SOURCES OF POLITICAL INFORMATION AMONG YOUNG WOMEN IN PERAK

[1] Siti Noranizahhafizah Boyman, [2] Jayum Jawan, [3] Samsudin Suhaili, [4] Junaidi Awang Besar

ABSTRACT

This article examines trends in the preference for political information sources among young women in Perak. Media is one main sources for political information. Based on the growing number of youths from 10.8 million in 2005 (41 % of Malaysia's population) to 13.4 million in 2010, the influence of youth in determining change can be significant. In Perak youth accounted for about 37 % of the total voters in the 2013 general elections. This study seeks to identify the preference of media sources for political information among young women in Perak. The analysis will also determine the confidence level of political information source and issues that are important to them. Survey method is used and data will be processed thought a quantitative approach. A sample size of 450 young women were randomly selected. The results show that mainstream media played an important role as the main source of political information among the young women in Perak as compared to alternative medias. Television was the most important source of political information for them. In addition, respondents' confidence in the source of political information which they obtain from television was preceded by Astro Awani with the highest mean scores, followed by government-owned television stations, namely TV1 and TV2. With respect to print media newspapers like Berita Harian, Utusan Malaysia and The Star have the young women's confidence as compared to Keadilan Daily. It can also be said that young women do not choose alternative media as the media for political information because social media is widely being used to spread false information, which are often provocative and seditious. The study also found that current issues that affect young women's life were more important to young woman respondents, such as cost of living and educational issues.

Keyword: political information, youth, women, media, politics, Perak

Introduction

The power of social media and its influence on society is not a new phenomenon. Some studies showed that many social media affected social movements. For example, Harlow (2011) found in his study that social media like Facebook was a platform or an interactive tool to mobilise people to act in certain situations. It can be said that various social media such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter were able to replace the role of mainstream media (Osterrieder, 2013; Gaile, 2013). Meanwhile, Baron (2012) had shown that Facebook social media had influenced social movements in Egypt during the Arab Spring. Social media such as YouTube was a platform that ~~can~~ had encouraged people to participate in social movements, protests and other political activities (Porter & Hellsten, 2014 ; Obar, 2014). Similarly, Cohen (2016) states that Trump's victory was due to his social media strategyand skilful use of the former. Meanwhile, Zhang and Lin (2014) in their study found that social media like WhatsApp has succeeded as one of the media platforms for mobilizing people in social movements.Therefore, this article investigates the tendency in choosing political information sources among young women, their level of confidence in the sources obtained and current issues that had concerned them. This article focuses on young women because first and foremost, the number of young women is almost equal to that of young males, making them very significant in the study. Second, young

[1] Dept. of Social Studies & Citizenship, University Pendiddikan Sultan Idris, 35900 Tanjung Malim, Perak, Malaysia
noranizah@fsk.upsi.edu.my (Corresponding author)
[2] Dept. of Government and Civilization, University Putra Malaysia (UPM),43400 Serdang Selangor
nurayuni@@upm.edu.my
[3] Dept. of Social Studies & Citizenship, University Pendiddikan Sultan Idris, 35900 Tanjung Malim, Perak, Malaysia
[4] School of Social, Development & Environmental Studies, University Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). 43600 Bangi Selangor.
jab@@ukm.edu.my

women's involvement and role in politics is increasing important (Haryati, 2014). Youth, whether men or women, are important in determining the country's future direction .

Objective

The main objective of this article is to identify the trends of preference for media sources in seeking political information among young women in Perak. In this respect, the article also analyzes the confidence level of political information sources.

Literature Review

Political Studies on Women in Malaysia

Among scholars who have conducted studies on women's involvement in politics is Sharifah Syahirah (2010). She studied women's political representation during Malaysia's general election in 2008. The results of her study showed that the level of political participation among women had increased in the 2008 general election. Mohd Roslan and Siti Zafrina (2012) studied women and electoral politics from the Quranic perspective. Their study found that women's participation in Malaysia's politics was not something new. During the colonial period, they found that women had established Angkatan Wanita Sedar (AWAS) or Conscious Women's Front in 1945 which had sought to oppose the colonialists. However, there was controversy over the issue of women's political involvement from the Islamic point that was not conducive to women leaving home and be involved in politics. The issue drew both supportive voices and objections. However, women's involvement in politics had allowed their needs and concern to be heard.

In 2012, there was a study by Azlina on women's participation in national development and gender issues. The study discussed gender-themed studies in Malaysia between 1980s to 2000s. Khairunnisa & Zakaria (2013) conducted a study comparing women's roles and the political processes in Malaysia and Japan. Their study aimed to compare the role of women in Malaysia and Japan in regard to their involvement in politics. The study found that the level of political participation among women in Malaysia was rather low. This theyr argued will negatively impact the country's future as it failsed to bring a balance in the country's decision-making processes.

In her study, Ruhana (2013) discussed the theory and concept of women during the political struggle in Malaya. According to her research, women got involved in politics after they adapted to cultural, educational and environmental change. These findings showed that the feminine approach is represented by women and influenced by the right-wing ideology. Meanwhile the masculine approach could be seen in the character of women influenced by the leftist ideologies who were fighting an anti-colonial struggle. Fatimi et al. (2015) conducted a study on factors of Malay women's political participation in Malaysia. Their paper aimed to discuss the involvement of women in politics, particularly in the practice of democracy and basis of religion. The study results showed that although the goal was not achieved , Malaysia had already scored a successful first step with female candidates representing about 30% of the total in nomination. In line with this upward trend, Nur Azyan (2015) found in her study findings showed that women's leadership in politics was demanded in Islam, and it was seen as a necessity and obligation for women to be involved in politics and become political leaders in the context of today's world. She proposed that the public should be open to accepting and supporting women's leadership, especially in politics. These suggestions concurred with findings in a study by Fatimi et al. (2016).

Nor Rafidah et al. (2017a) conducted a study on leadership and gender factors in women's political involvement in Malaysia (1980-2013). Their findings showed that there were eight factors that influenced women's leadership in politics; patriarchal culture, discrimination, perception, religion, economics, education, socialisation and the environment. Her group also studied the political involvement and empowerment of women in Malaysia (1980-2013) (Nor Rafidah et al., 2017b). The results showed that in Malaysia the strengthening of women's leadership in political participation can increase women's awareness. The study findings also found that women who lacked the party's highest leadership were due to the weakness of their own women and to ignore the support of the branch and central leaders.

The study by Muhammad Rahimi and Bahiyah (2017) centred on the leadership of Tun Fatimah Hashim which focused on the theoretical aspects of women's leadership based on the experience of Malay women leaders, in

Malaysia, namely Tun Fatimah Hashim (1924-2010). The significance of Fatimah Hashim's leadership research was due to the birth and development of her leadership in the era that dominated the conservative-patriarchal society. This study suggested that women's leadership theoretical explanation based on indigenous knowledge was developed. Fatimi (2017) conducted a study on Malay women's participation in Malaysia's elections between 1999-2008. The results of her study showed that there were four factors that influenced women's participation in the election. Among them were the practices of democracy in Malaysia, human rights and Islamic religious policies that allowed women to participate in elections and education. In addition, the young left wing section created in the political party had encouraged political participation of young women. The study also found that the number of female representatives showed a pattern of improvement. This was a healthy phenomenon in Malaysian politics. Finally, Noor Atirah Eliya and Hasrina (2017) conducted a study on factors that contributed to political involvement among the people in Penang. The study results indicated that interest and knowledge of politics was a major factor that contributed to political involvement among the people in Penang. According to him, interpersonal discussions on political issues with others was a very important activity to increase political engagement. Her findings on the factors of involvement among women, were similar to what Siti Noranizahhafizah found in her study carried out in 2019; their self-determination was important for their involvement in politics, and was not influenced by anyone. However, her research found that the involvement of women in politics was still quite passive.

Methodology

This study used a quantitative approach with a survey method to obtain information on the tendency of young female's choice of sources for political information. The study was drew data from published documents as well beside conducting a random sampling of young woman responsdents. Samples were collected from selected state constituencies such as Behrang (N.59), Canning (N.25) and Manjoi (N.23). These constituencies also covered urban and rural areas. The sample was taken by using simple stratified sampling which involved polling districts (PDM) in each constituency. Percentages were calculated based on population and ethnicity in each PDM. The determination of the sample size of the respondents was based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) calculation formula.

Table 1. Samples

DUN Area	Voters Population	Recommendations sample Krejcie & Morgan (1970)	Total Sample	Notes
Behrang (N59)	22,953	Total voters 109,363 Recommendations = 384 people	150	The total number of samples is increased to 450 to enhance the ability generalise the findings.
Canning (N25)	35,255		150	
Manjoi (N23)	51,155		150	

Source: Survey Data, 2018

The data obtained were processed by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 23. Then, the SPSS data readings were analysed by using descriptive statistics based on frequencies, percentages and means obtained based on the questionnaire. Findings and Discussion

Profile of Respondents

A profile analysis of respondents was conducted among 450 young women samples. The analysis was divided into 10 main aspects, namely parliament, state legislature (DUN), constituencies, voting year, age, education level, employment sector, income, ethnicity and religion. The 450 respondents were selected from three constituencies of Canning (N25), Manjoi (N23) and Behrang (N59),which were located in Tambun Parliament (P63), Ipoh Timur (P64) and Tanjong Malim (P77).

According to Table 2, out of a total of 450 respondents, 149 (33.1%) respondents were from Manjoi (N23) constituency under Tambun Parliament (P63), 147 (32.7%) respondents were from Canning (N25) constituencies under East Ipoh Parliament (P64) and 154 (34.2%) respondents elected from the Behrang constituency (N59) under

the Tanjong Malim Parliament (P77). The majority of respondents were from rural areas, which accounted for 326 people (72.4 %) as compared to 124 respondents (27.6 %) from urban areas.

The selected respondents were between 18 and 40 years old. An analysis of education found that 441 (98%) people out of 450 respondents had received education up to the certificate level, diploma, bachelor, and degree . Only 9 (2%) respondents were absent from the study. As for income, more than half of the respondents (238 or 52.9%) had income of RM500 and below. On the other hand, 138 respondents (30.7%) had total income in the range of between RM1501 to RM3000. This indicated that the majority of respondents belonged to B40 (bottom 40%) group.

Table 2. Respondent Profile

Items			Frequency (n=450)	Percentage (%)
Parliament	P63	Tambun	149	33.1
	P64	Ipoh Timur	147	32.7
	P77	Tanjong Malim	154	34.2
State Legislative Assembly (DUN)	N23	Manjoi	149	33.1
	N25	Canning	147	32.7
	N59	Behrang	154	34.2
Area	Urban		124	27.6
	Rural		326	72.4
Voting Year	1999		7	1.6
	2004		11	2.4
	2008		52	11.6
	2013		200	44.4
	Never		180	40.0
Age	18 to 20 years old		57	12.7
	21 to 25 years old		89	19.8
	25 to 30 years old		74	16.4
	31 to 35 years old		113	25.1
	36 to 40 years old		117	26.0
Education	Does not go to school		9	2.0
	Certificate		173	38.4
	Diploma		132	19.3
	Bachelor		56	12.4
	Master and above		3	0.7
	Others		77	17.1
Employment Sector	Civil servants		34	7.6
	Self-work		127	28.2
	Private employees		128	28.4
	Not working		161	35.8
Income	RM 1500 and below		238	52.9
	RM 1501 to RM 3000		138	30.7
	RM 3001 to RM 4500		58	12.9
	RM 4501 to RM 6000		10	2.2
	RM 6000 to RM 7500		4	0.9
	RM 7501 and above		2	0.4

Ethnic	Malay	288	64.0
	Chinese	108	24.0
	India	46	10.2
	Others	8	1.8
Religion	Islam	287	63.8
	Christianity	45	10.0
	Hinduism	27	6.0
	Buddhism	91	20.2

Source: Survey Data, 2018

Respondents also comprised various ethnic and religious groups. Of the total, 288 (64%) respondents were Malays, 108 (24%) Chinese, 46 (10.2%) Indians and 8 (1.8%) from various smaller ethnic groups. The number of respondents from each ethnic group was in line with the ethnic strata in Malaysia. Based on religion, out of 450 respondents, 287 (63.8%) were Moslem, 45 (10%) Christians, 27 (6%) Hindus and 91 (20.2%) Buddhists.

Political Information

Political information in this study covered opinion on various issues in political developments. This information was important to know in relations to how far young women had followed the country's political development. The data produced from spss came in the forms of frequencies, percentages and mean scores to determine the significant selection and pattern selection of respondents.

Political Development

The frequency of political ~~upheaval~~ participation among young women of Perak was analysed to determine the propensity of women to participate in Malaysia's politics and political developments. It is important to identify the young women's tendency. Frequency of respondents' responses to selected issues was measured based on a Likert five-point scale. According to Table 3, a sizeable number of respondents were "sometimes" politically engaged. The "sometimes" choice recorded 204 respondents or about 45.3 % of the total 450 respondents. The mean score for the frequency of respondents in political development was 2.65. This showed that the frequency or tendency for young women respondents to follow political development as a whole was located at a moderate level.

Table 3. Following political development

Item	**Frequency (n=405)**	**Percentage (%)**	**Mean Score**
Never	44	9.8	
Rarely	147	32.7	
Sometimes	**204**	**45.3**	2.65
Frequent	33	7.3	
Always	22	4.9	

Source: Survey Data, 2018

Table 4 shows the frequency in more details based on ethnic background. According to Table 4, the highest frequency of those who followed political developments and categorised within the response "sometimes" was 204 respondents (45.3 %). However, along ethnic line, young Chinese woman led in with 53 (49.1%) responses in this category. This was followed by 131 young Malay woman (or 45.5 %) and 17 Indian respondents (or 37 %) . The findings also found that young Indian women respondents recorded the highest percentage of "never" participated in political development with a total of 6 respondents (13 %). The second highest was recorded for young Malay women respondents who listed 32 (or 11.1%) for the "never" category. There are 6 (or 5.6%) young Chinese women respondents in this category. Based on the findings of analysis, it can be said that young women in Perak had a moderate tendency to be politically active and that young Chinese women respondents were more likely to be politically engaged than young women respondents from other ethnic groups.

Table 4. Following political development by ethnicity

| Items | Ethnic (n=450) | | | | |
	Malay	Chinese	Indian	Others	Total
Never	**32**	**6**	**6**	**0**	**44**
Rarely	86	39	17	5	147
Sometimes	**131**	**53**	**17**	**3**	**204**
Frequent	23	7	3	0	33
Always	16	3	3	0	22
Total	**288**	**108**	**46**	**8**	**450**

Source: Data Survey, 2018

Sources of Political Information

This section identifies the likely sources of political information among young women in Perak. The study identified important sources of political information available to young women, such as newspapers, radio, television, political talks, blogs, websites, and many social applications. According to Table 5, the main source of political information was television with the highest mean score of 2.10. The newspaper was the second main source of information for the respondents with a mean score of 1.75.

This showed that mainstream medias played an important role as a major source of political information among the young women respondents in Perak as compared to alternative medias. More than a half of young women respondents chosed mainstream media as their sources of information, 206 (44.7%) of 460 chose television and 147 (31.9%) of 460 chose newspaper. This finding is contrary to the finding of a study by Junaidi et al. (2013) and Farideh et al. (2015), that found Internet media to be the main preference as the main medium for political information among their respondents. In this study, the most important factors that influenced outcomes were expensive Internet access and some respondents found difficulty to obtain Internet services their areas (place of residence) (Siti Noranizahhafizah, 2017). As such, television and newspapers were the main source of information for most respondents as they are easily available and free.

Table 5. The selection of political information sources

| Items | Frequency (n=450) | | | | Mean |
	Very Important	Important	Medium	Not to Choose	
Newspaper	147	115	118	70	1.75
Radio	22	145	74	209	0.96
Television	**206**	**110**	**106**	**28**	**2.10**
Political talk	27	11	29	383	0.29
Blog	8	12	17	413	0.14
Website	30	46	41	333	0.50
Others	20	7	61	362	0.30

| Items | Percentage (%) | | | | Mean |
	Very Important	Important	Medium	Not to Choose	
Newspaper	32.7	25.6	26.2	15.6	1.75
Radio	4.9	32.2	16.4	46.4	0.96
Television	**45.8**	**24.4**	**23.6**	**6.2**	**2.10**
Political talk	6.0	2.4	6.4	85.1	0.29
Blog	1.8	2.7	3.8	91.8	0.14

Website	6.7	10.2	9.1	74.0	0.50
Others	4.4	1.6	13.6	80.4	0.30

Source: Data Survey, 2018

In terms of age, it was found that youth aged between 31 and 40 years chose television as the main source of political information with 49.6 % (ages 31 to 35) and 54.7 % (ages 36 to 40) (Table 6). In addition, research findings showed that blogs were the last resort for them to obtain political information. Television as the main source of information for most respondents because they are easily available and free.

Table 6. Selection of political information sources by age

Items	Percentage (%) (n=450)				
	18-20	21-25	25-30	31-35	36-40
Newspaper	38.6	30.3	37.8	32.7	28.2
Radio	5.3	6.7	5.4	2.7	5.1
Television	**43.9**	**39.3**	**33.8**	**49.6**	**54.7**
Political talk	5.3	7.9	6.8	4.4	6
Blog	1.8	2.2	1.4	1.8	1.7
Website	8.8	11.2	8.1	6.2	1.7
Others	1.8	5.6	8.1	2.7	4.3

Source: Survey Data

Level of Confidence in Political Information Sources

This section discusses the confidence level of respondents' sources of information for various types of sources such as from the television and newspapers. These confidence levels were assessed based on Likert a five-point scale and as shown in Table 7. Answers provided by respondents were based on their confidence level for their respective sources of information. The mean score was calculated for each source of information source and compared to respondents' confidence level with each source.

Table 7. Likert scale confidence level of information source

Scale	Indicator
1	Very Not Confident
2	Not Confident
3	Not Sure
4	Confident
5	Very Confident

Source: Survey Data, 2018

Based on Table 8, the findings showed that the television segment, Astro Awani, had the highest confidence level with a mean score of 3.50. State-owned televisions such as TV1 and TV2 had the second highest score of 3.48. Newspapers such as *Berita Harian, Utusan Malaysia* and *The Star* had mean scores of 3.42, 3.37 and 3.24. Meanwhile *Keadilan Daily* is a source of political information which had the lowest confidence level with a mean score of 2.96. This finding suggested that young women did not choose alternative media as a medium for political

information in line with studies that showed the use of social media is often misused to disseminate false information that are often provocative, siditious (Kumar & Thapa, 2016; Husnu & Mamat , 2016; Harper & Conversation 2017).

Table 8. Confidence level of information sources

Item	Frequency (n=450)					Mean
	Very Not Confident	Not Confident	Not Sure	Confident	Very Confident	
TV3	32	36	123	224	34	3.43
TV1 dan TV2	18	34	132	245	20	3.48
NTV7	17	34	182	205	12	3.36
TV9	14	35	191	192	18	3.37
Astro Awani	**10**	**23**	**178**	**212**	**27**	**3.50**
Berita Harian	14	25	190	202	19	3.42
Utusan Malaysia	15	26	211	174	24	3.37
Sinar Harian	15	31	261	130	13	3.21
Harakah	17	44	319	62	8	3.00
Keadilan Daily	20	42	333	46	9	2.96
Malaysiakini	19	33	288	94	16	3.12
Malaysia Today	17	41	299	70	23	3.09
The Star	16	39	248	115	32	3.24
The Malaysian Insider	15	37	299	76	23	3.12

Source: Survey Data, 2018

Current issues

Current issues of concern to young women were assessed on a five-point Likert scale was according to the guidelines. Results are as shown in Table 9. Respondents were asked to evaluate current issues by determining the importance of the current issue based on instructions given below. A mean score was calculated for each current issue to compare the level of importance of current issues among young women respondents in Perak.

Table 9. Likert scale of importance of current issues

Scale	Indicator
1	Very Unimportant
2	Not Important
3	Not sure
4	Important
5	Very Important

Source: Survey Data, 2018

According to Table 10, the cost of living was the most current issue of priority among young women respondents. The cost of living statement recorded the highest mean score of 4.59. There were a number of factors that contributed to the rising cost of living, such as low income, rising living standards, spending patterns and lifestyle (Mohd Aqmin et al., 2018; Asan et al., 2016). These were the main concerns among young women respondents in Perak. In addition,

the second most important issue of concern was the issue of education and corruption or abuse of power, which recorded the second highest mean score at 4.39. Education issues were important to young women respondents in Perak because of concerns about graduation rates, unemployment and foreign investment (Norhayati et al, 2012). Taking the same second position as the issue of corruption or abuse of power, the young women were concerned about the issue as it can cause harm to the country. According to Enida (2019), among the causes of corruption were the neglect of religious values, selfishness, desire for a luxurious lifestyle beyond one's ability and greed. Implementing integrity and ethical values were important in ensuring that the responsibilities and trust given to them were properly implemented (Megat Ayop & Abd. Halim, 2016).

Table 10. Importance of current issues

Items		Frequency (n=450)					Mean
		Very Unimportant	Not Important	Not sure	Important	Very Important	
a.	**Cost of living**	**3**	**3**	**6**	**152**	**286**	**4.59**
b.	Criminals	3	8	41	177	221	4.34
c.	Car price	6	31	115	165	133	3.86
d.	House price	4	12	88	159	187	4.14
e.	**Oil price**	**4**	**6**	**50**	**151**	**239**	**4.37**
f.	**Education**	**3**	**5**	**56**	**134**	**252**	**4.39**
g.	Toll	22	39	109	158	122	3.71
h.	ISA, Sedition Act, AUKU, Assembly and Print Act	24	43	116	172	95	3.60
i.	Leader's personal	34	44	63	142	167	3.81
j.	Land	18	13	97	192	130	3.90
k.	Water	1	9	79	197	164	4.14
l.	**Corruption or abuse of power**	**3**	**4**	**41**	**168**	**234**	**4.39**
m.	Bumiputera privilege	30	36	77	149	158	3.82
n.	Demonstration	29	40	109	169	103	3.61
o.	Unemployment	18	11	80	162	179	4.05
p.	Religious	8	25	61	143	213	4.17
q.	Ethnic	9	23	74	163	181	4.08

Source: Survey Data, 2018

Overall, the young women respondents in Perak showed an attentive attitude to the country's current issues. However, current issues related to the lives of young women were more important and valued by respondents, such as the cost of living and education issues. This was because the cost of living was fundamental to the daily lives of women. In addition, the educational issues of concern was because some of them have a children.

Conclusion

Overall, the study results found some important points. Firstly, it was found that mainstream media played an important role as the main source of political information among the young women respondents in Perak as compared to alternative media. Televisions were selected as the most important sources of political information among young women. Second, the findings showed that respondents' confidence in the source of political information they obtained

from ~~for~~ the TV category showed that Astro Awani was highly regarded with the highest mean score, followed by government-owned televisions such as TV1 and TV2. On the other hand, as for newspapers, *Berita Harian, Utusan Malaysia* and *The Star* were the main choices compared to *Keadilan Daily*, which received the lowest confidence level. Young women did not choose alternative media as a medium for political information because social media was widely seen as having being misused to spread false information that are provocative and seditious. Finally, the study found that current issues such as the high cost of living and issues relating to education are dominating their concern and attention.

Acknowledgment

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