Political Marketing: Social Media Content and Its Influence on Voters' Loyalty To Political Leaders

By

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for the Degree of Master of Business Administration
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that:

(1)   This Research Project is the culmination of my own efforts, and all sources of information, whether written, electronic, or personal, have been acknowledged in the references.

(2)   No part of this research project has been submitted to support any other degree or certification at this university or other learning establishments.

The word count of this research report is **16,860**

Signature   :

Name   :

Date   :

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Indeed, juggling life between building a career, raising two little kids, managing a household, and striving in studies is not a mere walk in the park.

My MBA journey has been quite a roller coaster, yet UNIRAZAK has made the ride worthwhile. Furthering my studies in MBA, UNIRAZAK is one of the best decisions I have made for myself in a long time by virtue of the very dedicated and knowledgeable group of lecturers to the very accommodative support system from other departments.

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To my family, my husband, and my lovely daughters, this is for us.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Syakirin Husnal

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A brilliant social media strategy in politics has become more important to political campaigns in the last decade. Nowadays, no campaign manager can afford to ignore or disregard social media. Instead, they will take advantage of every opportunity to make the most of a candidate's social media. Politicians may interact directly with their constituents through social media platforms. As a result, constituents members may readily engage in political debates, influence policy choices, and have their opinions heard. At the same time, politicians can exchange policy suggestions, run advertisements, and raise funds, among other things. The study's main objective is to determine the factors influencing voters' loyalty towards political leaders. The study specifically focuses on three factors, i.e., Content Frequency, Content Relevance, and Content Language. A survey of online questionnaires was done on the public, especially those active on social media (namely Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok). This research requires a survey on 325 people who may or may not follow politically linked pages and are interested in a politician for the quantitative data collection. By researching the relationship between the efficiency of content marketing on social media to several types of content styles, we can see a trend of positive perception from the public towards the politician. The independent variables used in this study are (1) content upload frequency, (2) content relevance to current issues, (3) content language. Data analysis was done through MS Excel, and it was found that the overall questionnaire was internally consistent and reliable. All hypotheses are accepted. This study will give a more precise idea to political strategists in planning their content for the public on social media in marketing their respective politicians.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter proposes research that will add to an understanding of the Malaysian voters' loyalty to political leaders based on the contents they consumed from social media pages in politics. This research will specifically investigate the factors of social media content in terms of frequency of content upload – which can also be understood as visibility, content relevance to current issues, and the usage of friendly language used by political leaders to communicate with their followers on social media. First, the study's background, research objectives, research questions, and problem statement will be discussed in this chapter. Next, the research's hypotheses derivation, theoretical framework, and significance will be examined.

1.1 Background

Following the triumph of Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign in the United States, politicians and voters worldwide began to pay attention to social media. Soon after, the 14th General Election in Malaysia was a kickstart for the Pakatan Harapan alliance to fully utilize social media usage during their campaign against the then government Barisan National, which resulted in the first-ever change of government in Malaysia.

There is a rising trend for politicians globally to use social media to increase awareness of their presence while propagating their political campaigns and agenda.

Social media is seen as a powerful tool to deliver messages in various forms such as text messaging, visual messaging, including but not limited to photos and videos, and community and followings building.

With political marketing using various content via social media, it is essential to consider how to craft messages that assist influence voters' perceptions of politicians their political campaign and, ultimately, win elections.

Ever since the 14th General Election in Malaysia, many politicians and political parties have started using digital media or social media specifically as their propaganda machine to deliver their image to the public. When the Barisan Nasional government fell after GE14, they had been using social media actively to salvage their image and perception in the public's eyes. This exercise includes mobilizing a mass cyber troopers movement to spread ideologies, virtual psychological war further, and brainwashing the crowd on their political agenda. After the Sheraton Move toppled the Pakatan Harapan government, many politicians utilized social media to regain voters' trust by communicating and engaging with them through digital content on their social media platforms. This approach seemed like a new trend gaining popularity to build public perceptions of a particular politician, political party, or alliance.

As the trend of social media mobilization evolved around a political campaign, many are still trying to understand the formula for producing compelling content that attracts the public's attention. Especially in Malaysia, many politicians and think tanks do not exploit the social media algorithm to run any political agenda. The inconsistency of social media's content presence or activeness is another gap in strategic planning.

The result of this failure is that many politicians in Malaysia are stuck within their existing followers and 'support bubble' and have a hard time creating awareness that will positively affect their leadership quality. This study will develop an assessment tool to establish a winning formula for political strategists in planning a competitive strategy towards building the persona of their politicians and political agenda, leading them to a victorious election campaign.

1.2 Problem Statement

The active presence of a politician on social media platforms will allow the public to see them regularly, giving a reasonable presumption of their personality in the sense of how good they are at their work. Furthermore, content marketing on digital media is an excellent way to expose the public to their (politicians) current political campaign (if any) aligned with their political strategy. Therefore, as opposed to traditional

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campaigning methods such as house-to-house visitation, bunting, pamphlet, and ground events, digital media is more practical to indoctrinate the public with specific political propaganda.

However, not many politicians are consistent with their social media content, leading to infrequencies in their message delivery. Many seem to be disconnected from the real world, and some are even tone-deaf regarding issues concerning the people. This example can be seen by numerous insensitive posts by the politicians as of late, especially when it comes to the recent COVID-19 standard operation procedures (SOPs) violation and the financial sufferings of the people.

The lack of sensitivity and a well-understood formula of content marketing on social media for politicians inhibits them from moving forward with their political agenda. Moreover, the rise of people's voices through social media could also harm their (politicians') image and reputation and sacking from their position. One recent example was the termination of Datuk Seri Tajuddin Abdul Rahman from his post as Prasarana Malaysia Bhd chairman after his disastrous press conference following the LRT Kelana Jaya line train collision incident.

Hence, a clear guideline on a competitive strategic content marketing plan is vital to improve politicians' 'online persona' to win the public's positive perception and maneuver the public towards consuming their political agenda.

1.3 Research Objectives

This section will begin with the research's overall objective, based on the stated issue statement in the preceding section. Following that, a summary of the precise objectives to assess the research's aim. The following is a list of the objectives:

1.3.1 General Objective

This research aims to identify a correlation between social media content by political leaders to voters' loyalty. This study aims to examine the content marketing strategy to the success of political image amongst politicians in Malaysia. At the end of the study, the objectives that need to be met in the research are:-

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are listed below, which were determined from the general objective in the preceding section.

RO1: To determine the relationship between presence activeness on social media in terms of frequency of content uploads with voters' loyalty

RO2: To determine the relationship between the relevancy of political leaders' social media content to current issues and voters' loyalty.

RO3: To examine the correlation between language friendliness and political leaders' social media and voters' loyalty.

1.4 Research Questions

The questions to be answered in this research would be:

RQ1: Does the frequency of social media upload affects voters' loyalty to political leaders?

RQ2: How does relevant social media content attracts voters and convert them into political leaders' loyal?

RQ3: Does the friendliness of content language influence voters' loyalty?

1.5 Significant of Studies

Content Marketing is a vital part of any Political Campaign's strategic planning, especially when it comes to creating a positive image of a politician. Thus, this research topic's main objective is to examine the factors of content marketing that could influence the public's positive perception to a politician and how beneficial it can be in bringing them into agreeing to the related political agenda. Furthermore, it aims to investigate the inter-reliant connection between independent variables content variance to the success of a political campaign.

The results of this study are of significance to several interested parties. First and foremost, the outcomes would enable Political Campaign Strategists to get a holistic view of what type of strategy resonates the best with the public and could be used against a competitor.

Secondly, this study's verdicts would also offer politicians insight into how to communicate and engage with the public via social media and truly embody the role of being people's voice.

Let us not forget about the political parties. This study would give political parties an upper hand crafting their plan and communication strategy. They will also be able to come out with people-first policies in contending to be the ruling government.

Considering that not many studies had been done in Malaysia's political scene relatively, this study would be a catalyst for more political researchers to understand the content marketing algorithm further and go beyond the traditional assumption method in creating campaigns for politicians.

Hopefully, this study will inspire more strategists and researchers to build a competitive industry for high-class and intelligent politicians in Malaysia.

1.6 Term of References

The terminologies employed in this study have a wide range of definitions and interpretations depending on the context. As a result, detailed explanations of the critical terminology applied in the current study are required. Therefore, the following language is defined and provided in the context of this study:

Political Marketing– Political marketing is targeting voters with political candidates and ideas to meet their political requirements and obtain support for the politician and theories in question (Shama, 1975).

Social Media – "Websites and programs that enable users to produce and share information or engage in social networking" is how social media is defined (Oxford University Press, n.d.). In this research, social media solely refers to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok.

Social Media Content – Any materials, papers, images, graphics, and other information generated, shared, or sent through social media is referred to as "social media content."

Voter's Loyalty – According to Suaib et al. (2017), it highlights that engagement, affiliation, and support for a political party should demonstrate loyalty. Participation in activities such as party meetings and political rallies shows the backing. Also, in an election, support should be expressed in a particular vote.

Political Leader - In this study, a political leader is defined as someone prominent in the party's leadership and elected officials.

1.7 Overview of the Report

In the context of political marketing, this study aims to determine the impact of social media content on voters' loyalty to political leaders.

Chapter One: Introduction

The first chapter, the introduction, gives a comprehensive overview of the study issue

and explains its reasoning. It is accomplished by emphasizing the importance of the study issue in Malaysian voters' loyalty towards political leaders by social media content marketing. This chapter is organized with sections on Research Questions and Objectives, the Importance of Studies, the Terms of References, and a Summary.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The chapter begins with a brief introduction to the issue before focusing on the Malaysian context. Then there are political marketing studies, which lead to debates of each independent variable. Previous empirical investigations, the theoretical framework, and the conceptual framework are all mentioned in the chapter structure before the hypotheses are developed.

Chapter Three: Methodology

This chapter outlines the steps on how the research is intended to be carried out in terms of the research process design, type of research, population, the variables, the instruments, or methods used for data collection, and various statistical testing methods to support the data analysis in Chapter Four.

Chapter Four: Results

The raw acquired data will be cleaned up in this chapter before being fed into the Data Analysis package in MS Excel for thorough statistical analysis. In addition, the results of the statistical analyses will be reported in this chapter.

Chapter Five: Discussions

This chapter will go through the study findings, how they were interpreted, and whether or not the data supported the hypotheses. This chapter will also discuss limits and suggestions for further study.

1.8 Summary

Levy and Kotler (1969) proposed a broader definition of marketing, claiming that it may be used to the marketing of people, organizations, and ideas in addition to economic items and services. These expanded definitions of marketing necessitate the expansion of other marketing ideas that were previously limited to the sale of financial products and services. Hence, the research may provide insightful information on how Political Marketing is being practiced in Malaysia primarily through various social media platforms to capture different demographics of voters.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review is organized in this chapter with extensive evaluations of the study issue based on secondary data. The thoughts of vital theoretical models are explored as the chapter progresses before the conceptual framework is developed. Finally, we will create hypotheses based on the conceptual framework before wrapping this chapter with a summary.

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will review social media content marketing studies and their influence on voters' loyalty to political leaders. It examines the literature, theories, models, and sources of content marketing and the public's opinion of politicians. It also assesses the relationship between factors using results and recommendations from previous research.

The literature review's strategic goal is to build a conceptual framework based on the knowledge gained from relevant publications. Throughout the research process, findings and revelations will bring a prejudice that may influence developmental opportunities.

This literature review will include national and international research activities relevant to the study's scope.

2.2 Political Marketing

2.2.1 Political Marketing Theory

Democracy is the most widely used political system in the world. Citizens can pick their rulers through free competitive elections, and they are the best vehicle for reflecting people's wants and desires. Candidates can use political marketing

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to overcome these issues effectively. Furthermore, it increases the power of political groups in political disputes and their promoting activities, which was previously accomplished solely through the use of traditional political science ideas and tactics. Also, the use of a consistent marketingframework and the modification of basic commercial marketing concepts to make them applicable to parties or political individuals (Okan, Topcu, and Akyuz, 2014).

Many definitions have been presented in recent years. First and foremost, Shama (Shama,1976) described political marketing as "the process by which political candidates and their ideas are directed at voters to satisfy their potential needs and thus gain their support for the candidate and ideas in question." Kotler & Levy stated in early January 1969 that elections should be one of the new areas of marketing interest. "Political contests remind us that candidates are marketed as well as soap." (Kotler and Levy, 1969)

Another definition by Lock and Harris stated that "political marketing is concerned with communicating with party members, media and prospective sources of funding, and the electorate." (Lock and Harris, 1996) Wring's political marketing is defined as "the partyor candidate's use of opinion research and environmental analysis to produce and promote a competitive offering which will help realize organizational aims and satisfy groups of electors in exchange for their votes." (Wring, 1997) "Political marketing," according to Henneberg, "seeks to build, maintain, and enhance long-term political relationships at a profit for society, so that the individual political actors and organizations engaged in achieving their goals." This is accomplished through mutual exchange and the keeping of promises"(Henneberg, 2002). Political marketing is defined by the American Marketing Association (AMA) as "marketing designed to persuade target audiences to vote for a specific person, party, or proposition," and Winther-Nielsen defines it as "concerned with reciprocated exchanges of value between political entities and their environments." 2012 (Winther- Nielsen)

According to Maarek (1995), political marketing is a complicated process resulting from a worldwide effort encompassing all aspects of political communication. He also underlines that political marketing is the primary way of political communication. Marketing, in his opinion, has become an integrated and critical component of the company. According to the same source, the primary applications of political marketing campaigns are image building and election campaigns. According to Lock and Harris (1996), political marketing focuses on communication with party members, the media, potential funders, and voters.

2.2.2. **Agenda Setting Theory**

The ability of the media to inform us what topics are essential is referred to as agenda-setting by the media. Walter Lippman, a newspaper writer, was worried as early as 1922 that the media had the power to present pictures to the public. McCombs and Shaw studied presidential campaigns in 1968, 1972, and 1976. They focused on two factors in the1968 study: consciousness and information. They tried to analyze the relationship between what voters in one community believed were critical concerns and the actual content of the media messages employed throughout the campaign by looking into the media's agenda-setting role. McCombs and Shaw concluded that the media had a considerable impact on voters' perceptions of the campaign's primary topics (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

The news media's role in raising public knowledge and concern about essential topics is central to the assumptions and declarations. Most agenda-setting research is based on twopremises: (1) the press and media do not represent reality; instead, they filter and mold it; and (2) the media's focus on a few issues and themes causes the public to regard those concerns as more important than others. The time range for this phenomenon is one of the most critical parts of the concept of mass communication's agenda-setting role.

Furthermore, different media have varying levels of agenda-setting capability. The agenda-setting theory appears to be a good fit for understanding the media's widespread influence (for example, political communication systems). "The press may not be greatin persuading people what to think much of the time, but it is astoundingly successful in giving its readers what to think about," Bernard Cohen (1963) said.

2.2.3 Political Agenda

Scholars of agenda-setting mostly agree on assessing the public and media agendas. However, as Dearing and Rogers (1996, p. 18) point out, ''metrics of the policy agenda vary significantly more from study to research than measures of the media and public agenda, which are pretty conventional." The difficult decision to be taken is how to define and measure the political agenda. According to Walgrave and Van Aelst (2006), there is no such thing as a political agenda but rather an ecosystem of loosely related political agendas. In other words, every political actor has an agenda; some even have multiple agendas that are more or less independent of one another.

It is sufficient to mention that most investigations were limited to one or two political objectives based on the literature. For example, only Protess (Protess et al., 1987, 1991) and Soroka(2002) looked at multiple political agendas simultaneously.

A political agenda is a list of issues and ideas proposed by ideological or political parties and topics under consideration by the government's executive, or cabinet, to influence current and future political news and debate (Weaver, Graber, McCombs & Eyal, 1981).

2.2.4 Political Communication

In political communication, there are five primary functions. The primary role is to inform the public about what is going on in the area (Davis, 2010). The second goal is to teach the public about the importance and meaning of facts. The third goal is to create

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a forum on which political concerns may be discussed. The fourth step is to produce publications, and the fifth is to equip news media with policies and programs (Alhassan, 2018).

Politicians utilize political communication channels to communicate messages to specific audiences and persuade people to support and vote for them (Iyengar and Simon, 2000).

Bennett and Iyengar (2008) define involvement in the political communication process as the capacity to launch communications that one wishes to communicate and reply to any other political campaign.

The digitization of the communication process, as well as social media, have made communication channels available to everyone, allowing anyone to participate in political communication and activities (Alam et al.,n.d)

2.2.5 Confirmation Bias

One problem in understanding whether social media content marketing played a role in swaying the public's perception is the concept of confirmation bias. The propensity to seek for, understand, favor, and retain information that confirms or supports one's preexisting ideas or values is known as confirmation bias. People show this bias when choosing the information supporting their beliefs while ignoring contradictory information or perceiving ambiguous evidence confirming their current beliefs. The influence is most potent for desired goals, emotionally charged topics, and deeply ingrained ideas. Confirmation bias cannot be removed entirely, but it can be handled by education and training in critical thinking abilities, for example.

Humans tend to dismiss information that contradicts previous decisions and conclusions. Confirmation bias significantly impacts various fields, including politics, science, and education. When others' beliefs are disconfirming, this bias is linked to decreased neuronal sensitivity to the strength of others' opinions in the posterior medial prefrontal cortex.

"The human understanding when it has once adopted an opinion draws everything else to support and agree with it. And though there be a greater number and weight of instances to be found on the other side, yet these it either neglects and despises, or else by some distinction sets aside and rejects." – Francis Bacon

2.3 Social Media

2.3.1 Social Media

Social media is a technique of storing or distributing information in a communication environment. In contrast, social networks are social structures of a group of social actors with a complicated set of dyadic linkages (Peters, Chen, Kaplan, Ognibeni, & Pauwels, 2013). Social media are two-way communication channels that allow users to produce, collaborate, and exchange content on the interactive web by forming a virtual community on social media platforms (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014).

Social media is essentially different from any conventional medium due to its social network structure and egalitarian ethos (Peters et al., 2013).

In a hierarchical '1: n' structure, a brand, according to Peters et al. (2013), is merely a social actor in the network with no authority. In other words, a brand is regarded the same as other network users, and it no longer has the traditional marketing advantage of imposing commercial messaging through other media. Alternatively, it may be defined as a peer-to-peer communication channel that lets users cooperate and exchange information (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). In the next part, we will look at the role of marketing in social media.

According to a recent article by Hainla (2017), social media is still booming and increasing. Using Facebook as an example, in 2015, the social media platform effectively impacted 52 percent of customers on online and offline purchasing behavior, up from 36 percent in 2014. In reality, 50 million small companies use social media channels like Facebook to engage with their clients worldwide. In February 2016, over 4.4 million videos were submitted straight to Facebook, resulting in over 199 billion views from social media users worldwide. Twitter, for

example, has 328 million active users and is quite active in tweeting among its members.

Over 78 % who complained to a brand via Twitter expected a response within an hour, demonstrating the power of Twitter. Instagram, a photo and video-sharing social media site, is popular with companies to communicate with their followers, with 70.7 percent of users predicted to use it in 2017. (Parker, 2016). According to Parker (2016), more than 80% of users are from countries other than the United States. As a result, it is more than simply a social networking platform for sharing videos and photos; it is also a marketing avenue for companies to connect with their followers.

2.3.2 Social Media and Content Marketing

Because social media marketing differs from traditional marketing strategies, it requires specific attention and plans developed to establish brand image and loyalty. As a result, consumers are involved in social media marketing (Gordhamer, 2009).

Social media platforms, including blogs, microblogs, email, and social networking sites, provide various benefits for marketers and consumers to meet marketing communication and branding social goals (Kaur, 2016; Smith, 2014). According to Kim and Ko (2010), social media has evolved into an alternative communication tool that may expand users' experiences by supporting existing connections and activities in a fun way.

Unlike traditional marketing strategies, Weinberg (2009) predicted that social media penetration would continue to rise, and the Internet would become more social. As a result, the trend of consumers seeking information through social media rather than traditional ways is continuing. According to Weinberg, consumer trust in conventional media has dropped due to the move to online social media, and traditional media is no longer as successful as it once was. This scenario is due to a shift in focus from brands to customers (Hutter, Hautz, Dennhardt, & Füller, 2013).

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Consumers are taking the lead in marketing as active creators and influencers, in contrast to traditional marketing and the emergence of communications. According to Hutter et al.(2013), this phenomenon directly moved some brand authority to customers on social media platforms.

Brands and individuals might utilize social media marketing to advertise their websites, goods, and services to a broader audience. Reviewing the material or identifying helpful stuff and sharing it on social media are examples of ways to promote it. Unlike typical marketing methods, where individual efforts are emphasized, the actions are highlighted collectively (Weinberg, 2009).

According to Hutter et al. (2013), additional research is needed to understand better the impact of social media marketing campaigns on consumers' perceptions of products and brands and the effect on purchase intent. However, regardless of the dangers and uncertainties, brands cannot afford to be missing from such a potent communication channel. Despite this, Zeng and colleagues (2014) claim that using social media to advertise items has shown to be a promising approach in and of itself. As a result, companies continue to spend on social media operations to participate in the conversation and sell their goods and services.

2.3.3 Content Marketing

Information marketing is a strategic marketing method that focuses on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a target audience and generate lucrative consumer action.

According to Nathan (2012), viral content is a powerful tool for extending one's subjective lens of previous experiences. He believes that people disseminate viral content because it "represents or exposes something pleasurable that we could never have imagined with our minds." Berger and Milkman (2012) confirm this conclusion in their scientific study of virality.

Mandloys Digital Agency (2013) defines content marketing as developing relevant, fascinating, engaging, and valuable information that must be distributed regularly to sustain or impact client behavior. Content marketing is an important marketing activity that helps firms retain customers, acquire new ones, and build a strong brand.

Content marketing can be portrayed loosely by this figure below:

Figure 1: Content Marketing Definition (Mandloys Digital Agency, 2013)

According to Copyblogger, "content marketing" is "developing and sharing valuable free material to attract and convert prospects into customers, and consumers into repeat purchasers" (2013). Therefore, they feel that it should be provided free to encourage people to access, consume, and share the material.

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2.3.4 Social Media and Politics

Political parties are influencing their target audiences using popular social media. Due to social media, people's perceptions of the electoral process, extremist politics, and worldwide political strife became less sensitive and private. By disseminating information, social media aids in spreading political knowledge, resulting in increased engagement in political activities. In addition, the social media platform has allowed newcomers to engage with people regarding political topics (Alam et al.,2021).

Social media is also an excellent area for politicians to solicit their partner's opinion to improve their effectiveness in a political campaign and adopt ideas to entice folks to vote for them. Facebook is the most popular social media site, and it aids political marketing efforts by providing access to various tools for sending messages to the target demographic (Kahne et al., 2021). As a result, politicians have a unique ability to use social media to promote themselves and their candidates.

Politicians can interact directly with young voters via social media, motivating them to join in political activities and vote (Piyathissa and Ratnayake, 2019). As a result, it is reasonable to conclude that social media has significantly influenced the election (Alam and Yousof, 2021).

Social media may play a significant role in providing voters with practical ways to contact political parties. The contact on social media assists politicians in gaining voter confidence. Citizens may also use social media to gain necessary information and expertise about political parties, which will aid them in making vote decisions (Karamat and Farooq, 2020).

2.3.5   Social Media Use in Political Marketing

Based on a study by Okan, Topcu, and Akyuz in November 2014, they stated that most authoritarian countries are attempting to restrict access to social media, which has become a coordinating tool for practically all of the world's political movements. Social media in political marketing has advanced significantly in the last ten years. The power of social media has been acknowledged much more now as a platform for campaigns

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and candidates to reach out to voters via Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter.

Social media campaigns should be employed effectively for the multiplier effect by reaching out to volunteers and increasing their shares on platforms. Political candidates and parties' campaigns are easily accessible to the target audience via social media platforms, allowing marketing operations to be handled with voter feedback more interactively. Volunteers can quickly communicate with other voters in their area using location-based social media, and campaigns can be run more efficiently.

Social media has ushered in a new era of political discourse. The direct marketing approach of a political party or candidate is reduced from society to peer to peer and provides distribution into the trust based on social platforms. It also allows voters to participate as opinion leaders in political marketing campaigns by traveling all information via the internet.

2.4 Voter's Loyalty

The voter is (and ought to be) at the center of political marketing, just as the client is in marketing. Understanding their beliefs, wants, desires, and behavior is critical to influencing voters' political decisions. One of the primary goals of political marketing is to attract and keep committed voters (Pap, 2020). Often, political marketers focus on the floaters, overlooking their loyal voting base (Lilleker 2005). This disregard for committed voters does not appear logical, especially when compared to a traditional corporate situation.

In marketing, customer loyalty is an important notion. For many businesses, establishing and keeping client loyalty is "the ultimate aim," according to Harris and Goode (2004). The favorable impact of employee loyalty on corporate performance has even been referred to as "vital" for a company's success (Anderson and Srinivasan 2003). Apart from the numerous economic and competitive benefits that loyal consumers provide, they are also less vulnerable to rivals' marketing efforts and may even engage in positive word-of-mouth advertising (Dick and Basu 1994).

Rubin (1993) noted four crucial advantages of loyalty, (1) an increase in customer/new constituencies with a positive description of the corporation/political party; (2) customer/new constituencies with positive recommendations tended to be loyal; (3) an increase in earnings/electability as a result of many loyal customers/ constituents; and (4) a decrease in the cost of promotion and advertising.

Those advantages apply to political movements as well. Loyal voters strongly urge to spread information by word of mouth, which may bring in new votes and save money on advertising, marketing, and publicity, especially in the run-up to elections or improve the political party's image (Baker 2014). In addition, loyalty to a political party is a valuable asset since it may influence whether a political party/politician lives or dies (Pap,2020). The desire and motivation of loyal voters to continue propagating forms of support in the future, as well as the passion, commitment, and concrete action to try to attract people outside the party to provide support and choose the party, are all dimensions of loyalty (Suaib et al.,2017).

Previous traditional and political marketing studies have identified several elements influencing voters' loyalty. Client happiness is typically viewed as a significant effect on customer loyalty in conventional marketing (Hallowell 1996). This characteristic is also commonly highlighted in political marketing as an important way to generate brand loyalty (Lees-Marshment 2001; Osuagwu 2008; Lees-Marshment 2001; Lees-Marshment 2001; Lees-Marshment 2001; Lees-Marshment 2001; Lees-Marshment 2001 Shachar (2003) underlines the importance of habit in voting. This characteristic is also regarded to impact consumer loyalty in traditional marketing (Aarts et al. 1998) and to operate as a moderator in the satisfaction-loyalty connection (Aarts et al. 1998) (Anderson and Srinivasan 2003).

2.5 Political Leaders

With their government's authority and power, political leaders may transfer resources, power, and authority to their stakeholders to develop strong and long-lasting relationships. Therefore, political leaders have the responsibility to create a solid framework focused on the long-term wellbeing of citizens. (Ali, Tao, Shaikh, Sajid, 2017).

The image of a political leader impacts the appearance of their native nation. A country's image is affected by various elements, one of which, according to our findings, is its political leader. The most important feature was integrity, implying that the more trustworthy a political leader was, the better their home country's image was perceived. The influence of the political leader's charisma on the image of the home nation came next, followed by competence and leadership characteristics (Ingenhoff and Klein,2018).

2.6 Previous Empirical Studies

Empirical studies are a scientific way of evaluating a hypothesis by gathering and analyzing primary data using quantitative and qualitative methods. Researchers, academicians, and intellectuals have emphasized the necessity of empirical study to prove beyond theory and abstract thinking (Better Thesis, n.d.).

As a result, the research will emphasize earlier empirical investigations undertaken by researchers in this sector to call attention to statistical relationships between variables (Better Thesis, n.d.).

2.6.1 Social Media and Agenda Setting: Implications on Political Agenda

Based on research done by Ali Salman, Normah Mustaffa, Mohd Azul Mohd Salleh & Mohd Nor Shahizan Ali from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia titled Social Media and Agenda Setting: Implications On Political Agenda, they have concluded that in the five years leading up to the 2013 elections, social media in Malaysia played a significant role in keeping critical political problems in the spotlight.

Social media, particularly Facebook and Twitter, significantly influenced public opinion on major political issues. People have used social media to express their concern and dissatisfaction with matters affecting their welfare that the traditional media may not dare publish or broadcast. As a result, agenda-setting must be reconsidered, as the public agenda is increasingly taking center stage thanks to new/social media. As a result, the agenda-setting model could be expanded or rebuilt to include new/social media, as they impact public policy. It has the additional implication that politicians should keep up with social media developments to comprehend current topics of considerable interest to the public and society. We must accept that we live in a digital and globalized world.

2.6.2 The Effects of Digital Media on Political Knowledge and Participation in Election Campaigns

Another study was done by Daniela V. Dimitrova, Adam Shehata, Jesper Strömbäck, and Lars W. Nord on The Effects of Digital Media on Political Knowledge and Participation in Election Campaigns: Evidence From Panel Data (2014) concluded that higher frequency of use of digital media would lead to higher levels of political knowledge and political participation. They hypothesized that the effects of digital media use would vary significantly depending on which forms of digital media people use. They theorized that different forms of digital media have other functions and properties and that individuals' motivations for using digital media may vary across various formats. Their study proposed that online news sites would have a more substantial effect on political knowledge than political party websites and social media; that political party websites and social media would have more potent effects on

political participation than online news sites; and that social media would have the most powerful impact on political participation than online news sites.

In terms of the overall consequences of digital media use, their findings show that it has minimal effect on political awareness and involvement. The impacts on political knowledge are relatively limited when controlled for age, gender, education, political interest, general knowledge, and attention to politics in conventional media. Only select online news sources contribute to increased political awareness, whereas party websites and social media do not. And while reading the news online has a significant and good influence on learning, it is a minor one. The overall conclusion is that, when other factors are controlled for, the use of various types of digital media has minimal impact on political outcomes.

2.6.3 Social Media Marketing in Politics

On the other hand, Kayode Ayankoya, Margaret Cullen, and Andre Calitz, the authors of Social Media Marketing in Politics, suggested that managers of political campaigns must connect their media selection to the market segment, much as they do with social media and business. They must include social media in their traditional marketing strategies. Although social media might have an unexpected reach, its usefulness is dependent on precise distribution targeting. This scenario necessitates a thorough understanding of the structure of virtual and real-world social networks and a grasp of the importance and value of particular political messages. Traditional means of political campaigning are supplemented rather than replaced by social media. New media can help political messages reach the political dialogue by avoiding established media routes. Traditional media start conversations, but they are amplified and sustained by social media (Christopolous 2012, Van Spronsen 2012).

2.6.4   Assessing Organizational Information Visibility: Development and Validation of the Information Visibility Scale

This study by Hoeven et al., 2019 talks about the Information Visibility Scale to measure the core aspects of information visibility. For politicians, who tend to equate

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transparency and democracy with visibility; practitioners, who are interested in visibility in relation to organizational efficiency, effectiveness, and corporate social responsibility; and scholars, who are interested in visibility as an affordance capturing "the amount of effort people must expend to locate information," visibility has become a powerful ocular metaphor (Treem & Leonardi, 2012, p. 150).

Visibility and transparency are intertwined in this interaction. However, businesses cannot be transparent without information visibility. Moreover, various stakeholders require access to information at different times and in different settings and modalities (see four directions of transparency explained in Albu & Flyverbom, 2019). Yet, we know relatively little about the dynamics of information visibility, despite the critical link between information visibility and organizational transparency.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

A note from Dr. Sudha Menon in her paper Political Marketing: A Conceptual Framework (2008), though political marketing is becoming more common in democratic political systems where mass support is critical to maintaining power, military rulers often employ marketing strategies to develop their branded image. Political parties' working styles have been influenced by professional marketing. Parties grew more market-oriented, framing their platforms and policies in response to polls and market surveys. Thanks to the information revolution and globalization, traditional political campaigning has been transformed into one of the most professional and sophisticated marketing methods.

Suppose a political party adopts the marketing mentality. In that case, it will aim to answer the needs and wants of voters, resulting in voter satisfaction, and therefore gaining electoral support to achieve its objectives (Marshment, 2006).

In this study, the proposed conceptual framework will work around the independent, dependent, and moderating variables that I am testing to validate the hypotheses. The framework can be seen as per the figure below;
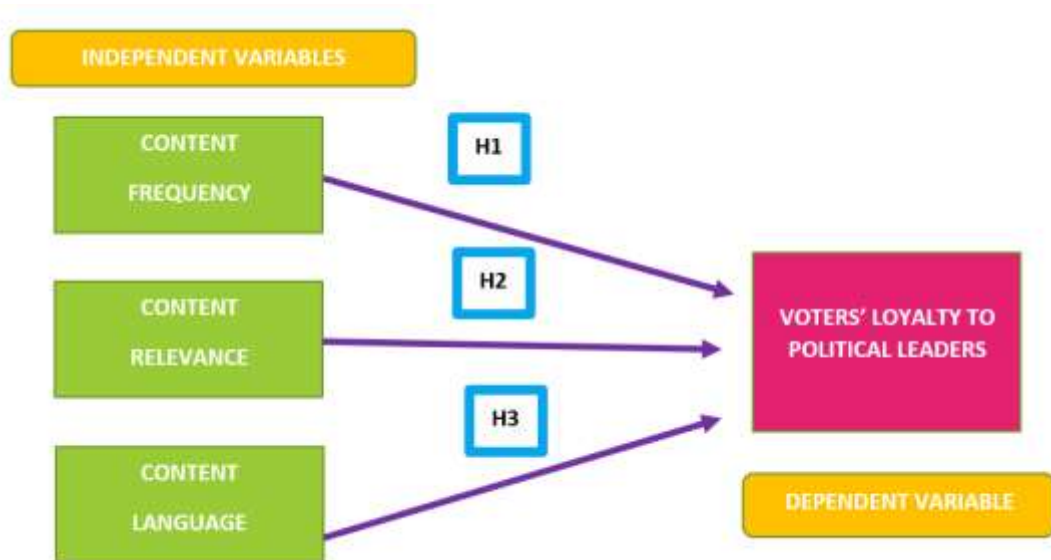
Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

2.8 Hypotheses Developments

This section will present three hypotheses based on each relationship established in the prior section's conceptual framework.

2.8.1   Content Frequency and Voters' Loyalty

The Content Frequency factor is adapted from a study by Danho, Tomeh, and Danho (2020) titled The Role of Social Media Marketing Activities on Customer Satisfaction. It was found in the study that regular posting on social media platforms play a significant role in enhancing customer satisfaction

In 2012, Çiçek and Erdogmus conducted a study to understand the effect of social media marketing on brand loyalty formation from the consumers' perspective. Because social media marketing may be regarded as a new but fast-increasing platform for creating relationships with consumers and forming good images of businesses in their eyes, the study's findings are expected to make a substantial addition to practice and literature.

According to the findings of this study, beneficial social media campaigns are the most important drivers of brand loyalty, followed by the relevance of content, the popularity of material among friends, and appearance on various social media platforms and offering applications.

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Relevance is the second most significant aspect determining brand loyalty; as a result, businesses must be informed about their consumers' interests, activities, and current life views. For example, companies might use qualitative research or observations to learn about their consumers' lifestyles and share such information on social media sites. Finally, the popularity of the material among friends boosts customer brand loyalty.

H1: *Political leaders' social media content upload frequency affects voters' loyalty.*

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2.8.2 Content Relevance to Voters' Loyalty

The Content Relevance factor is adapted from Bashir and Gupta (2018) titled Social Networking Usage Questionnaire: Development and Validation in an Indian Higher Education Context. The findings revealed that social networking usage could be decomposed into four factors: academic, socialization, entertainment, and informativeness. In this study, informativeness is tested in the context of seeking content that is relevant to current issues and news.

Social media are a new web-based platform that encourages user interaction and engagement. They are primarily based on web 2.0 technology and rely on computer-mediated tools capable of facilitating expressions, creating or co-creating social values known as Users Generated Content (UGC), and engendering discussions among people who may be geographically dispersed (Akpoghiran & Erubami, 2019). According to Kaplan and Haelin (2010), these tools can be classified as social networking sites, blogs and microblogs, collaborative projects, content communities, virtual game worlds, and virtual social worlds.

Social media has provided consumers with new routes for political information in the political sphere. Users now obtain political communication from familiar sources via postings by friends and acquaintances, rather than from media such as TV, print, and radio (Kushin & Yamamoto, 2010). Politics becomes a part of young people's everyday lives due to this accessibility, and their interest in politics grows as a result. Gillmor (2006) backs up this claim, stating that because social media is mainly made up of user-generated material, users can uncover perspectives not adequately represented in

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traditional news outlets, piquing their interest in learning more.

H2: *Political leaders' relevance of social media content to current issues affects voters' loyalty.*

2.8.3 Content Language and Voters' Loyalty

The friendly language of social media content is adopted from a study titled Sustainable Political Social Media Marketing: Effects of Structural Features in Plain Text Messages by Park, Kang, and Lee, 2020. In addition, research was done to understand whether voters would perceive politicians who use informal language in their social media text messages will be seen as more likable than those who use formal language.

When the same individual presents the same concept in various ways when speaking to different audiences and using other modalities, stylistic variation in language formality arises. Linguistic formality entails deliberate and overt displays of respect. Surprisingly, formal communication creates social distance between people who communicate face to face and through technology.

On the other hand, linguistic informality minimizes overt formality, suggests warmth, and reduces the social distance between communicators. Interlocutors' desire to be liked, acknowledged, and approachable is addressed in informal communication. Honorifics and formality are fairly intricate systems in specific languages, such as Korean and Japanese, which entail changing verb conjugations to vary the level of formality (Park et al., 2020).

H3: *Political leaders' engagement with social media followers using friendly language affects voters' loyalty.*

2.9 Summary

This paper's literature review proposes the various factors of social media content marketing style and its relationship with the public's perception of politicians and their political agenda, affecting voters' loyalty. Social media has different effects on different studies of a political campaign based on previous research. The findings and relevant theoretical models of previous researchers are also applied to support the hypotheses and relationship between social media content marketing, the role of social media, political agenda, political campaign, and electoral campaign, with the impact on politician's image. In this study, we will further explore the factors of social media content that might influence voter loyalty.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains how the data for this study was collected and analyzed using the Data Analysis package in MS Excel. Next, this chapter will describe research designs, research methodologies, sampling criteria, and the equipment used to gather data for later analysis in statistical software, followed by statistical tests to offer a better knowledge for subsequent analysis in the following chapter.

3.2 Research Design

A research design is a broad strategy that outlines the goals of a research endeavor and the steps that must be taken to achieve those goals. In other words, it is a master strategy for carrying out a study endeavor.

Through Saunders' research 'onion,' Sahay (2016) emphasized the importance of planning and designing in research. The outer layer serves as the research's root, while the inner layers serve as the research's building blocks. Wilson (2014) emphasizes its relevance in helping to explain research designs, recognize which methods perform best, and assist the researcher in identifying and adapting research designs accordingly.
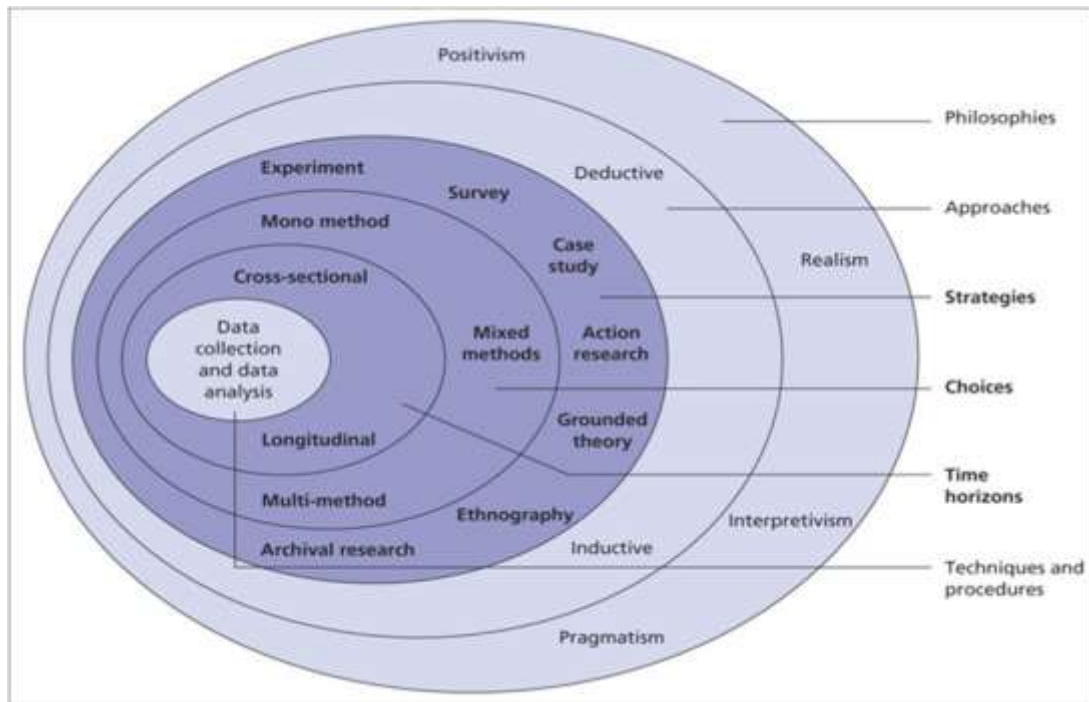
Figure 3: Saunders' Research 'Onion'

In the research paradigm, there are two fundamental methods of thinking: ontology and epistemology, which combine to produce a complete understanding of how knowledge is viewed and how we might see ourselves in relation to it (Patel, 2015; Saunders et al., 2012). Ontology, it is claimed, is concerned with the nature and properties of reality (Boateng, n.d.; Saunders et al., 2012). Another way of looking at it is how the researcher sees the world (Patel, 2015). Subjectivism and objectivism are the two dimensions of ontology, according to Saunders and colleagues (2012). On the other hand, objectivism depicts social things as being in reality and independent of the social players.

Researchers must consider numerous issues such as research philosophy, methodologies, methodological choice, research strategies, research methods, time horizon, and research techniques and processes, according to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012). The advantages of the research 'onion' produce a sequence of phases and processes that may be used to characterize a methodological investigation that is in line with the research's aims and research questions (Sahay, 2016).

This study will use a positivist approach, employing objectivism from an ontology standpoint. It also coincided with the epistemological perspective that the research is

conducted using organized data-collecting via questionnaires and statistical software to analyze the results (Zung, 2017).

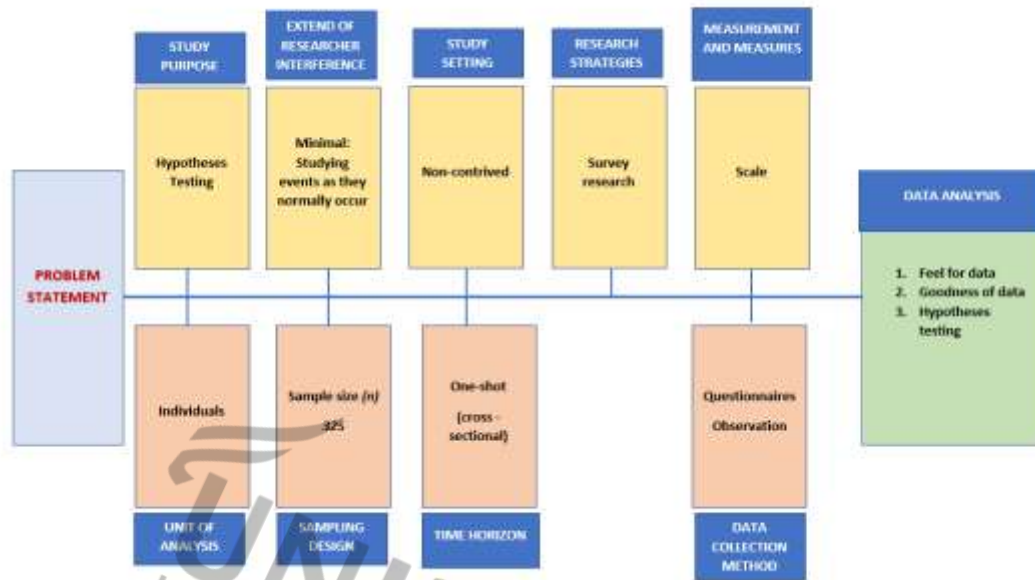The blueprint of this study is designed as per the figure below;

Figure 4: Research Design

3.3 Research Approach

Deductive reasoning begins with and applies an existing theory rather than attempting to develop a new theory (Boateng, n.d.; Saunders et al., 2012; Wilson, 2014). In other words, deduction entails the transformation of a theory into hypotheses that are subjected to a series of rigorous tests. As a result, there is a causal link between concepts and variables, which researchers are eager to discover. Wilson (2014) explains that theory and hypotheses arrive early in the research process and continue to impact its remainder. Most of the time, the deductive research method is associated with quantitative studies. As a result, a suitable sample size must be chosen to obtain a comprehensive picture of the deductions through statistical analysis and validation of the original hypotheses (Trochim, 2006a). As a result, it is a very regimented method (Gill & Johnson, 2010; Saunders et al., 2012; Wilson, 2014).

Sekaran (2003) characterized the research technique as hypothesis testing and descriptive investigation from a distinct standpoint. According to Sekaran (2003), hypotheses testing is used to evaluate links or establish distinctions among components in a situation that explain variance in the dependent variable or predict organizational outcomes.

3.4 Population and Sampling

A population is a term that refers to the complete collection of people, events, or objects that have some common set of traits that the researcher is interested in studying (Greener, 2008; Sekaran, 2003; Zikmund et al., 2010). Put another way; it referred to the entire collection of data from which a sample was obtained (Saunders et al., 2012).

Sampling is picking a sufficient number of the correct elements from a population so that the sample can be studied and its qualities or qualities can be understood, allowing such aspects to be generalized.

The sample is a subset of the target population from which conclusions may be generalized to the entire population using data obtained from this subset (Greener, 2008; Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2012; Sekaran, 2003; Zikmund et al., 2010). Sampling accuracy is determined by sample size (a larger sample size reduces error) and survey procedure quality (Saunders et al., 2012).

Probability sampling techniques and nonprobability sampling techniques are the two sampling strategies. The nonprobability sampling approach was used to recruit participants for this investigation. The sampling technique used is convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is frequently utilized and is quite simple to collect compared to other methods (Saunders et al., 2012). According to Zikmund and colleagues (2010), convenience sampling successfully gathers a large number of data fast and inexpensively.

This study will focus on respondents from Malaysia who have access to the social media platform as the target demographic. Social media users who are also

registered voters in Malaysia, who regularly follow political news, politicians' social media accounts, or political parties' social media accounts, would make up the study's sample population.
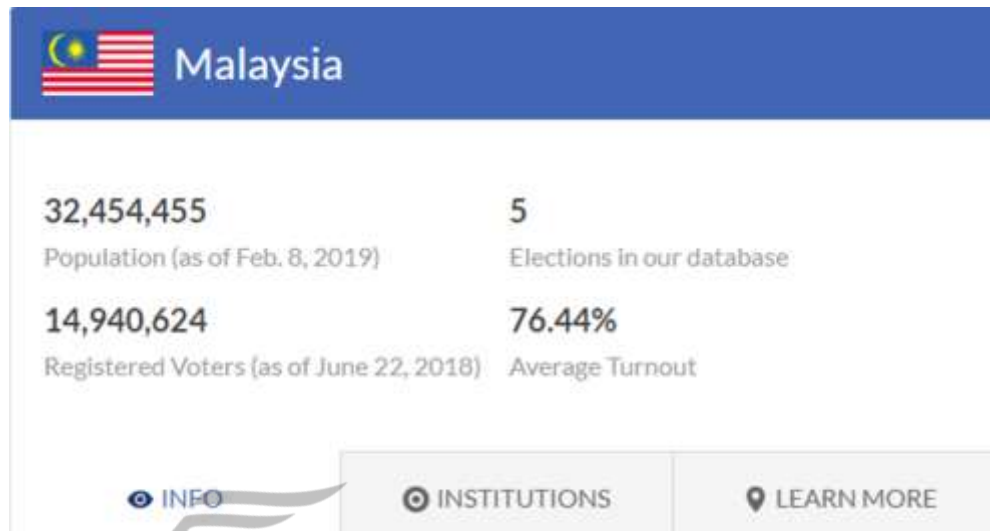
Figure 5: Research Population: Registered Voters in Malaysia for GE14

3.5 Sampling Size

Three factors must generally be mentioned in addition to the study's objective and population size to establish the right sample size: the level of precision, the amount of confidence or risk, and the degree of variability in the variables being examined (Miaoulis and Michener, 1976).

The range in which the actual value of the population is estimated is referred to as the degree of precision, which is also known as sampling error. In the same manner that media reports on political campaign surveys, this range is frequently stated in percentage points (e.g., 5 percent) (Israel, 1992).

The Central Limit Theorem's principles calculate the amount of confidence or risk. The Central Limit Theorem is based on the premise that when a population is sampled repeatedly, the average value of the attribute acquired by those samples equals the actual population value (Israel, 1992). The confidence level, the margin of error that may be allowed in the study, the kind of statistical analysis, and the

overall population size influence the sample size. Researchers in most social science studies are satisfied to predict the population's characteristics with 95 percent confidence and a margin of error of 3 to 5%.

The degree of variability in the qualities being assessed is the third criterion, and it pertains to the distribution of attributes in the population. The higher the sample size needed to achieve precision, the more diverse a population is. Conversely, the smaller the sample size, the less varied (or homogenous) the population is (Israel, 1992).

Taro Yamane's formula was used as a guideline for this study. Based on approximately 14,940,624 voters in the previous 14th General Election, with a 0.05 error margin, around 399 samples are needed.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N * (e)^2}$$

Where,
n = sample size sought
e = level of significance (e = 0.05)
N = population size
1 = constant

Applying the formula above;

$$n = \frac{14{,}940{,}624}{1 + 14{,}940{,}624 * (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 399$$

However, Saunders et al. stated that a minimum of 30 sample sizes for each category within the sample is a good rule of thumb. Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2010) proposed a 5:1 ratio, in which each independent variable is observed five times. On the other hand, Hair et al. (2010) stated that a 15 to 20 observations level is preferable for each independent variable.

Another factor to consider when choosing a sample size is the number of people required to analyze the data. If descriptive statistics, such as mean and frequencies, are employed, almost any sample size will be sufficient. Multiple regression, analysis of covariance, or log-linear analysis, on the other hand, need a large sample size, such as 200-500 people, and can be used for more thorough state effect analyses. The sample size should be sufficient for the intended analysis (Israel,1992).

As a result, a minimum of 150 sample sizes are needed for the three independent variables in this investigation, according to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012). Furthermore, a minimum of 100 sample sizes should be used when examining five or fewer constructs, according to Hair et al. (2010) guidelines. Therefore, based on Israel (1992), since 200-500 is considered a good sample size, I proceeded with the 325 responses I collected during the online survey through a constructed questionnaire.

3.6 Data Collection Methods / Instruments

Data is collected from the primary source, a personally given questionnaire, to answer the research questions for this study. Electronic surveys are simple to administer, can reach a more significant number of respondents, are affordable, and produce results quickly, especially during the current pandemic when physical movement is restricted.

More significantly, responders can react whenever they choose, and the responses are processed automatically. A questionnaire is a frequent tool for collecting information through survey tactics (Saunders et al., 2012). According to Saunders (2012), everyone is asked the same set of questions; therefore, it is an excellent way to get replies from a big group of people for quantitative analysis. According to Sekaran (2003), a questionnaire is a pre-written set of questions to which respondents reply using a restricted number of alternatives.

The Google Forms web tool produced and constructed the structured questionnaire (Google, n.d.). Google Forms is an internet-mediated or web-based questionnaire that can be accessed from various devices with an internet connection, including computers and smartphones.

The structure of the questionnaire is thoughtful design with the following layout. Section 1: Brief introduction the purpose of conducting the survey is for research purposes. Section 2: The questions were focused on demographics, voter's status, and social media usage, which will lead the respondent to the next section. In Section 3, questions focused on the construct measurements for social mediacontent and loyalty. A totalof 20 questions were created for this study.

3.6.1 Construct Measurement

Literature reviews were used to customize the questionnaire items based on various sources. The questions on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" were listed below.

Table 1: Construct measurements

Category	Questions	Source
SM1	Do you have any of these social media accounts? (e.g., Facebook / Twitter / Instagram / Tiktok)	
SM2	On average, how much time do you spend on social media in a day?	Zung, 2017
SM3	Do you follow any political leader/ political party / political page on social media?	Alam et al., 2020

CF1	Regular content posting on political leaders' social media is important	Danho, Tomeh, & Danho, 2020
CF2	I am satisfied with the amount of social media content uploaded by the political leaders	Danho, Tomeh, & Danho, 2020
CF3	I like the political leaders who upload their social media content frequently	Can & Yildirir 2016
CR1	Political leaders' social media content is a relevant source of information for current issues	Ali & Awais 2021
CR2	I frequently get information on current issues via political leader's social media content	Bashir & Gupta, 2018
CR3	I trust the information on current issues shared by the political leaders on their social media	Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2007
CL1	Political leaders are more approachable when they use informal/friendly languages on social media	Shieh & Lai, 2017
CL2	Political leaders are more truthful when they use informal/friendly language on social media	Park, Kang, & Lee, 2020
CL3	Political leaders are more dependable when they use informal/friendly language on social media	Park, Kang, & Lee, 2020
VL1	I trust the political leaders who upload social media content more frequently compared to the ones who do not	Park, Kang, & Lee, 2020
VL2	I trust the political leaders who upload social media content more relevant to the current issues compared to the ones who do not	Dabula 2017

| VL3 | I trust the political leaders who upload social media content in informal/friendly languages compared to the ones who do not | Dabula, 2017 | |

3.6.2 Data Scale of Measurement

Rating scale measuring methods were used in the questionnaire to acquire respondents' information. Scaling, precisely the Likert scale, is used to construct measuring sections. The Likert scale is commonly used to assess individual sentiments, according to McLeod (2008). For example, the Likert scale was created to gather respondents' responses to a sequence of statements about a topic based on how much they agree with each statement (McLeod, 2008).

On the other hand, the focus on demography information used nominal and dichotomous scales to collect demographic data from respondents such as gender, age, region, social media ownership, and voter status.

3.7 Variables

A variable is a changing entity that may take on several values (Mustafa, 2015; Trochim, 2006b). The variable modified in the experiment to see how it affects the dependent variable is an independent variable (Helmenstine, 2017). The independent experiment on the link between the three independent variables, Content Frequency, Content Relevance, and Content Language, was carried out in this study. On the other hand, the dependent variable is the variable being measured whose character is affected by changes in the independent variable (Helmenstine, 2017). For example, voter's loyalty is the dependent variable used in this study to capture its effect based on the three changes in independent variables.

3.8 Reliability Testing

The term "reliability" is related to the degree to which measurements are consistent (Hair et al., 2010; Leech, Barrett & Morgan, 2015; Sweet & Martin, 2012). According

to Sekaran (2003), reliability testing or measurement indicates the amount to which it is free of bias and consistently assessed throughout time and at different times. In addition, it ensures that answers do not change over time so that every measurement taken at any moment in time is accurate (Hair et al., 2010).

According to Sekaran (2003) and Hair et al. (2010), the most used inter-item consistency reliability test is Cronbach's coefficient alpha. Cronbach's alpha is a well-known test for determining multipoint-scaled items' dependability; the higher the coefficients, the better. When many Likert-type questions are combined to provide a composite score, Alpha is commonly utilized (Leech et al., 2015). According to Leech and colleagues (2015), alpha refers to the average correlation between each item on the scale and the other items. A dependability coefficient of 0.70 or above is acceptable (Hair et al., 2010; UCLA, n.d.). The amount of items in a test, according to Andale (2014a), affects alpha.

According to Andale (2014a), a high alpha value might suggest the presence of repetitive questions. Similarly, a low alpha score might indicate that the assessment has insufficient questions.

Table 2: Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient Range

Cronbach's alpha	Internal consistency
α ≥ 0.9	Excellent
0.9 > α ≥ 0.8	Good
0.8 > α ≥ 0.7	Acceptable
0.7 > α ≥ 0.6	Questionable
0.6 > α ≥ 0.5	Poor
α < 0.5	Unacceptable

3.9 Statistical Testing

The goal of statistics is to prove or disprove a theory. It is a way through which the researcher may test the survey results to check if they are significant or not. According to Andale (2017c), hypothesis testing is used to establish if the outcomes of an experiment or survey may have occurred by chance.

3.10 Summary

The technique used to conduct the research and obtain data for analysis is detailed in this chapter. The quantitative approach received sample data from a broad population as part of the study methodological choices. The construct measurements and their reliability testing were also described in this chapter to confirm that the measurements were consistent. Finally, in Chapter 4, the statistical analysis methods might be used in future analyses.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The obtained data from the survey are outlined in this chapter, and the data is analyzed using the Data Analysis package in MS Excel. The approach utilized in this study was to collect data for subsequent analysis using the statistical program MS Excel to compare the findings to the hypotheses established previously. For this survey, 325 sets of data were obtained.
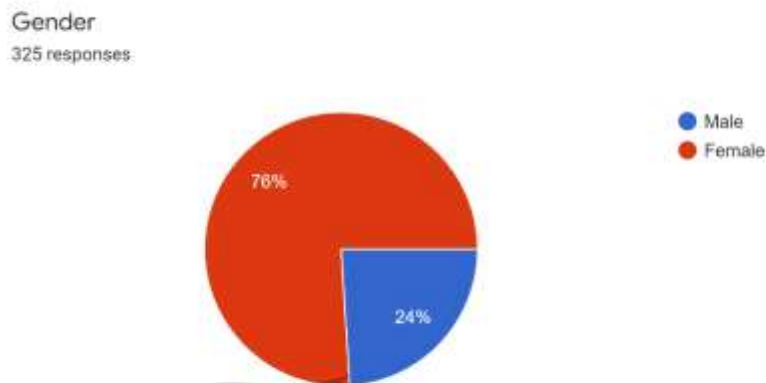
4.2 Respondent Demographics

The respondents' demographic characteristics are represented in Table 3 as an overview of the 325 sets of data. Of the 325 respondents, three did not specify their occupation.

Table 3: Respondents Demographic Information

Respondent, N = 325				
Variable	**Category**	**Frequency**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Gender	Male	78	24	24
	Female	247	76	100
Age	18 – 29	84	25.8	25.8
	30 – 39	148	45.5	71.3
	40 – 49	48	14.8	86.1
	50 – 59	33	10.2	96.3
	60+	12	3.7	100
Location	Northern	48	14.8	14.8
	Central	165	50.8	65.6
	Southern	56	17.2	82.8
	East Cost	47	14.5	97.3
	East Malaysia	9	2.8	100.1
Occupation	Public sector	70	21.7	21.7
	Private sector	136	42.2	63.9
	Self-employed	39	12.1	76
	Student	41	12.7	88.7
	Retiree /	36	11.2	99.9

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	Homemaker			
Registered Voter	Yes	290	89.2	89.2
	No	35	10.8	100

Figure 6: Gender Demographic Information

Gender
325 responses

- Male
- Female

76%

24%

Based on Figure 5, 78 males responded to this survey and represented a valid 24% of the total. 247 female respondents participated in this survey, with 76% representing the largest group.
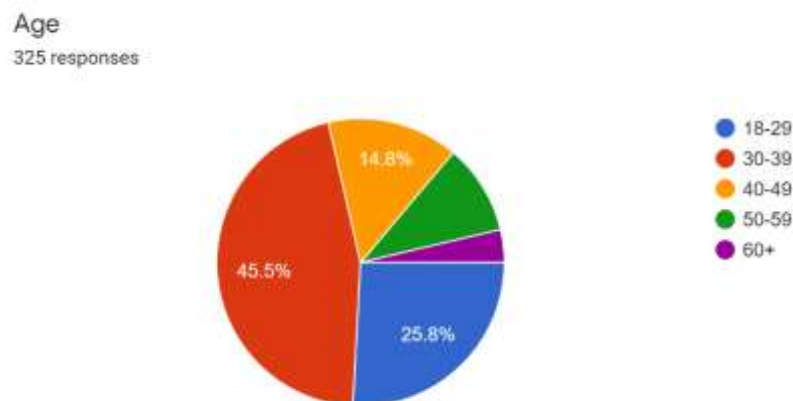
Figure 7: Age Demographic Information

Age
325 responses

- 18-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60+

14.8%

45.5%

25.8%

Figure 6 provides an overview of the age group demographic information of the collected samples. The most significant representation is those between 30 to 39, which accounted for 45.5%, almost half of the sample size—followed by the generation of 18 to

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29 at 25.8%. Next is the group of age 40 to 49 at 14.8%, age 50 to 59 10.2%, and lastly, the sample above the age of 60 cumulated 3.7%.

Figure 8: Region / Location Demographic Information

Region / Location
325 responses
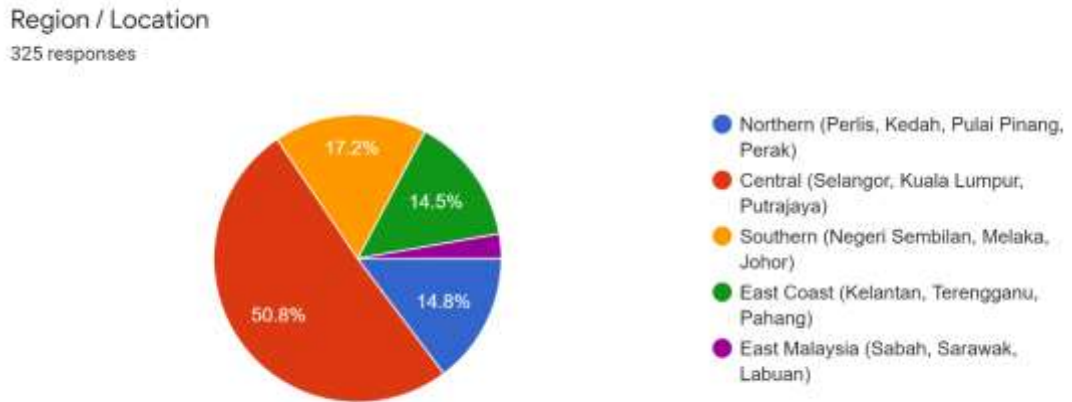
From Figure 7, 148 respondents came from the Central region, 50.8%, followed by 56 from the Southern part at 17.2%. 48 respondents are from the Northern region at 14.8%—similarly, those from East Coast at 14.5% equivalent to 47 respondents. Lastly, only 9 respondents from East Malaysia captured 2.8% of the total response.

Figure 9: Occupation Demographic Information

Occupation
322 responses
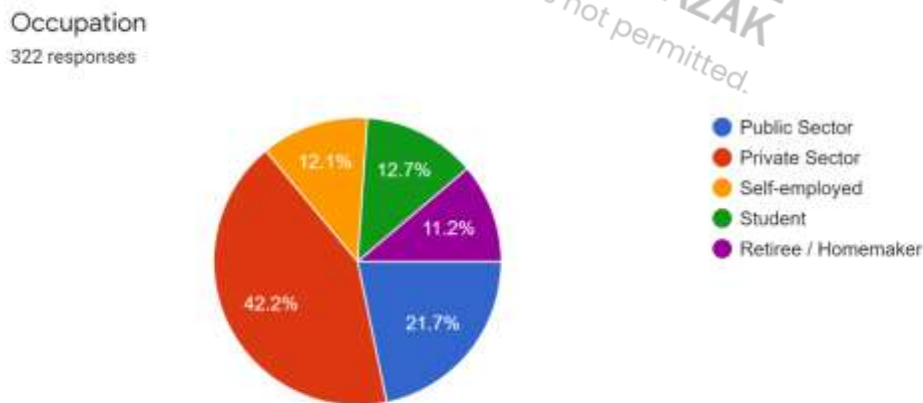
Based on the pie chart in Figure 8, 3 respondents did not disclose their occupation details, making the total responses collected for this section is 322. The data shows that most respondents work in the private sector, with 136 responses cumulating 42.2% of the collected data. Next is the public sector, with 70 data at 21.7%.

Surprisingly data from students are captured slightly higher than self-employed at 41 (12.7%) and 39 (12.1%) each. Finally, only 36 Retiree/Homemakers responded to this survey at 11.2%.
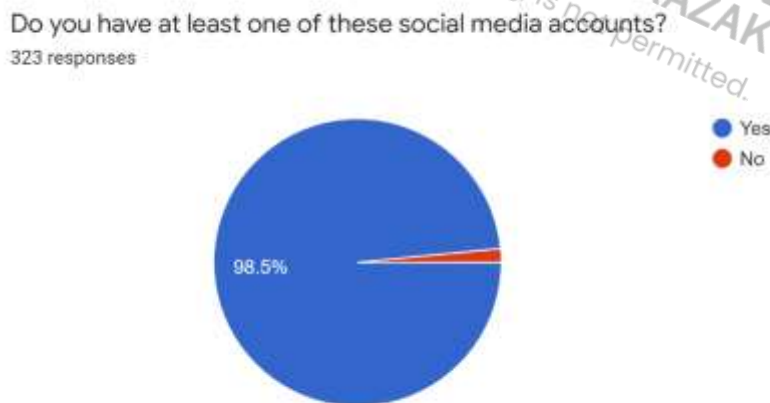
Figure 10: Voter's Registration Status

Are you a registered voter?
325 responses
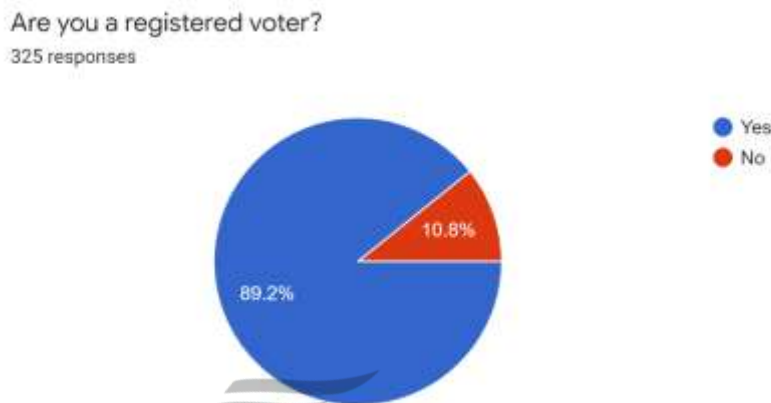
From 325 respondents, 290 (89.2%) answered "Yes" at the question, while 35 (10.8%) said "No".

4.3 Descriptive Analyses

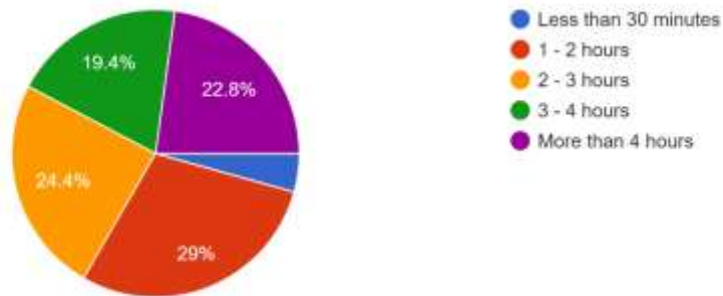Figure 11: Social Media Accounts

Do you have at least one of these social media accounts?
323 responses

323 responses were captured in this question. 318 answered yes at 98.5%, and only 5 answered no at 1.5%.

Figure 12: Average Time Spent on Social Media

On average, how much time do you spend on social media in a day?
324 responses

On average, 29% or 94 respondents spend 1 to 2 hours a day on social media, while the other 24.4% of the total respondents(79) spend 2 to 3 hours a day. 74 people at 22.8% spend more than 4 hours a day on social media, 63 (19.4%) spend 3 to 4 hours a day. 14 respondents spend less than 30 minutes a day on social media, making them 4.3% of the total sample.
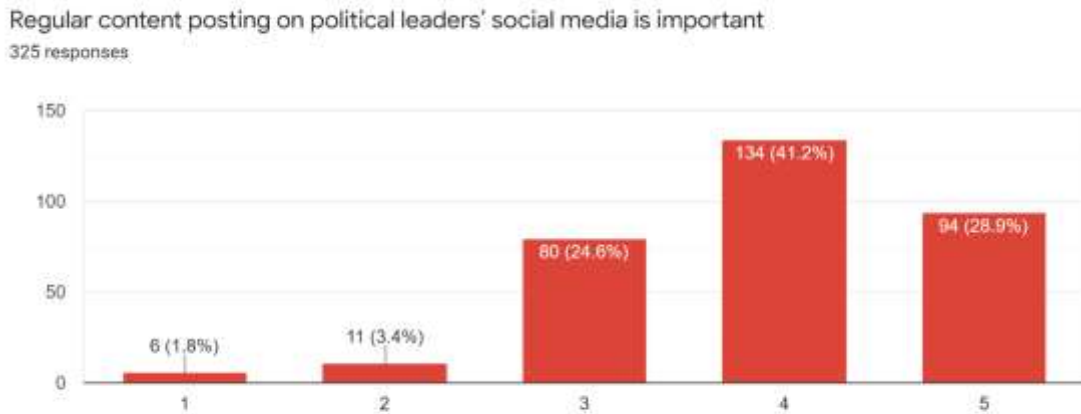
Figure 13: Political Page's Following

Do you follow any political leader/ political party / political page on social media?
324 responses
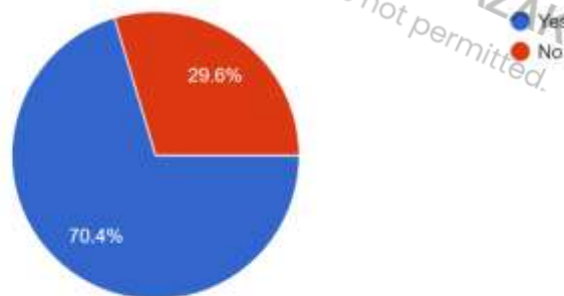
70.4% or 228 respondents follow political pages on social media, while only 96 or 29.6% do not.

Figure 14: Content Frequency CF1

Regular content posting on political leaders' social media is important
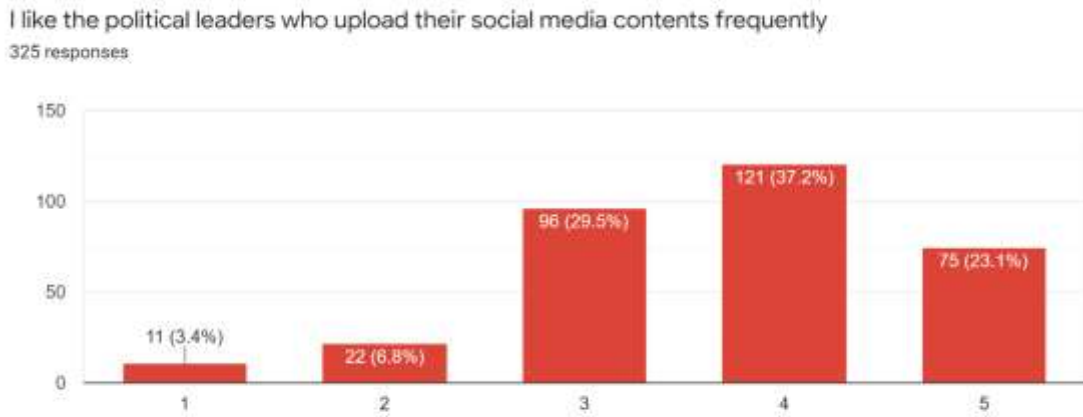325 responses

From the 325 responses gathered, 228 agreed that regular content posting on political leaders' social media is essential, making 70.1% from the whole sample. On the other hand, 24.6% or 80 respondents stay neutral in their opinion, and only 17 respondents disagree with the statement at 5.2%.

Figure 15: Content Frequency CF2

I am satisfied with the amount of social media contents uploaded by the political leaders
325 responses
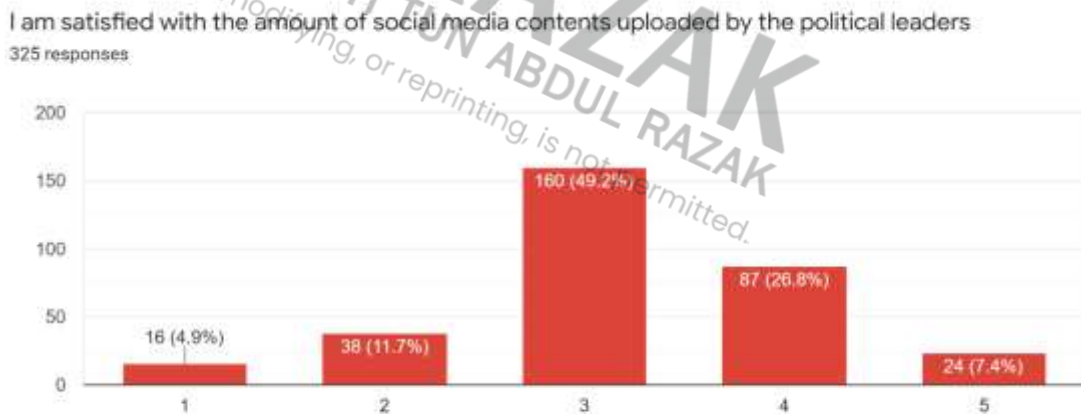
A different pattern can be seen here regarding voters' satisfaction regarding the political leaders' amount of social media content. With 160 responses at 49.2%, almost half of the respondents chose to stay neutral on this opinion. On the other hand, 111 respondents agree to cumulate 34.2% and 54 at 16.6% are not satisfied with the content frequency.

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Figure 16: Content Frequency CF3

I like the political leaders who upload their social media contents frequently
325 responses

Most respondents agreed that they like political leaders who frequently upload their social media content, making up 60.3% with 196 responses. 96 (29.5%) stays neutral, and 33 (10.2%) disagreed.

Figure 17: Voters' Loyalty VL1

I trust the political leaders who upload social media contents more frequently compared to the ones who do not
325 responses
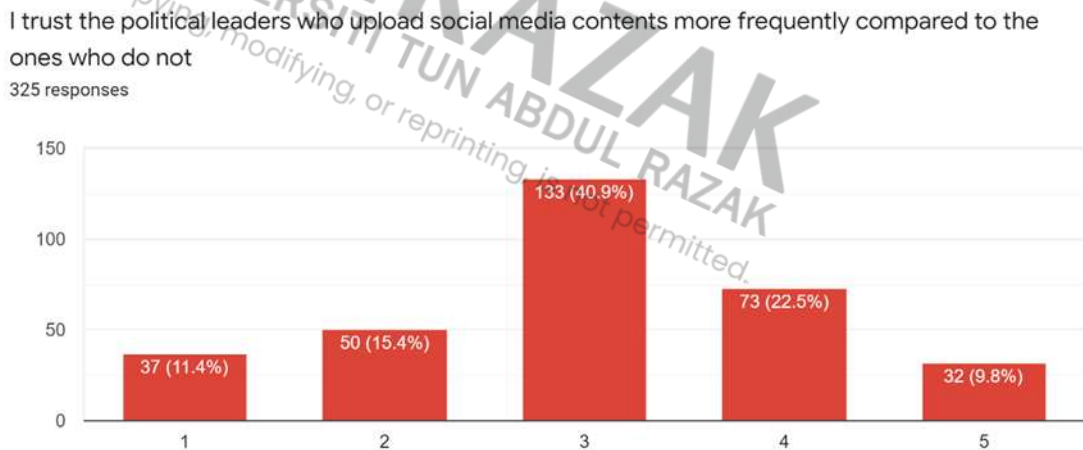

For the content frequency variable, 133 (40.9%) respondents chose to stay neutral when trusting political leaders who upload social media content more frequently than those who do not. 105 (32.3%) agree with the statement above, and 87 (26.8%) do not agree.
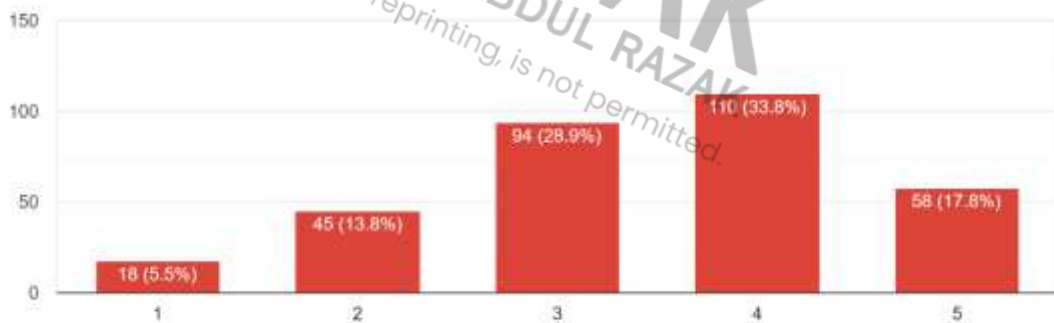
Figure 18: Content Relevance CR1

Political leaders' social media content is a relevant source of information for current issues
325 responses
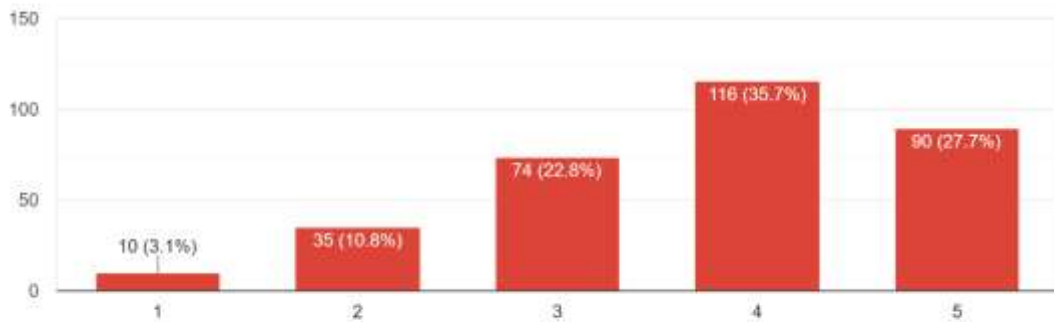
For content relevance, more than half of the respondents agree that political leaders'
social media content is a relevant source of information for current issues, with 206
responses at 63.4%. In addition, 74 (22.8%) answered neutral, while only 45 (13.9%)
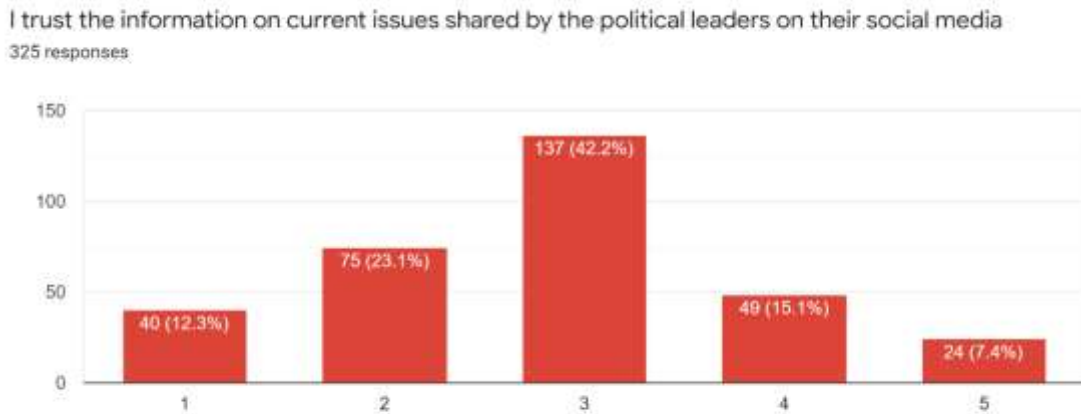disagreed with the statement.

Figure 19: Content Relevance CR2

I frequently get information on current issues via political leader's social media content
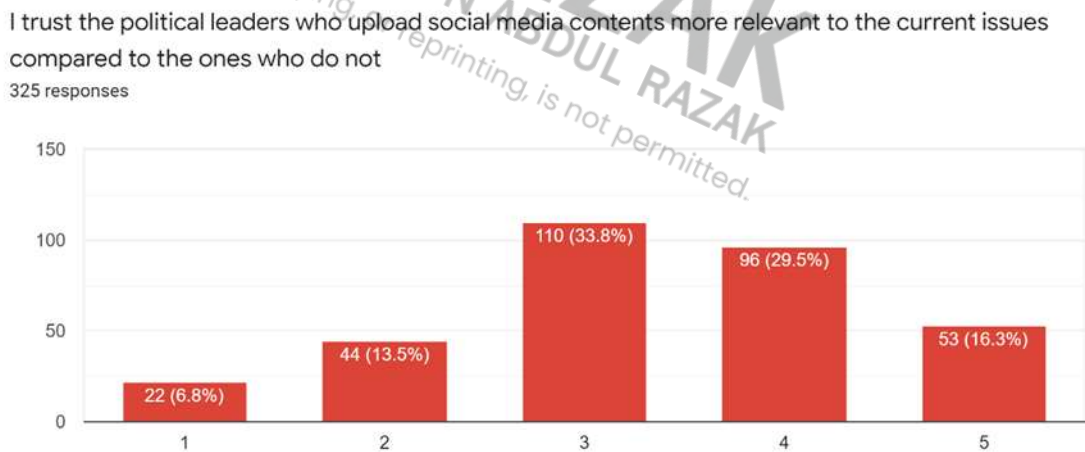325 responses

168 (51.6%) agree that they frequently get information on current issues via political
leaders' social media content. However, 94 (28.9%) answered "neutral", and 63
(19.3%) disagreed.

Figure 20: Content Relevance CR3

I trust the information on current issues shared by the political leaders on their social media
325 responses

With 137 responses at 42.2%, most respondents chose to stay neutral when trusting information on current issues shared by the political leaders on their social media. However, 115 respondents at 35.4% disagree with the statement. Surprisingly only 73 respondents at 22.5% answered: "agree".

Figure 21: Voters' Loyalty VL2

I trust the political leaders who upload social media contents more relevant to the current issues compared to the ones who do not
325 responses

For the content relevance variable, 149 (45.8%) agreed that they trust the political leaders who upload social media content more relevant to the current issues than those who do not. On the other hand, 110 (33.8%) feel neutral about the statement, and 66 (20.3%) disagree.

Figure 22: Content Language CL1

Political leaders are more approachable when they use informal/friendly languages on social media
325 responses
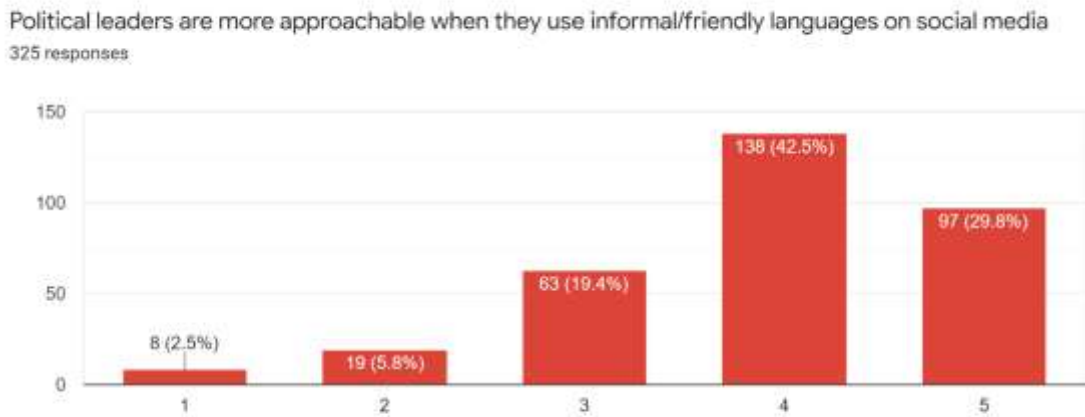
When it comes to the friendliness of content language, the vast majority of the respondents agree that political leaders are more approachable when they use informal or friendly language on social media, with 235 responses at 72.3%. On the other hand, 63 (19.4%) answered "neutral" and only 27 (8.3%) disagreed.

Figure 23: Content Language CL2

Political leaders are more truthful when they use informal/friendly language on social media
325 responses
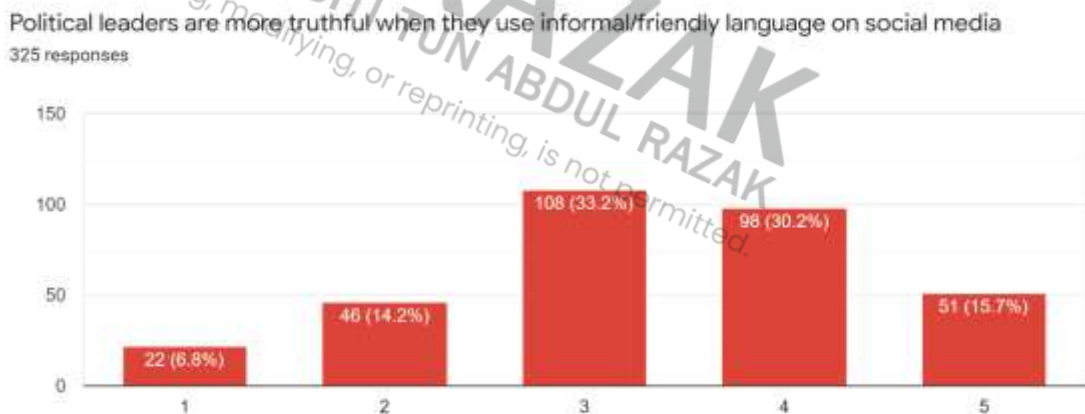
149 (45.9%) of respondents agree that political leaders are more truthful when using informal or friendly language on social media. However, 108 (33.2%) feel neutral about the statement, and 68 (21%) disagree.

Figure 24: Content Language CL3

Political leaders are more dependable when they use informal/friendly language on social media
325 responses
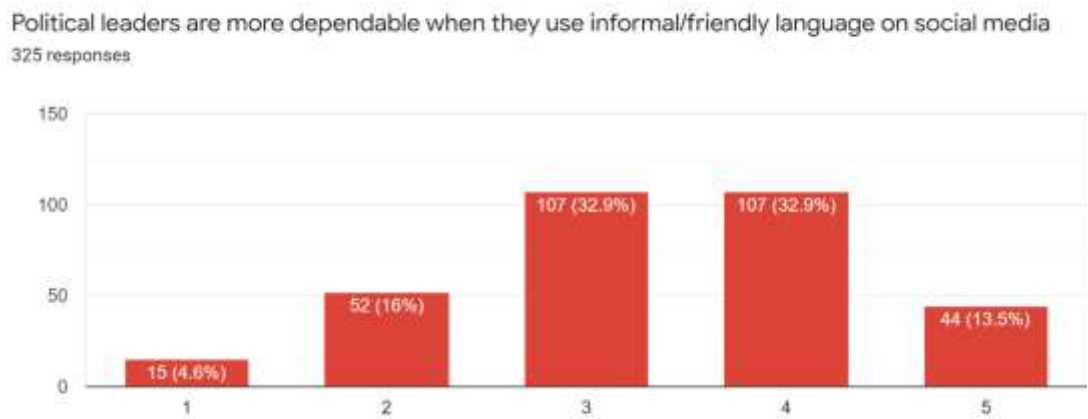
151 (46.4%) agree that political leaders are more dependable when using informal or friendly language on social media. 107 (32.9%) rated "neutral" and 67 (20.6%) disagree.

Figure 25: Voters' Loyalty VL3

I trust the political leaders who upload social media contents in informal/friendly languages compared to the ones who do not
325 responses
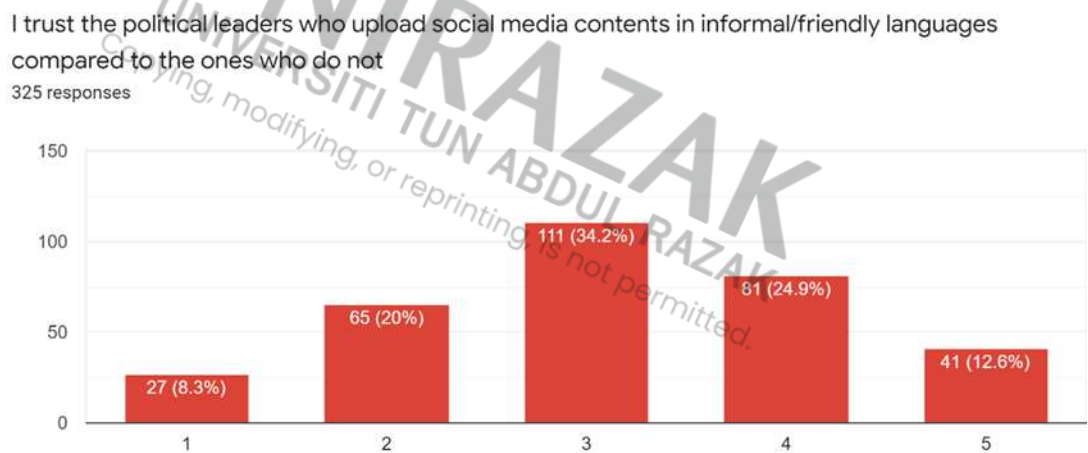
For the content language variable, 122 (37.5%) agree that they trust the political leaders who upload social media content in informal or friendly languages compared to those who do not. On the other hand, 111 (34.2%) stayed neutral on the opinion, and 92 (28.3%) disagreed.

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4.4 Reliability Analysis

The degree of consistency in measurements was reliability (Hair et al., 2010; Leech et al., 2015; Sweet & Martin, 2012). According to Sekaran (2003), reliability testing or measurement refers to how something is free of bias and can be tested at any point in time. According to Leech and colleagues (2015), alpha refers to the average correlation between each item on the scale and the other items. A dependability coefficient of 0.70 or above is acceptable (Hair et al., 2010).

Two-factor ANOVA without replication was performed to obtain Cronbach's Alpha values for each component and overall questionnaire utilizing the Data Analysis package in MS Excel.

From Table 4, the reliability test was conducted on each component for its consistency. The result for Content Frequency (CF) was 0.67 for three questions. In comparison, Content Relevance (CR) was reliable at 0.74 with three questions. Content Language (CL) achieved 0.83 for three questions, and lastly, Voters' Loyalty gained 0.88 with three questions. The overall Cronbach's Alpha for the 12 questions is 0.90, indicating excellent internal consistency. From the results, only the Content Frequency (CF) component is Questionable between 0.6 to 0.7 due to insufficient questions. Theother components satisfied the Cronbach's Alpha reliability test at the Acceptable and Good range.As the alpha is sensitive to the number of items in a test, all the questions in each component did not face the issues of redundant questions.

Table 4: Reliability Analysis

Component	Questions	Cronbach's Alpha
Content Frequency	CF1, CF2, CF3	0.67
Content Relevance	CR1, CR2, CR3	0.74
Content Language	CL1, CL2, CL3	0.83
Voter Loyalty	VL1, VL2, VL3	0.88
Overall	CF1, CF2, CF3, CR1, CR2, CR3, CL1, CL2, CL3, VL1, VL2, VL3	0.90

4.5 Analysis

Table 5: Hypotheses Results

Hypothesis	Result
H1: Political leaders' social media content upload frequency affects voters' loyalty.	Supported
H2: Political leaders' relevance of social media content to current issues affects voters' loyalty.	Supported
H3: Political leaders' engagement with social media followers using friendly language affects voters' loyalty.	Supported

4.6 Summary

This chapter describes the survey response analysis process. Each response from the questionnaire was analyzed descriptively and presented in a clear table and graphs. From the 325 samples, data we run through Data Analysis Package in MS Excel to further evaluate the reliability of every variable tested in this study.

A reliability test was done using Cronbach's Alpha. Cronbach's Alpha is most valuable for indicating scale reliability in the equivalence of items within single-construct scales. The general rule of thumb is that a Cronbach's alpha of 0.70 and above is good, and 0.80 and above is better, while 0.90 and above is best. Despite lacking by 0.03 on Content Frequency, the overall finding shows strong reliability of all the variables tested in the questionnaire. All hypotheses are supported. More in-depth discussion shall be done in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSIONS

5.1 Introduction

The findings from Chapter 4 will be discussed in-depth in this chapter. And further understanding of the influence of social media content frequency, relevance to current issues, and friendliness of the language on voters' loyalty to political leaders.

5.2 Findings through Descriptive Analysis

The study was conducted to determine how Malaysian voters react to political leaders' social media content frequency, relevance, and language. The focus group was made up of Malaysians. The poll was performed online using various social media platforms, as Malaysia is rated fifth in the world for being the most engaged on social media (Kemp, 2017).

Significant insights on general demographics may be summarized from the obtained data and corroborated with information published by other sources. For example, on the issue of whether they are a registered voter, 290 (89.2%) of the 325 respondents indicated "Yes," while 35 (10.8%) stated "No." For those who replied "No," a few assumptions can be drawn. It's either (1) they did not vote in the last 14th General Election; (2) they have never registered as voters before; or (3) they are unaware of the current automatic voter registration technology used by Malaysia's Election Committee recently. More research and surveys are needed to know Malaysians' understanding of voting status and processes.

On theage structure, between 30 to 39 years old are the highest frequency from the respondent age groups, with mostly come from the central region. The majority of the respondentsconstantly keep themselves updated via social media platforms and follow political pages on social media.

In Malaysia, politicians' and political parties' usage of social media platforms is rising; hence, understanding voters' acceptance of political and social media content

is vital. It can be seen from this study that Malaysia voters are accepting towards all three variables tested, which are the frequency of content uploads – which also means more visibility for the political leaders, content relevance with the current issue- which reflects how aware the political leaders are with their surrounding, and lastly content language – which proposes that friendliness is an excellent factor to engage more with their (politicians') followers and voters.

5.3 Discussion of Major Findings

This study examines the factors that lead to voters' loyalty towards political leaders in Malaysia. The elements were studied included the content frequency, content relevance to current issues, and the friendliness of content language on social media.

5.3.1 H1: Political leaders' social media content upload frequency affects voters' loyalty.

In this study, the relationship between the frequency of content upload and voters' loyalty is positively associated. The more time politicians or political leaders upload content on their social media platforms – be it Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or TikTok, the more voters prefer to follow their pages, leading to loyalty. However, when it comes to satisfaction, many believe that the amount of content uploaded by our political leaders is not yet enormously agreeable. Hence, more effort shall be put into crafting messages and content uploaded by the politicians.

Interestingly, although many agree that they prefer political leaders who update social media content more frequently than others, they do not necessarily trust everything published on political leaders' social media pages. This scenario calls for further research to understand more factors contributing to social media content upload strategy success for politicians and political parties alike.

5.3.2 H2: Political leaders' relevance of social media content to current issues affects voters' loyalty.

Social media has been an excellent platform for information sharing. Sharing information, feedback, and reviews on social media platforms helps overcome uneasiness and build trust in the product or business (Hajli, 2014). The same concept applies in this study, where it is proven that many Malaysian voters find that political leaders' social media is a relevant source of information for current issues. They frequently find the latest news from politicians' social media pages. However, many reserve their agreement on this matter regarding trust. In other words, voters might find the issues raised by political leaders relevant. Still, they do not necessarily believe in whatever is written on the political leaders' social media pages.

5.3.3 H3: Political leaders' engagement with social media followers using friendly language affects voters' loyalty.

The vast majority of voters strongly agree that political leaders are more approachable when using informal or friendly language on social media. Especially with the fast evolution of memes and slang, voters find it agreeable to depend on and deem political leaders as truthful when they speak in common friendly language. In the communication model, memesis symbolizes the process of forming a community through the spread of a new language, culture, and way of thinking. As a result, language is a meme, demonstrating how digital communities are altering conventional structures of unified individuals in a single location and indirectly incorporating people into the creative process, displaying them as social creatures with their thinking and culture (Petrova, 2021). According to Laroche et al. (2013), improving connections within the brand community should boost brand trust, positively impacting brand loyalty. To put it another way, improving relationships within the brand community has a good influence on brand satisfaction, which leads to brand loyalty (Laroche et al., 2013).

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5.4 Conclusion

The combination of social media development, pandemic, new-norm-lifestyle, and the rise of digitalization, political campaigning, and communication has shifted into content marketing.

While many politicians and political parties still rely on the force of the party's grassroots to win voters via ground events, we cannot dismiss that content virality plays a massive role in influencing young voters. Social media is a valuable tool for encouraging young people to get involved in politics and voting activities. Politicians nowadays use social media for political campaigns and provide up-to-date information to those interested in politics (Alam et al., 2021).

After the fall of the Pakatan Harapan government in 2020, Malaysians had seen the most extensive political crisis in Malaysia, resulting in a three-time-change of Prime Minister. In addition, many state elections were held due to the instability of the ruling government, adding more to the political fatigue that Malaysians endure from 2020 to 2021. Most of these movements were fueled by polarizing content on social media.

Alam and Yousuf (2021) concluded that young social media users rely on social media for political knowledge and decision-making. They believe that social media is an excellent source of important political news. They also think that using social media in politics is a waste of time and effort. It also allows the target audience to hear about personal thoughts and views. As a result, it can be stated that the use of social media in politics has a significant influence on young people's political behavior and provides a wealth of options for political participation.

Whenever the word "trust" was used in the questionnaire, the responses will move more towards neutral and disagree instead of agreeing. This trend shows a different trust sentiment amongst the voters.

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Hence, to fully understand voters' behavior and the best content strategy to win the public's perception of any particular political agenda, more research and development are needed to further explore this field, especially in Malaysia's highly volatile political situation.

5.5 Limitations of Study

Several limitations have been identified and should be noted throughout this research. These limitations, however, did not detract from the importance of the findings, which would be taken into account in future research.

The most significant limitation was the lack of a literature review based on Malaysia's political landscape during this study.

Further, the political turmoil that happened very quickly every a few months in Malaysia during this study had also affected the perspective of the political situation and voters' behavior towards the fast-changing preference.

Some minor limitation during the reliability testing was also observed. For example, the Cronbach's Alpha for Content Frequency was 0.67, categorized as Questionable. According to Andale (2014a), this low alpha score might indicate that the assessment has insufficient questions.

5.6 Recommendations for Future Research

Following are some recommendations for further research based on the study's shortcomings:

Future research should use a more extended timeframe and commit more resources to perform the study in Malaysia to achieve a bigger sample size representing Malaysia's whole voter base.

Future studies should include more factors so that the consequences on voter behavior and loyalty can be better understood.

"Trust" is a very 'sensitive' word in this study, and it affects the preference and judgment of our respondents. Hence, further research is vital to understand the factors influencing voters' trust in mediating their loyalty to politicians, political leaders, and political parties.

More questions are needed to increase the Cronbach's Alpha score to obtain a better internal consistency of a questionnaire, indicating that it is more reliable in future studies.

5.7 Summary

In this chapter, analyses were conducted to understand better the demographic information and the relationship between the variables.

All the hypotheses were significant through the statistical analyses performed on MS Excel. Moreover, they positively influenced the voters' loyalty to political leaders through social media content uploaded frequently, relevant to current issues, and using informal, friendly language to engage with followers and voters.

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APPENDICES

Online Survey Questionnaire

Survey on Factors Influencing Voters' Loyalty To Political Leaders

Dear respondent,

I am an MBA candidate in the Graduate School of Business at Universiti Tun Abdul Razak (UNIRAZAK), Malaysia. The research project revolves around social media content and its impact on loyalty.

The study's main objective is to determine the factors influencing voters' loyalty towards political leaders. The study specifically focuses on three factors, i.e., Content Frequency, Content Relevance, and Content Language.

Your participation would involve completing this Google Form questionnaire which should take around 5-10 minutes of your time.

The purpose of this research is purely academic, and the focus will only be driven towards what the results indicate rather than self-interest. The data analysis will be conducted ethically, considering the interests of all parties involved. Data will not be disclosed or sold to third parties for commercial purposes. Your privacy will be retained, and no information obtained from this study shall be disclosed to identify you. All data obtained would be kept strictly confidential.

Kindly respond by 31 January 2022.

By submitting the completed questionnaire, you consent to participate.

Thank you so much for your cooperation and support. Stay safe!

Kind regards,

Syakirin Husnal

Instructions:
Please answer ALL the questions.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Gender:
☐ Male
☐ Female

Age:
☐ 18 - 29
☐ 30 - 39
☐ 40 - 49
☐ 50 - 59
☐ 60 +

Region / Location
☐ Northern (Perlis, Kedah, Pulau Pinang, Perak)
☐ Central (Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya)
☐ Southern (Negeri Sembilan, Melaka, Johor)
☐ East Coast (Kelantan, Terengganu, Pahang)
☐ East Malaysia (Sabah, Sarawak, Labuan)

Occupation
☐ Public Sector
☐ Private Sector
☐ Self-employed
☐ Student
☐ Retiree / Homemaker

Are you a registered voter?
☐ Yes
☐ No

SOCIAL MEDIA

*In the context of this study, social media refers to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok only.

Do you have at least one of these social media accounts?
☐ Yes
☐ No

On average, how much time do you spend on social media in a day?
☐ Less than 30 minutes
☐ 1 – 2 hours
☐ 2 – 3 hours
☐ 3 – 4 hours
☐ More than 4 hours

Do you follow any political leader / political party / political page on social media?
☐ Yes
☐ No

Instructions:
a. Please answer ALL the questions on this page.
b. Please rate the following statements on a scale from 1 - 5, with 1 strongly disagree and 5 strongly agree.

1 - Strongly Disagree
2 - Disagree
3 - Neutral
4 - Agree
5 - Strongly Agree

CONTENT FREQUENCY

Regular content posting on political leaders' social media is important

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Strongly Agree

I am satisfied with the amount of social media content uploaded by political leaders.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Strongly Agree

I like the political leaders who upload their social media content frequently

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Strongly Agree

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CONTENT RELEVANCE

Political leaders' social media content is a relevant source of information for current issues

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Strongly Agree

I frequently get information on current issues via political leader's social media content

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Strongly Agree

I trust the information on current issues shared by the political leaders on their social media

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Strongly Agree

CONTENT LANGUAGE

Political leaders are more approachable when they use informal/friendly languages on social media

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Strongly Agree

Political leaders are more truthful when they use informal/friendly language on social media

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Strongly Agree

Political leaders are more dependable when they use informal/friendly language on social media

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Strongly Agree

LOYALTY

I trust the political leaders who upload social media content more frequently compared to the ones who do not

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Strongly Agree

I trust the political leaders who upload social media content more relevant to the current issues compared to the ones who do not

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Strongly Agree

I trust the political leaders who upload social media content in informal/friendly languages compared to the ones who do not

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Strongly Agree

End of Survey

APPROVAL PAGE

TITLE OF PROJECT PAPER: POLITICAL MARKETING: SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT AND ITS INFLUENCE ON VOTERS' LOYALTY TO POLITICAL LEADERS

NAME OF AUTHOR   :   NUR SYAKIRIN BINTI HUSNAL 'AZ' HARI

The undersigned certify that the above candidate has fulfilled the conditions of the project paper prepared in partial fulfilment for the degree of Master of Business Administration.

SUPERVISOR

Signature   :   _____

Name   :

Date   :

ENDORSED BY

_____

Dean

Graduate School of Business

Date:

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