspects such as self-efficacy, situational political involvement, and government trust, motivating them to seek political information on Twitter to meet their specific needs.

When evaluating the comprehensiveness of political information available on Twitter, respondents agreed that they trust Twitter the most, to help them understand controversial or difficult-to-understand reports or political situations. Respondents also indicated that if

they received different or conflicting reports of the same political information from traditional media sources, they would be most likely to believe the same information on Twitter. This supports Kaye and Johnson's (2004) study, which found that internet users rated online political news sources as more credible than traditional news sources. Regardless, when asked if there were conflicting reports of the same news or article on Twitter, the majority of respondents disagreed, implying there were no contradicting reports of the same news on Twitter. This demonstrates that Twitter as a platform is regarded as a reliable and accurate source of information for its users.

When asked if the information shared on Twitter concerning politics is biased, the majority of respondents disagreed, implying that information on Twitter is not biased. Aside from that, the majority of individuals believe the political information shared on Twitter is fair. This adds to the reliability and quality of political information found on Twitter, and thus increases individuals' trust in the information they read. In his study analysing the relationship between media trust and news attention, Williams (2012) suggested that perceived trust in the news influences attention to the news. Based on these findings, given the amount of reliability and quality of political information available on Twitter, it is possible to conclude that the quality of information on Twitter motivates individuals to use Twitter for political information. Therefore, research objective number 2 is addressed: To determine the relationship between Malaysian youths' perception of information quality and political information-seeking behaviour on Twitter.

Political information is also easily accessible on Twitter, which leads to the behaviour of seeking political information. According to the survey findings, respondents strongly agree on using Twitter for political information because it is easy to obtain. Furthermore, the clear majority of those respondents stated they use Twitter to find specific information. This demonstrates how easily political information is obtainable on Twitter, as well as how simple it is to navigate around and find specific information to meet respondents' needs. As a result, in an attempt to address the study's last research objective, which is to explore the relationship between Twitter as a social media platform and the motivation of political information-seeking behaviour among youth in Malaysia, these findings suggest that the accessibility and credibility of information on Twitter, as well as the significance of Twitter as a source of information rather than just an entertainment app, motivates youths' political information-seeking behaviour.

SUMMARY

This research is important because it fills a knowledge gap in the uses and gratifications theory and youth motivation for seeking political information on social media, specifically Twitter. The main contribution of this study is that it focuses on the factors that influence youth, with a particular emphasis on the political attitudes they possess, that motivate them to seek political information on Twitter. This research also provides a deeper understanding of the challenges surrounding information seeking on social media, particularly in terms of information quality and credibility, as well as concerns such as bias and inaccurate information, that could be a disadvantage especially when users lack political literacy and are unable to use this information to make informed decisions. To further understand the utility and value of Twitter as a medium for a primary political information source, future research should direct their focus on the uses and gratifications of political information on Twitter. This way, future studies will be able to pinpoint the types of gratifications associated with

acquiring specific types of political information on Twitter, potentially increasing desire to use the platform. Future research could potentially expand the study's scope to include other Malaysian regions and age groups, as a bigger sample of online participants could reveal new motivations. Furthermore, rather than observing motivations from other studies, future research should consider using open-ended questions to gain a better understanding of Twitter use and motivations for political information seeking.

BIODATA

Azmira Izzati Binti Azwar is a Senior Executive at The Star Media Group and got a Master degree in Media and Communication from Taylors University Malaysia. Her current field is with Marketing and Branding. She is interested in Political Communication as well as Media and Marketing. Email: azmiraazwar@yahoo.com

Kho Suet Nie (corresponding author) is a senior lecturer in the Center for Research in Media and Communication, National University of Malaysia. She specializes in the study of the mediatization of politics in Malaysia, public relations and corporate communication. Email: suetnie@ukm.edu.my

REFERENCES

- Abdullah, N. H., Hassan, I., Fazil Ahmad, M., Hassan, N. A., & Ismail, M. M. (2021). Social media, youths and political participation in Malaysia: A review of literature. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 11(4), 845-857. <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v11-i4/9578>
- Abdullah, N. H., Hassan, I., Azura Tuan Zaki, T. S. ., Ahmad , M. F. ., Hassan, N. A., Mohd Zahari, A. S., Ismail, M. M. ., & Azmi, N. J. . (2022). Examining the relationship between factors influencing political information seeking-behaviour through social media among youths in Malaysia. *Revista de Comunicaci3n de la SEECI*, 55, 1–15. <https://doi.org/id4r>
- Ahmad, T., Alvi, A., & Ittefaq, M. (2019). The use of social media on political participation among university students: An analysis of survey results from rural Pakistan. *SAGE Open*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019864484>
- Attia, A. M., Aziz, N., Friedman, B., & Elhousseiny, M. F. (2011). Commentary: The impact of social networking tools on political change in Egypt’s “revolution 2.0.” *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, 10(4), 369–374.
- Austin, E. W., Van de Vord, R., Pinkleton, B. E., & Epstein, E. (2008). Celebrity endorsements and their potential to motivate young voters. *Mass Communication & Society*, 11(4), 420–436. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15205430701866600>
- Campbell, A., Gurin, D., & Miller, W. E. (1954) *The voter decides*. New York: Row, Peterson, and Company.
- Chang Da Wan. (2019). The Universities and University Colleges Act in Malaysia: History, Contexts and Development. *Kajian Malaysia*, 37, 1-20.
- Fallows, J. M. (1996). *Breaking the news: How the media undermine American democracy*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Gaziano, C., & McGrath, K. (1986). Measuring the concept of credibility. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 63(3), 451-462.
- Gillin, J. L. (1919). The origin of democracy. *American Journal of Sociology*, 24(6), 704–714. <https://doi.org/10.1086/212975>
- Gleason, B. (2013). #Occupy Wall Street: Exploring informal learning about a social movement on Twitter. *American Behavioural Scientist*, 57(7), 966–982. <https://doi.org/f425qc>
- Jain, S., & Sinha, A. (2020). Identification of influential users on Twitter: A novel weighted correlated influence measure for Covid-19. *Chaos, Solitons & Fractals*, 139, 110037. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chaos.2020.110037>
- Hassan, I., & Azmi, M. N. L. (2018). Readers’ preferences for print and online newspapers in North-western Nigeria. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 9(6), 965-974. <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v8-i6/4294>
- Huijsmans, T., Rijken, A. J., & Gaidyte, T. (2020). The income gap in voting: Moderating effects of income inequality and clientelism. *Political Behaviour*, 44, 1203–1223.
- Kaye, B. K., & Johnson, T. J. (2004). A web for all reasons: Uses and gratifications of Internet components for political information. *Telematics and Informatics*, 21(3), 197-223. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0736-5853\(03\)00037-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0736-5853(03)00037-6)
- Kemp, S. (2021, February 11). Digital 2021: Malaysia. *Data Reportal*. <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-malaysia>
- Kurlantzick, J. (2021, July 23). Malaysia’s political crisis is dooming its COVID-19 response. *World Politics Review*. <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/in-malaysia-political-crisis-dooms-covid-19-response/>

- Lee, N. J., Shah, D. V., & McLeod, J. M. (2013). Processes of political socialization: A communication mediation approach to youth civic engagement. *Communication Research*, 40(5), 669-697. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650212436712>
- Matdura, S. (2020). 5 changes Undi18 will bring to Malaysia (other than lowering the voting age). *Ask Legal*. <https://asklegal.my/p/5-changes-malaysians-must-know-GE15-undi18-voting-age>
- Marquart, F., Ohme, J., & Möller, J. (2020). Following politicians on social media: Effects for political information, peer communication, and youth engagement. *Media and Communication*, 8(2), 197-207.
- McLeod, J. M., & Becker, L. B. (1974). Testing the validity of gratification measures through political effects analysis. In J. G. Blumler & E. Katz (Eds.), *The uses of mass communications* (pp. 137-166). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Medina, A. F. (2021, August 2021). Malaysian prime minister resigns, deepening political crisis. *ASEAN Briefing*. <https://www.aseanbriefing.com/news/malaysian-prime-minister-resigns-deepening-political-crisis/>
- Moeller, J., Kuhne, R., & Vreese, C.D. (2018). Mobilizing youth in the 21st century: How digital media use fosters civic duty, information efficacy, and political participation. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 62(3), 445-460.
- Mohamed Azmi, N., & Chinnasamy, S. (2019). Selangor young voters awareness and motivation during GE14. *Journal of Media and Information Warfare*, 12(June), 1-31.
- Nur Rusydina Khadzali, & Zainal Md. Zan. (2018). E-participation: A systematic understanding on public participation in the government in 21st century. *Jurnal Intelek*, 13(2), 29-46.
- Nurzihan Hassim, Tan, S. Z., & Jayasainan, S.Y. (2020). The influence of peer engagement on voting among Malaysian youths through social networking sites. *SEARCH Journal of Media and Communication*, 12(3), 125-144.
- Nor Ain Mohamed Radhi. (2019, July 18). Maszlee: No place for politics in school. *New Straits Times*. <https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2019/07/505408/maszlee-no-place-politics-schools>
- Oyibo, K., & Vassileva, J. (2019). The relationship between personality traits and susceptibility to social influence. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 98, 174-188.
- Salman, A., & Saad, S. (2015). Online political participation: A study of youth usage of new media. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(4). <https://doi.org/jcn8>
- Salman, A., Yusoff, M. A., Salleh, M. A., & Abdullah, M. Y. (2018a). Penggunaan media sosial untuk sokongan politik di Malaysia. *JONUS: Journal of Nusantara Studies*, 3(1), 51-63. <https://doi.org/10.24200/jonus.vol3iss1pp51-63>
- Salman, A., & Yusoff, M. A., & Mohamad Salleh, M. A., & Abdullah, M. Y. (2018b). Political engagement on social media as antecedent for political support among voters in Malaysia. *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 34(2), 152-165. <https://doi.org/10.17576/JKMJC-2018-3402-10>
- Salman, A., & Salleh, M. A. M. (2020). Examining the relationship between political agenda on social media and political support among university students. *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 36(3), 281-295.
- Sheetz, S. D., Kavanaugh, A., Skandrani, H., & Fox, E. A. (2021). Uses and gratifications of political information: Student perceptions of information from the 2014 Tunisian elections. *International Journal of Management Science and Business Administration*, 7(4), 36-44.

- The Economist*. (2017, February 4). Millennials across the rich world are failing to vote. <https://www.economist.com/international/2017/02/04/millennials-across-the-rich-world-are-failing-to-vote>
- Theocharis, Y. (2011). Young people, political participation and online postmaterialism in Greece. *New Media & Society*, 13(2), 203–223. <https://doi.org/dzt5xf>
- Tirtayana, N. (2021, May 27). UNDI18: The rise of youth in Malaysia. *Friedrich Naumann Foundation*. <https://www.freiheit.org/malaysia/undi18-rise-youth-malaysia>
- Voon Zhen Yi. (2018, March 22). Politics discourages and disenfranchises Malaysia's youth. *East Asian Forum*. <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2018/03/22/politics-discourages-and-disenfranchises-malysias-youth/>
- Yaqub, U., Chun, S. A., Atluri, V., & Vaidya, J. (2017). Analysis of political discourse on twitter in the context of the 2016 US presidential elections. *Government Information Quarterly*, 34(4), 613-626. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2017.11.001>
- Williams, A. E. (2012). Trust or bust? Questioning the relationship between media trust and news attention. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 56(1), 116–131. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08838151.2011.651186>
- Zalinah Ahmad, & Zawiyah Mohd Zain. (2021). Political involvement among youth in Malaysia: Lessons learnt. *International Journal of Media and Communication Research*, 2, 11-22.
- Zhu, A.Y.F., Chan, L., & Chou, K.L. (2019). Creative social media use and political participation in young people: The moderation and mediation role of online political expression. *Journal of Adolescence*, 77, 108-117. <https://doi.org/gmm8q5>