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**THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS A  
COMMUNICATION STRATEGY ON VOTING  
DECISIONS OF 18-20-YEAR-OLD FIRST-TIME  
VOTERS IN SELANGOR: Examining message  
effectiveness of pre-electoral propaganda in Malaysia's  
15th General Election (GE15).**

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*A project submitted in partial fulfilment of the award of the  
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## APPROVAL SHEET

This postgraduate thesis entitled *The Impact of social media as a Communication Strategy on Voting Decisions of 18-20-year-old first-time voters in Selangor: Examining Message Effectiveness of Pre-Electoral propaganda in Malaysia's 15th General Election (GE15)* prepared and submitted by *Permata Ardy Almatsir* in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (Communication Management), has been examined and is recommended for acceptance.

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## Abstract

This research intends to examine the message effectiveness of pre-electoral propaganda in Malaysia's 15th general election, particularly in the sense of - the impact of social media as a communication strategy on voting decisions of 18 to 20-year-old first-time voters. The research also aims to inform individuals in charge of strategic communication of political parties on the impact that social media has on the democratic process as well as the need for responsible political communication practices in a digital age. As the Malaysian 15th General Election addresses political instability as well as the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, multiple changes in power, as well as the first General Election with the voting age, lowered to 18, there is a significant increase in young first-time voters who are impressionable to propaganda shown to them, especially through social media. Social media on its own democratizes distribution and transforms political campaign strategies by allowing direct communication with their audience. There is a lack of exploration when it comes to the effectiveness of pre-electoral messaging particularly targeting first-time voters. This research aims to conceptualize and identify key factors that can affect an 18 to 20-year-old Selangor first-time voter's voting decision. With a total of 200 respondents participating in a multilingual survey, this research concludes that there is a significant difference when looking into the influence of communication strategy message Framing and social influence when it comes to voting decisions and it highlights the key factors that respondents understand the responsibility of citizens and use social media to be more informed of General election proceedings.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

#### **1.0 Background**

The new age of global digitization has transformed the way individuals connect and consume information, particularly with the rise of social media and its users. Over the past decade alone, various social media platforms have experienced a surge in their monthly active users, which revolutionized the way not only individuals or businesses communicate with one another but also how governments interact and share information with the masses. Malaysia itself had 30.25 million active social media users as of January 2022, which is equivalent to approximately 91.7% of the total population (Kemp, 2022). Kepois - a digital advisory firm, analyzed that there has been an 8% (2.3 million) increase in active social media users within Malaysia between 2021 and 2022 alone. As of June of 2023, there were an estimated 26.80 million active social media users, which is 78.5% of Malaysia's total population (Howe, 2023). Data provided from Meltwater - an online media monitoring organization, shows that there is an audience of individuals that choose social media as their primary source of consuming information. With 42.6% of individuals stating that they actively use social media to keep up to date with the news and current affairs (GWI, 2023). From Facebook and Twitter to Instagram or TikTok, these platforms have played an integral role in shaping social interactions, influencing public discourse as well as playing a pivotal role in political movements - particularly the 15th Malaysian General Elections.

The 15th Malaysian General Elections, also known as GE15 was held on November 19, 2022. It was considered to be a crucial election in determining the future state of Malaysia, as it was a snap election which is pivotal to subdue the crisis of political instability caused by

coalition between party members as well as the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic that has contributed to two prime ministers resigning from their duties and the collapse of their respective coalition governments since the previous elections held in 2018 (Tee, 2022). Furthermore, the Undi18 campaign, which has successfully advocated for provisions to lower the voting age from 21 to 18 in July of 2019, as well as the approval for automatic registration of voters was enacted by parliament (Carvalho, 2019). This has resulted in a significant increase in the number of young voters in Malaysia. Approximately six million new voters were expected to participate during the election at the time. The first-time voters or the 18-20-year-old age group represented 1.39 million first-time voters (MalaysiaNow, 2022). These young voters, particularly classified into the category of Gen Z or late millennial voters are characterized to be both familiar and active in their engagement with social media platforms and have the potential to be significantly influenced by political propaganda circulated on these platforms (Mamat, 2022). The importance of understanding the effectiveness of political social media coverage in conveying pre-electoral propaganda lies in its potential implications for democratic processes. The ability of individuals in positions of power or political stature to utilize social media to shape public opinion raises questions about the ethics and transparency of electoral campaigns (Kaid, 2007). Furthermore, studying the impact of political social media coverage on first-time voters specifically can provide insights into the effectiveness of targeted propaganda strategies aimed specifically at first-time voters.

The use of social media during GE15 has showcased its power to democratize the distribution of information as well as give a voice to previously marginalized groups (Mamat, 2022). Traditional industry players and information gatekeepers, such as news outlets and media conglomerates have begun to lose their monopoly on the dissemination of news and opinions, particularly for the wave of new first-time voters (Mamat, 2022). This has led to unprecedented growth in Social Media usage for the primary usage of pre-electoral

propaganda, as social media platforms portrayed a public perception of a powerful tool for political communication and engagement. This has significantly transformed the way political campaigns are conducted, which not only allows politicians and their parties to convey information directly to their voters but also to reach a wider audience and disseminate their message in a more direct and interactive manner (Vonderschmitt, 2012).

This research aims to investigate the effectiveness of political social media coverage as a communication strategy in conveying pre-electoral propaganda, with a specific focus on the first-time voters during the 15th General Elections (GE15) in Malaysia. Overall, this research aims to inform policymakers, political persons, and electoral stakeholders about the potential impact of the information distribution through social media as a communication strategy on democratic processes and the need for safeguards to ensure fair and transparent elections as well as to promote responsible political communication practices in the digital age.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

With the increased surge of active social media users, as well as an entirely new target demographic of young, first-time voters, the use of social media as a communication strategy in conveying pre-electoral propaganda has become increasingly apparent in modern-day political campaigns. Using the Malaysian 15th General Elections (GE15) as a benchmark, it is crucial to examine the message effectiveness of pre-electoral propaganda on social media, specifically targeted at young, first-time voters in the Klang Valley. The effectiveness of pre-electoral messaging specifically targeting first-time voters overall remains largely unexplored (Leong, 2015). Understanding the impact of these messages is vital in shaping communication strategies that are persuasive, informative, and resonate with the young electorate. With a substantial presence on social media platforms, first-time voters in the Klang Valley are highly

exposed to political information and propaganda disseminated through these channels (Mamat, 2022). However, the extent to which social media influences their political attitudes and decision-making processes remains uncertain, necessitating an in-depth analysis.

To ensure a healthy democratic process, it is essential to evaluate the effectiveness of pre-electoral propaganda messages on social media platforms. By examining the content, tone, and strategies employed in these messages, this study can shed light on their persuasiveness, credibility, and impact on first-time voters in the Klang Valley. Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of these messages can guide political actors, campaign strategists, and policymakers in developing more effective communication strategies. The use of propaganda raises ethical concerns in political campaigns, particularly when targeted at young, impressionable voters. If these messages are found to be misleading, manipulative, or lacking in substance, they may undermine the trust and engagement of young voters in the political process (Kaid, 2007). In contrast, however, if the messages are informative, authentic, and empowering, they can encourage active participation, informed decision-making, and long-term civic engagement among first-time voters.

This study explores the use of social media as a communication strategy in conveying pre-electoral propaganda, specifically focusing on the message effectiveness for first-time voters in the Klang Valley during the Malaysian 15th General Elections (GE15). Addressing this problem will provide valuable insights into the influence of social media on young voters, ethical considerations, and the implications for democratic participation, ultimately contributing to the development of more effective and responsible political communication strategies.

Specifically, it also aims to answer the following research questions:

1. Is there a significant difference in the influence of communication strategy across voting decisions?
2. Is there a significant difference in the influence of message framing of political parties across voting decisions?
3. Is there a significant difference in the influence of ‘social influence’ across voting decisions?
4. How did seeing different coverages of GE15 through social media affect the voting decisions of 18-20-year-old first-voters in Selangor?

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

The overall objective of the study is to determine the effectiveness of social media as a communication strategy in conveying pre-electoral propaganda for Klang Valley first-time voters during Malaysia’s 15th General Election.

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- To determine the impact of party affiliation on the relationship between social media exposure to pre-electoral propaganda and the voting decisions of 18-20-year-old first-time voters in Selangor.
- To assess the extent of mediation by communication strategy in the relationship between social media exposure to pre-electoral propaganda and the voting decisions of 18-20-year-old first-time voters in Selangor.

- To investigate the role of message framing/delivery as a mediator between social media exposure to pre-electoral propaganda and the voting decisions of 18-20-year-old first-time voters in Selangor.
- To examine the role of social distortion as a mediator in the relationship between social media exposure to pre-electoral propaganda and the voting decisions of 18-20-year-old first-time voters in Selangor.

## 1.4 Framework of the Study

This section will further explore and evaluate the theories that will be used as a framework for this research as well as determine the significance of said theories on the study being conducted.

### 1.4.1 Theoretical Framework

Framing theory is a communication theory that provides a valuable lens for understanding how media and communication shape public perceptions and interpretations of events, issues, and policies. The concept was first proposed in 1972 by Gregory Bateson (Arowolo, 2017). Framing Theory is closely related to the agenda-setting theory, however, it expands on the theory by focusing on the essence of the issues in comparison to a broad and overall topic (Chong, 2007). In practice, framing theory can be described as the practice of thinking about information (particularly news and stories) within a particular, pre-mediated context (Chong, 2007). Framing theory suggests that media will focus on a specific event and provide context, giving their audience a closed-off view of the subject matter at hand to shape its meaning (Arowolo, 2017). This involves the use of language, visuals, metaphors, and

narratives to influence how information is interpreted by the audience. Arguably, within the right context and situation, information that is ‘framed’ is able to be manipulated to suit specific narratives. Traditionally, media organizations play a significant role in constructing and disseminating frames to the public. As we move towards the digital age, media has expanded its horizons to the virtual scene - including itself in social media platforms which allows the framing agents to engage in framing by highlighting specific angles, emphasizing certain aspects while subsequently downplaying others.

The framing theory has a variety of adaptations within its frameworks, the three frameworks within the framing theory that will be explored within this study are Attribute frames, Episodic frames, and thematic frames. Attribute frames highlight certain attributes or characteristics of individuals, events, or policies, shaping perceptions about them (Levin, et.al, 1998). Episodic frames present an issue or event through individual stories or specific incidents (Lyengar, 1991), whereas thematic frames emphasize broader patterns or trends (McLeod, 2022). All three frameworks are applicable in understanding the specific factors to understand the effectiveness of aspects of pre-electoral propaganda through the use of social media. These frameworks emphasize the effects of framing on individuals and society as it explores how framing influences audience perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. It investigates the cognitive processes through which frames shape individuals’ understanding and interpretation of issues. Additionally, it examines the potential consequences of framing on public opinion, political behavior, policy preferences, and societal outcomes (Boukes, 2021). The Malaysian 15th General Elections (GE15) relies heavily on the monitoring of personal image and brand (Freedomhouse, 2023), how political parties choose to frame their message for public consumption, and the public’s subsequent reaction to the frame would provide a better understanding on media vs. messaging. Furthermore, much like its theoretical counterpart - agenda-setting theory, the framework recognizes that framing effects are contingent upon

various mediating and moderating factors. Mediating factors such as Individual characteristics, such as personal prior beliefs, individual values, pre-existing knowledge as well and demographics can influence how individuals respond to frames. Moderating factor such as contextual factors which includes pre-existing political views, cultural backgrounds, and social environments can impact framing (Falkowski, 2019)

Ethics is a crucial component of the theoretical framework. Ethical implications of framing in communication such as the potential bias, distortion, and manipulation can play a role in the broader socio-political context (Kellaris, 1994). The framework considers the responsibility of traditional media organizations, social media platforms, and information relayers to provide accurate, fair, and balanced framing. Which overall highlights the factor of media literacy and critical thinking in mitigating the potential negative effects of framing (Tewksbury, 2019). By applying this theoretical framework, researchers, policymakers, and communicators can gain valuable insights into the role of framing in communication and its implication for the broader society, leading to more informed and responsible communication practices. It is also imperative to note that this study will delve into the Propaganda Model of media control - a theoretical model of media control which outlines how propaganda itself works in mass media (Chomsky, 1988), with Multilevel effects on mass-media interests, including it's size, ownership, profit orientation, funding, source, flaks and 'anti-communism' (which religion will be used as a substitute for this control mechanism) (Fuchs, 2018)

#### **1.4.2 Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework presented for this study was adapted from the Lees Marshment Political Campaign Communication Strategy Model Framework (Lilleker & Lees-Marshment, 2005) as presented in Figure 1.0. This framework was originally developed as an

analytical construct to examine the 1990 rise of “New” Labour in the United Kingdom, it has been recently used in the context of behavioral analysis of political parties in different nations, which includes Austria, Brazil, Canada, Germany Ireland, New Zealand, Peru, Scotland, Sweden and the United States (Paré, 2008). The two main justifications that distinguish the Lees-Marshment framework, the first is that modern political parties in liberal democracies need to alter the ways in which they deliver their offerings to their audience to effectively connect with the electorate. The second justification is the emphasis that has been placed in terms of organizational strategy and positioning within the political landscape (Paré, 2008). The Lees-Marshment framework suggests that political communication is not only orientated toward simple tactical campaign issues but the perception of the political product itself through candidates, staff, symbols, and constitutions (Lees-Marshment, 2005).

The Lees-Marshment Political Campaign Communication Strategy Model Framework serves as an appropriate base to this study’s proposed framework which leans on the limitations of the framework itself. Criticism regarding the framework surrounds itself on its short-term approach and narrow focus on the voters as well as the relationship between rivaling candidates (Ormrod, 2006). The application and modification of this framework into concepts surrounding independent, dependent, moderator, and mediator variables from the perspective of the electorate party rather than the political party, allows this study to account for a wider focus on individuals and the affecting variables surrounding their perception of the study itself.

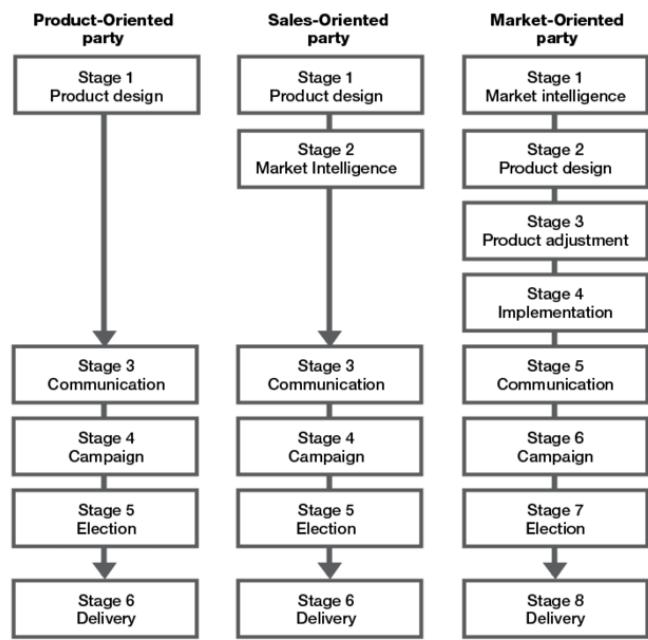
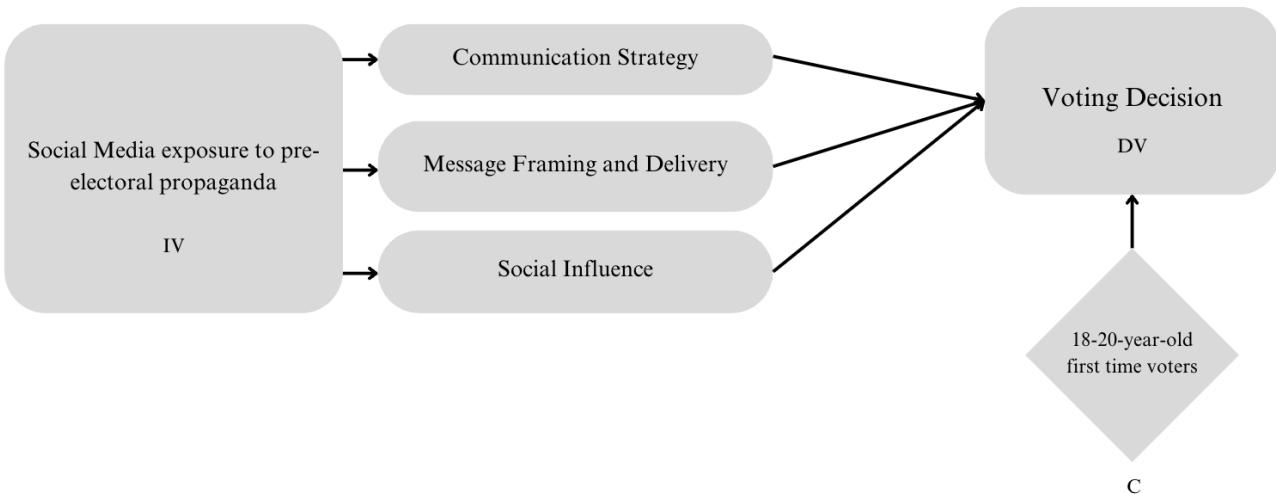


Figure 1.0 Lees Marshment Political Campaign Communication Strategy Model Framework  
(Lilleker & Lees-Marshment, 2005)

Aside from the Lees Marshment Political Campaign Communication Strategy Model Framework (Lilleker & Lees-Marshment, 2005), the conceptual framework was also adopted a simplistic approach much like the framework done by Faiswal Kasirye (2021), exploring “*The Relationship Of Political Polarization With Social Media Platforms, Social Media Usage, And Political Campaign Communication*” (Kasirye, 2021)



*Figure 2.0 Proposed Conceptual Framework*

The proposed conceptual framework directly identifies one key independent variable, which would be the factor of exposure to pre-electoral propaganda through social media. The conceptual framework also looks at one dependent variable that is imperative to this study which is the voting decisions of 18-20-year-old first-time voters.

Three specific factors that will be explored in relation to the independent variable of social media exposure to pre-elect or propaganda are communication strategy message Framing and delivery as well as social influence and how they all contribute to the final voting decision of 18 to 20-year-old first-time voters in Selangor. This proposed conceptual framework identifies the key factors that play a significant role in social media exposure that could potentially change the outcome of the voting decision itself.

## **1.5 Hypothesis**

This study will explore the following hypothesis for each corresponding research question:

1. There is a significant correlation between social media exposure to pre-electoral propaganda and the voting decisions of 18-20-year-old first-time voters in Selangor, even when controlling for the influence of party affiliation.
2. Communication strategy significantly mediates the relationship between social media exposure to pre-electoral propaganda and the voting decisions of 18-20-year-old first-time voters in Selangor.
3. Message framing/delivery significantly mediates the relationship between social media exposure to pre-electoral propaganda and the voting decisions of 18-20-year-old first-time voters in Selangor.
4. Social distortion significantly mediates the relationship between social media exposure to pre-electoral propaganda and the voting decisions of 18-20-year-old first-time voters in Selangor.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study fact that The Malaysian 15th General Elections (GE15) is a crucial moment for Malaysia's democratic progress, and the participation of first-time voters is of imperial importance. In today's digital age, social media has emerged as a powerful platform for political engagement, shaping public opinions and electoral outcomes. First-time voters play a pivotal role in shaping the future of the nation. Understanding the portrayal of pre-electoral propaganda on social media can provide these young individuals with the tools to critically analyze and evaluate the information they encounter online. By empowering first-

time voters to distinguish between authentic news and misinformation, this study can contribute to creating a more informed and engaged electorate.

Social media has become a breeding ground for the spread of disinformation, misinformation, and propaganda. By delving into the portrayal of pre-electoral propaganda, this study can shed light on the techniques employed to manipulate public opinion. Recognizing and exposing such manipulative tactics can enhance media literacy and cultivate a more discerning society capable of resisting political manipulation in the future. The study of social media's portrayal of pre-electoral propaganda can aid in evaluating the fairness and integrity of the electoral process. By examining the extent to which first-time voters are targeted by propaganda, we can assess the impact on electoral outcomes and identify potential vulnerabilities in the system. The findings may inform policymakers and electoral bodies on measures to safeguard the electoral process against undue influence. Understanding the portrayal of pre-electoral propaganda on social media platforms can contribute to a healthier democratic discourse. By analyzing the content, tone, and reach of such propaganda, this study can identify trends that may hinder constructive dialogue or fuel division within the electorate. This knowledge can inform efforts to foster more inclusive, respectful, and fact-based political discussions both online and offline.

The study's findings can inform the formulation of policies and regulations pertaining to social media platforms during election periods. Insights gained from analyzing the portrayal of pre-electoral propaganda can help identify areas where existing regulations are insufficient and provide evidence-based recommendations for strengthening them. These regulations can aim to ensure transparency, accountability, and fairness in the use of social media for political campaigns.

## 1.7 Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This research will cover the effectiveness of social media as a communication strategy in conveying pre-electoral propaganda, exploring communication strategies used during Malaysia's 15th General Elections, its audience's perception as well as the impacts on voter decision-making for first-time voters. The study specifically focuses on pre-electoral propaganda, which refers to persuasive messages disseminated through social media platforms, specifically focusing on the Malaysian 15th General Elections (GE15) as the context for analyzing the use of social media in conveying pre-electoral propaganda. The timeframe of the study is limited to the period leading up to the GE15, and it does not extend to subsequent elections or political events. By delimiting the study to a specific electoral cycle, it provides a snapshot of the dynamics of pre-electoral propaganda during a particular period. The study does not explore post-electoral propaganda or propaganda outside the election period.

Furthermore, this study will cover a targeted demographic of first-time voters residing within the Klang Valley region of Malaysia which encompasses Kuala Lumpur, and its surrounding areas. However, as the study focuses on a targeted demographic, the findings may not be generalizable to other regions in Malaysia. By focusing solely on the use of social media the study aims to understand the unique dynamics, message effectiveness, and implications of pre-electoral propaganda on popular social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tiktok and Whatsapp.

Overall, the scope and delimitation of the study on the use of social media as a communication strategy in conveying pre-electoral propaganda for Klang Valley first-time voters during Malaysia GE15 establishes the geographic scope, target audience, communication strategy, timeframe, and focus on message effectiveness. By setting these boundaries, the study aims to provide valuable insights into the experiences and impacts of pre-

electoral propaganda on social media for first-time voters in the specific context of the Klang Valley region.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### 2.0 The Role of Social Media in Political Communication

In the past decade, the rise of social media platforms has transformed the landscape of political communication. Social media has emerged as a powerful tool that shapes and influences public opinion, political discourse, and electoral processes. With its wide reach, instantaneous nature, and interactive features, social media has revolutionized the way political messages are disseminated, campaigns are run, and citizens engage in political discussions. This has led to a fundamental shift in the dynamics of political communication, with social media playing a central role in shaping political narratives, mobilizing supporters, and connecting politicians with their constituents.

This section explores the multifaceted role of social media in political communication, examining its influence on political campaigns, citizen engagement, and public opinion formation. It also delves into the challenges and ethical considerations posed by social media platforms and provides insights into how political actors, regulators, and citizens can navigate this rapidly evolving landscape to promote informed, inclusive, and participatory political discourse.

## 2.1 Political Communication

Based on an article titled “All the News That's Fit to Click the Economics of Clickbait Media” (Munger, 2020) by Kevin Munger he states that the news media industry has changed following the rise and popularity of the internet and social media reaching its maturity and has integrated into the daily lives of most individuals. Munger argues that social media serves both as not just a distribution platform but also a platform in order to build a reputation which then leads to a massive increase in the need for digital literacy, as there are growing tensions with traditional news media outlets (Munger, 2020). In another study titled “Social Media and Political Agenda Setting” (Gallardi, 2021). Digital platforms have significantly reduced information gatekeeping power over tradition in media as well as has increased the capacity for various kinds of political actors to shape the agenda more freely (Gallardi, 2021). The study was done in a Swiss context in which the researchers examined the connections between three separate agendas which are the traditional media agenda to social media agenda parties as well as social media agenda for politicians. Using supervised machine learning classifiers the researchers classified over two and a half million articles that were published in 84 newspapers along with 6,500 tweets posted on official party accounts as well as 210,000 tweets that were posted by politicians on their own personal accounts during a time period of almost 2 years between January 2018 and December of 2019 they used a vector Auto regression or VAR approach to analyze the relationship between the three agendas And concluded that there are that each agenda influences one another the researcher highlights that it is important to look at how different agendas interlace with one another and how parties could use this to push specific agendas (Gallardi, 2021).

In another study titled “Political Polarization on the Digital Sphere: A Cross-platform Overtime Analysis of Interactional, Positional and Effective Polarization on Social Media”

(Yarchi, 2020) highlighted that the digital space is a real challenge to many democracies around the world for their political polarization. This research conducted an analysis across multiple social media platforms including Facebook Twitter and WhatsApp to identify any political polarization over the time span of 16 months regarding the political controversy in Israel. Their findings indicate that social media is not a suitable platform for political polarization as it cannot be conceptualized and they identify that there are significant platform differences in which the engagement on Twitter largely conforms to expectations and on WhatsApp depolarization occurred over a period of time book was affiliate platforms in terms of its engagement And the emotions expressed Facebook on the other hand was identified to be the least homophilic platform in terms of its engagement and individual positions.

Lastly, a study titled “Disinformation by Design: The Use of Evidence, Collages and Platform Filtering in a Media Manipulation Campaign” (Krafft, 2020) focuses on disinformation campaigns particularly perpetrated and conducted by far-right groups in the United States they use these phenomena to understand previous models of disinformation and looked into how it has emphasized identity confirmation as well as seek to explain why this information is shared their case study observe substantial skepticism against narratives regardless of its disinformation and their findings provide a dynamic that is explored previously (Krafft, 2020). They highlighted if online and social platforms remain as it continues to grow these information campaigns will only grow according to the scale on which their platform is put on acknowledge that there are many values and technological design that not only Embraces transparency and decentralization they also highlight that there must be a level of accountability transparency to overcome new media manipulation tactics.

## 2.2 The Influence of social media on political participation and engagement

In a study conducted surrounding the use of political communication on tiktok by Juan Carlos Medina Serrano, specifically looking into US partisan Republic and Democratic parties and how the users communicated with one another regarding political issues the research titled “Dancing to the Partisan Beat: A First Analysis of Political Communication on Tiktok” (Serrano, 2020), uses natural language processing statistical tools and computer vision to illustrate how TikTok can be used for political communication purposes the research concluded that tiktok as a platform is more interactive in comparison to other static social media platforms particularly due to its high engagement rate as well as its ability to have different types of media as content, e.g. images videos and text the researchers discovered that political communication manifests in the form of communication trees in which users generate branches of responses to content that is already pre-existing and shown to them (Serrano, 2020). In terms of the demographics they found that both Republican and Democratic us parties who are young behave very similarly on the platform however, it could be noted that the Democratic users engage significantly more in discussions whereas the Republicans engaged more in content and video responses. as TikTok is only one of the many social media channels readily accessible by the General Public it can be seen that through this research individuals are able to interact with each other and engage with political content online it can also be assumed based on the research that although Republican and Democratic partisans behave slightly differently the engagement levels are still the same only varying in what type of Engagement is done online (Serrano, 2020).

In a separate research titled “Role of Social Media as a Soft Power tool in Raising Public Awareness and Engagement in Addressing Climate Change” (Mavrovdieva, 2019) researcher Alexandra Mavrovdieva, found that there are significant challenges to assessing the

exact effects of social media particularly as a soft power tool with certainty. Although they do acknowledge that there are visible links between social media and the changing of public perceptions they also acknowledge that there is a possibility that this will lead to a change in public opinion which will result in influencing political decisions. The researchers suggest that social media has a soft power tool is only one of the few factors that could affect public perception and has not looked at social media as a main source of information distribution (Mavrovdieva, 2019). Although this research doesn't primarily focus on electoral campaigns as such as research does highlight an important key factor that social media is the voice of the people therefore social media is able to Garner a mass understanding among the General Public which can lead to political parties to come to a consensus when making agendas or decisions that might influence a political campaign if there is one.

### **2.3 The characteristics of social media platforms as communication channels for political messages**

In a research titled “Social Media and Election Campaign: Tiktok as 2022 Malaysian General Election Battleground” (Abdullah, 2023), researcher Nurul Azmira Abdullah explored what makes Tiktok an effective medium for political campaigns for the Malaysian 15th general elections as well as looking into how it is used as well as its implications. The research suggests that with the right type of strategy as well as the right type of content politicians should be able to embrace Tiktok more as a platform that is growing in popularity among the Malaysian youth in particularly mentioning the Muda (Malaysian United Democratic Alliance) president Syed Saddiq Abdul Rahman who frequently posts on the platform and how it has affected his career as a politician as well as an individual. They suggest that with enough strategy social media

including TikTok could revert Malaysian politics back to its roots by increasing political participation as well as increasing the use of integrated social media tools (Abdullah, 2023).

Although the primary characteristic of social media as a platform to communicate political messaging includes it being an open channel in which individuals are able to express their ideas thoughts and opinions about the political leaders and the state of governance in their country it is also important to know that social media in itself can become a powerful weapon when used incorrectly as mentioned in a research titled “If there is a Declaration of War, We Welcome The War: UNDI-18 Tiktok Election and Normalization of Violence” (Razali, 2022). This research claims that the democracy within Malaysia has come under attack due to the radicalization of young and first-time voters on social media platforms particularly highlighting the issue of the widespread use of TikTok as a primary campaign Battleground for multiple political parties during the 15th general election the research claims that this is an anomaly within the pattern as it marks the first year where Malaysians aged 18 to 20 were eligible to vote. The research highlights that the lack of control on social media platforms can easily allow social media influencers or any key opinion leaders to manipulate and convince the youth voters to turn them into ponds in an electoral war which could be considered as provocation of hate speech as well as endangering the modesty of Malaysian democracy (Razali, 2022).

Through these researches, we could see that although social media has appealing characteristics when it comes to political Communications it is also imperative that the idea of social media and Public Communication be protected particularly when it comes to the rights of the youth as well as the protection for their public health and safety both types of research highlight the importance of having a level of control over the media in the sense of censorship to an extent to protect rather than to limit.

## **2.4 The use of social media as a strategic tool by political parties during election campaigns**

In a study titled “The Role of Media in Shaping the Trend of Political Participation among New Young Voters” (Allam, 2023), a high percentage of political participation particularly among the youth has been discussed by Scholars and political science and has only increased in interest in terms of political participation compared to previous years (Allam, 2023). As the study which aims to examine social media use among undergraduate students aims to measure the relationship between social media use and political knowledge. The research itself concluded that there is a higher rate of engagement on social media usage particularly in those individuals who choose to use Facebook as a platform to find political information, particularly about opposition parties (Allam, 2023). The researchers also concluded that these individuals who primarily use Facebook to get political updates are more highly exposed to political knowledge gained from social media but are also highly exposed to negative news such as political scandals that can affect the level of online political participation. The study also highlights that the freedom of media within Malaysia is not yet fully implemented even though Malaysia has exercised a democratic system and government-supported mainstream media has been perceived as biased and not providing coverage that is balanced between candidates in comparison to social media which the younger generation tends to seek out to Garner political information that is less biased as well as gather information through the discussion with their peers.

The article also stated that according to researcher, Rajaratnam in 2009 the lack of transparency in the media is what has caused voters to look into alternative media, especially social media (Rajaratnam, 2009). the research highlights that there is a positive correlation coefficient between social media and political knowledge which indicates that there is a direct

relationship between the variables and can be stated that the greater the exposure to social media, the greater their political knowledge

## **2.5 The Influence and Persuasion in Social Media Propaganda**

In an article written by Marshall Soules for the Edinburgh University Press titled “Media Persuasion and Propaganda” (Soules, 2015), he explores propaganda from the perspective of media maelstrom it's categories and decoding the media discourse: ideology, hegemony, and Power. He states that in persuasion particularly in the eyes of propaganda and media, best-trained individual minds have made a large effort to get into the collective public mind in order to manipulate exploit and control the decisions that are made and these large-scale efforts often result in impressive success in order to channel unthinking or subconscious habits purchasing decisions and thought process and that these efforts take place below the conscious level of awareness he also states that the persuasion and propaganda idea is built on the general foundational basis of rhetoric which is the way of communicating effectively and persuasively within a particular context rhetoric (Soules, 2015). The context of propaganda and persuasion is able to give language the additional interest and impact that can further increase its Effectiveness when being distributed to the public whereas persuasion seeks simply to change attitudes and beliefs with mutual needs met the act of trusting affects persuasion directly persuasion itself requires a baseline or anchor such an existing belief in order to become successful has a day as these anchors provide Focus and significance for the audience has expected with persuasion peer pressure as well as social norms hold a large influence as anchors of belief persuasion lean towards propaganda when it is “...consciously misleading or exploits beliefs values and attitudes for the propagandists benefit.” (Soules, 2015). Marshall highlights that the general distinguishing Factor between persuasion and propaganda is to see the intention

and consequences both intended and unintended of the public as both persuasion and propaganda use language message distinguishing Factor. When looking into media discourse Marshall suggested that there needs to be a suitable communication model to describe my Social Security relation he particularly mentioned the Steward Hall's model of encoding and decoding in which Hall identifies three decoding strategies which are the dominant hegemonic decoding in which the receiver accepts the message and considers it to be reliable and authoritative negotiated decoding in which the receiver accepts the general overview with some reservations but is able to still accept the message and lastly oppositional decoding in which the receiver understands the message however rejects its meaning (Soules, 2015).

### **2.5.1 The Role of Cognitive Bias and Heuristics in Shaping the impact of Propaganda on First-time Voters**

Cognitive biases and heuristics play on the subconscious mind which undoubtedly plays a role when it comes to voting decisions as the endpoint of a voting decision comes from a combination of self-indulge ideologies and or the discovery of new information as well as the exposure to repeated information.

Based on a study by James H Kuklinski and Paul Jay Quirk titled “Reconsidering the Rational Public: Cognition, Heuristics, and Mass Opinion” (Kuklinski, 2000), they noted that voters can activate one of three memory modules the first being procedural memory which consists of the knowledge that individuals use to do simple tasks such as removing a pan cap or opening a car door the second being declarative memory which consists of information and facts that are pre-existing within our subconscious 24 hours a day or 7 days a week and the last is working memory which is part of the long-term memory which is the most highly activated when faced with voting decision. the study places a strong emphasis on cognitive biases and

heuristics playing a significant role in shaping the effects of propaganda on first-time voters who tend to be less experienced in critically evaluating information as well as making political decisions (Kuklinski, 2000). First-time voters much like other individuals have a tendency to favor information that confirms their existing beliefs as well as propaganda that aligns with their preconceived notions and resonates with them this will then further affect their working memory which results in them being less inclined to critically examine or question messages that reinforce what they already believe (Kuklinski, 2000).

Factors such as social proof also play a role in cognitive bias as social proof in itself is the tendency to follow the actions or beliefs that others have within a social group first time voters may be more susceptible to this influence as they are more dependent on the opinions of their peers may it be on or off social media platforms so it is important to note that they are more exposed to their peer's belief systems on social media itself. If a particular message receives a high number of engagements on a social media platform that these voters deem to be trustworthy they may perceive them as more socially acceptable or valid.

David Dunning, is the primary creator behind the Dunning Kruger effect which is a form of cognitive bias where individuals with little or limited knowledge and experience in a particular field overestimate their expertise (Dunning, 2011). This highlights that first-time voters tend to exhibit such bias leading them to feel more confident in their political judgments. propaganda exploits this overconfidence by presenting information as absolute truth

This leads to the importance of promoting media literacy as well as critical thinking in order to help first-time voters evaluate information critically and distinguish credible sources from unreliable ones as well as the importance of providing fact-checking resources and tools that allow first time voters to verify information. It should also highlight the importance of promoting discussions about individuals' cognitive biases with others and maintaining an open discussion that encourages Civic engagement and participation in activities

Overall cognitive bias and heuristics should be placed of importance as a factor that could potentially affect a voter and voting decision during their processes as the more they are exposed to particular propaganda the heavier those effects are.

## **2.6 Pre-electoral Propaganda and its Forms**

Pre-electoral propaganda can be referred to as the distribution of persuasive information particularly with a political agenda attached in the period that leads up to an election (Anguiano, 2017). The primary aim of conducting pre-electoral propaganda is to influence voters' opinions as well as shape the Public's perceptions and swing electoral outcomes. Pre-electoral propaganda has various different forms in which they are designed to achieve specific objectives based on a study titled "Information and Non-informational Propaganda" (Horz, 2021) by Carlo M. Horz, there are two primary types of propaganda that can be used in the political sphere which is information and on informational. In his study, he theorized that information propaganda involves both the sender and the receiver in which the sender or the propagandist has one or more receivers to receive their message. This would then lead the sender to choose to send one of multiple messages and may or may not know the state of truthfulness when making their choice. The receiver on the other hand will not have known or had a prior belief to it before receiving the message which would then take the senders initiatives and strategy into account (Horz, 2021). This framework has been used to support numerous important literature studies however there are some limitations in which the framework could theoretically be used to "model propagandistic claims about anything for which an objective truth exists - including evidence-free speculations are interpretations of Highly Complex events." (Horz, 2021). Another limitation would be that the way of modeling propaganda does not take into consideration the role of different rhetorics as a separate form

of content or signal and lastly, it does not take into consideration that there are types of propagandistic statements such as subjective claims that has no relationship to a true State overall.

Non-informational propaganda has been used to attempt to address some of these limitations Particularly focusing on the subjective claims in order to understand a propaganda affects specific groups (Horz, 2021). The researcher states that the potential power that propaganda has and its effect are widely acknowledged by Scholars and the public alike however they also state that the mechanisms in which propaganda motivates behaviors and the exact conditions in which propaganda becomes the most effective is still unclear and that studies on propaganda should be increased as it is still a growing field (Horz, 2021).

As the General Public individuals are able to see political propaganda broadcasted through the regular broadcasting mediums which include political advertising on television ads in which political candidates and parties televise their campaigns to highlight their achievement policies and or qualifications as well as an opportunity to slander their target opponents with negative messaging this will fall in line with other forms of political advertising on both traditional and New Media including radio ads print ads as well as online ads. there is also the use of campaign rallies and events in which candidates hold campaign rallies and public events where they address their supporters and other public events such as debates forms press releases and campaign speeches it is important to note that based on a study titled “Persuasive strategies in electoral propaganda. Analysis of the television broadcasts transmitted during Jalisco’s Electoral Campaign in 2015” (Anguiano, 2017) pre-electoral propaganda can both be positive and negative the positive being a large focus on the future development of a nation and the future agenda that a certain political leader could have in mind and the political party that backs the decisions it can be done in a way that highlights the achievements of said leader and the party that they're affiliated with the effectiveness of pre-electric propaganda really depends on

multiple factors that range in complexity as there is a level of cognitive behavior that is tied towards the susceptibility of accepting pre-electoral propaganda as is (Anguiano, 2017).

In a study titled “Social Control in the Face of Digital Propaganda” (Swieboda, 2021) researchers summarize that the effects of propaganda as well as manipulation are the most effective when the messaging messages being delivered are consistent with an individual's pre-existing opinions (Swieboda, 2021). They also state that propaganda creates a sense of disharmony between personal opinion and public acceptance and an environment where individuals choose to accept a situation publicly however resented privately. this can be put in the context of the Electoral period as information is spread directly on social media which refers to the thought that as long as an individual votes for one party however claims to vote for a complete and separate entity they are unintentionally showing their support for that other entity

## **2.7 Ethical and legal considerations - Freedom of speech and misinformation**

In a study titled “Realizing Accepted UPR Recommendations: Challenges and Realities in Malaysia's Commitment to Enforce Freedom” (Nor, 2023). Researchers attempt to further understand the history and liberties associated with freedom of speech and Democratic rights in Malaysia. the researcher highlights that after the 14th general election GE 14 of 2018 there was a large expectation of progress in regards to freedom of expression And many netizens were significantly looking forward to an era of increased commitment towards UPR recommendations unfortunately due to the political climate that has been experienced since as well as instabilities of a coalition party as well as the sudden changes of three prime ministers and change in government administration since 2018 along with the covid-19 pandemic there has been a significant delay in this (Nor, 2023). The research states that article 10(1) of Malaysia's Federal Constitution gives the guarantee that every citizen has the right to freedom of speech and expression as well as the right to assemble peacefully and the right to form associations. This article argues that the lack of freedom of expression in speech is not only a human rights violation but also creates major setbacks for the betterment of Malaysia as a nation (Nor, 2023).

However, As much as netizens in the general public are looking forward and expecting a future in which freedom of speech expression is largely more accepted it is also imperative to further understand the connection between freedom of speech and the spread of misinformation and manipulation in a feature on the BMJ by Claire Wardle titled “Too little too late: Social media companies failure to tackle vaccine misinformation poses a real threat” (Wardle, 2021). They highlight the lack of regulatory practices put in place on social media platforms during the time of the covid-19 pandemic where due to this much false information and fake news run rampant online generating a general fear in the public as well as distrust not

only in certain governments but also in the field of Medicine Covid-19 was not the only case of a social issue that was mishandled due to false information on social media platforms other social information such as climate change as highlighted by Kathy m and their article which states that policymakers Scholars and practitioners are all calling for a more in-depth understanding on the misinformation of climate change debate.

When it comes to democratic elections itself, a review titled “Platform Values and Democratic Elections: How can the Law Regulate Digital Disinformation” (Marsden, 2020) they examine how governments can and should be able to regulate the values of social media companies so that they would regulate the spread of disinformation on their own platforms In which they suggested the use of AI and machine learning to Target and scrape content as it is being published online however before this comes to fruition there still is a battle to end fake news, particularly in a study titled, “The battle to end fake news: A qualitative content analysis of *Facebook* announcements on how it combats disinformation” (Iosifidis, 2019) Published on the International Communication Gazette, that a states that government bodies should put a larger emphasis on private organizations handling social media to take more responsibility and to apply self-regulating mechanisms in place that can put a stop to disinformation.

Based on all this information it's clear that regardless of the amount of effort put into my company's new sites and individuals who choose to share their opinions and thoughts online the spread of misinformation is still very rampant on social media as there isn't a single self-regulating body and or mechanism that can track misinformation across the World Wide Web therefore when understanding pre electoral propaganda as a whole it's important to note that it can often time play in the aspect that the propaganda itself is spreading misinformation either about the general story that takes place or about other candidates.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

#### **3.1 Method**

This research will be conducted using a quantitative approach, specifically in the form of questionnaire distribution to the sample selected (18-20-year-old Selangor first-time voters). Due to the parameters of the research exploring multiple mediating factors to validate the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, a significant sample size is required to fulfill the needs of the overall study. Online questionnaires with the use of non-probability purposive sampling will be distributed to the target sample as it is preferred. The questionnaires will cover demographical data, party affiliations, Likert scale questions as well and open-ended questions to understand the specificities of any probable correlation. Due to the multicultural environment of the respondent demographic, the questionnaires will be distributed in a multilingual format, where respondents can choose to answer in either English, Bahasa Melayu, or Chinese. However, all the data and analysis will be completed using their English counterparts (translated). The questionnaires will be distributed per convenience sampling methods as they will be distributed through an online survey generation platform – Microsoft Forms. By doing so, the researcher will not be restricted to the size and the scope of the study sample proposed.

### **3.2 Loale**

Selangor is one of the 13 states in Malaysia and is considered to be the most populous state in the country - The state of Selangor plays a crucial role in both the Malaysian economy and cultural landscape. The state has a diverse multi-ethnic and multi-religious population including the Malays, Chinese, and Indians as well as various indigenous groups. Selangor is home to numerous universities, colleges, and educational institutions, the state places a strong emphasis on education and is known for its quality of schools and universities. Selangor also boasts a large number of registered first-time voters aged 18-20 years old - approximately 273,703 registered voters within that age demographic (The Star, 2022). Due to Selangor's position as a rapidly growing and urbanizing state, accessibility to technology and the Internet has not just become readily available but rather has become a necessity for those residing in the state. This further solidifies the selection of Selangor as the primary state for respondents, as this study largely focuses on the use of information gathered from social media platforms during the electoral period of GE15.

### **3.3 Respondents**

The respondents of this study are 18-20-year-old first-time voters who reside in Selangor (as their registered voting state) during the 15th Malaysian General Elections (GE15). The selection of this demographic is due to the fact that GE15 was the first electoral campaign and voting period in which the voting age was significantly lowered from 21 years old to 18 years old. Selangor is known for its diverse population from different ethnic, educational, and socio-economic backgrounds. The range for these individual factors is wide due to the size of Selangor itself, however, this diversity plays a role in their social media consumption habits

and in turn their perceptiveness to pre-electoral propaganda. 18-20-year-olds are some of the most active demographics to be using social media, as overall, this targeted population takes up almost a fourth of the whole population's social media usage, approximately 28.6% (Howe, 2023).

The respondent demographic has also been selected due to the social characteristics of individuals growing up in the digital age - as they are expected to be well-versed in technology, and social media, and having online platforms play a significant part of their social and personal lives. Because of the diverse nature of Selangor, the respondent demographic is more likely to have friends and acquaintances from different cultural backgrounds, as well as those with a strong sense of civic engagement. Understanding the thought process and voting behavior of this group of individuals is detrimental to the study as we will be able to observe upcoming trends in the political sphere in which more and more electoral campaigns utilize the use of social media to target specifically young voters. Understanding the boundaries is crucial to maintaining a level of professionalism and public openness.

### 3.4 Instrument

The instrument used is online surveys conducted through Microsoft Forms. The questionnaire itself (Refer to Appendix 1) has been separated into five sections, in which the first section consists of demographical and psychographic questions and the last section a general open-ended question. The remaining three sections focus on subtopics used to answer the research questions as originally stated, which are: communication strategy, message framing and delivery as well as social influence. The separation of the subtopics into sections allows the respondents to focus on each topic at hand and reduces chances of confusion.

#### 3.4.1 Constructs and Source

The constructs and scales were adapted from prior research measuring communication strategy(), message framing and delivery() as well as social influence(). Each itemized construct is measured using a 5-point Likert scale with values of 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5). each individual question has been modified based on where it has been adapted from to allow the questions to match the research questions and objectives of This research in particular.

Construct	Item	Adapted from	No. of Items
Communication Strategy	CS1	(Salman <i>et al.</i> , 2018)	5
	CS2	(Salman <i>et al.</i> , 2018)	
	CS3	(Salman <i>et al.</i> , 2018)	
	CS4	(Salman <i>et al.</i> , 2018)	

	CS5	(Salman et al., 2018)	
Message Framing and Delivery	MFD1	(Salman et al., 2018)	5
	MFD2	(Salman et al., 2018)	
	MFD3	(Salman et al., 2018)	
	MFD4	(Salman et al., 2018)	
	MFD5	(Salman et al., 2018)	
Social Influence	SI1	(Hassim et al., 2020)	5
	SI2	(Hassim et al., 2020)	
	SI3	(Hassim et al., 2020)	
	SI4	(Hassim et al., 2020)	
	SI5	(Hassim et al., 2020)	

### 3.5 Data Gathering Procedures

For this study, the data gathering procedures would involve a systematic approach to collect any necessarily relevant data that is representative of the respondent demographic. The steps are as follows:

1. **Sampling:** To determine the target demographic and define the overall population criteria.
2. **Questionnaire Development:** To develop a structured questionnaire designed to answer the research questions which include validated scales and demographic questions for data stratification.

3. **Data Collection:** To distribute the final questionnaire to the selected respondents matching the criteria, ensuring that the process adheres to ethical guidelines which maintain the anonymity and confidentiality of respondents.
4. **Data cleaning and preparation:** To clean and organize the collected data, including, identifying missing values or inconsistencies. Translating non-English responses and re-organizing responses to prepare for statistical analysis.
5. **Statistical analysis (SPSS):** To utilize appropriate statistical methods - ANOVA test to assess and measure the effectiveness of pre-electoral propaganda through social media using relevant statistical techniques.
6. **Interpretation and Reporting:** Interpret the findings, and highlight important key insights, summarizing these findings in tables and statistical significance levels.

### **3.6 Statistical Treatment**

The main portion of the quantitative research utilized inferential statistics to test the hypothesis and draw conclusions about the population based on the sample respondents. The specific statistical method used was selected based on the research objectives as well as the overall nature of the data. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test was conducted to compare the means across multiple groups to determine the significant differences between them - if there are any. ANOVA is used due to the objective of examining the variations in data and understanding if there are any significant differences between multiple groups of people. The SPSS software was used in order to determine the P-value, and the significance level is measured if the P-value is less than 0.05.

As the research also included some open-ended questions, the Miles and Huberman's 1944 framework for data analysis (Ean, 2010, 40) was used in order to analyze the content of

the responses. The framework follows a four-step data analysis process, which includes: manually summarizing and categorizing raw data into codes and themes, developing patterns from codes and themes, making comparisons between responses, and the direct interpretation of the data according to the research question. This framework will be used in tandem with keyword and sentiment analysis.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation of Data.**

#### **4.0 Overview**

This chapter will discuss the core results of the study. We present and analyze findings that are significant surrounding the impact of social media as a communication strategy on the voting decisions of 18-20-year-old Selangor first-time voters. The content of this chapter will highlight the results of the relevant questionnaire input and inferential statistic analysis which falls in line with the overall objectives of the research. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed through online platforms specifically targeting 18-20-year-old first-time voters in Selangor (during the time of GE-15).

#### **4.1 Findings**

This section of the chapter will discuss the results and findings gathered from the execution of the research questionnaires and include an overall insight to the data that has been gathered.

##### **4.1.1 Demographics and Psychographics**

The research findings have explored multiple demographic and psychographic factors that are significant in understanding the impact of social media as a communication strategy on the voting decisions of 18-20-year-old Selangor first-time voters. The first main aspect the research focuses on is the demographical data, in which a majority of the respondents (64%) were 20 years old. With the remaining 36% being part of the 18-19 year old age group (*Refer to Appendix B*). The data indicated that there were more male respondents compared to female respondents (*Refer to Appendix C*). In terms of educational background, a large majority of participants selected ‘Bachelor’s Degree’ as the highest level of education (*Refer to Appendix*

*E)*, in which 72.4% of the respondents who selected ‘Bachelor’s Degree’ as their highest level of education reported to have a party affiliation prior to the election campaign. When looking at the amount of time the respondents spend engaging on social media, the majority of respondents (64%) reported spending between 3-5 hours on social media on a daily basis (*Refer to Appendix H*) and used Instagram as the primary platform to gather information (*Refer to Appendix I*). Geographically, a majority of the respondents stated that their primary voting area is the district of Petaling (*Refer to Appendix D*). It can also be seen through the results that a majority of the Petaling district voting respondents stated that they voted for Pakatan Harapan, however only 84% of these respondents state that they had a political party affiliation prior to the timeline of the election campaigns, whereas the remaining 16% did not have a political party affiliation prior to the election campaigns. Regarding political party affiliations as a whole a majority of respondents (76%) have a political party affiliation prior to the election campaigns (*Refer to Appendix F*) - and this is regardless if this affiliation has resulted in a choice to vote or not.

In terms of specific voting decisions, the survey findings have highlighted the diverse political preferences of our respondents. Pakatan Harapan was the prominent choice among respondents with a majority of 84 individuals expressing their preference for this political coalition. Another significant support was for Perikatan Nasional, with 51 respondents indicating their preference for this party. Barisan Nasional, although not as dominant as the first two, was still preferred by 22 respondents. Pejuang and Bebas had the preference of 21 respondents and 19 respondents respectively. And importantly, 10 respondents indicated that they did not vote, which signifies a group of individuals who have opted for non-participation in the electoral process (*Refer to Appendix G*).

#### **4.1.2 Communication Strategy**

To address the first research question ‘is there a significant difference in the influence of communication strategy across voting decisions?’, the hypothesis formulated suggested that there is a significant difference in influence across various voting decisions. This hypothesis was supported by the data received from the questionnaires, where it was found that Pakatan Harapan (PH) and Perikatan Nasional (PN) had the highest average scores, with Pakatan Harapan (PH) averaging 15.86904762 and Perikatan Nasional (PN) averaging 16.81481481. An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test (*Refer to Appendix J*) revealed a remarkably low p-value of 3.11364E-06, indicating statistical significance. This low p-value suggests that there is a difference in the influence of communication strategy across voting decisions, particularly for Pakatan Harapan (PH) and Perikatan Nasional (PN) voters

#### **4.1.3 Message Framing**

In exploring the second research question ‘Is there a significant difference in the influence of message framing of political parties across voting decisions?’ the hypothesis formulated suggested that there is a significant difference in the influence of message framing across various voting decisions. It was observed that Pakatan Harapan (PH), Perikatan Nasional (PN), and Pejuang had the highest average scores, with Pakatan Harapan (PH) having an average of 23.29761905, Perikatan Nasional averaging 25.12962963 and Pejuang averaging at 25.52631579. It is important to note that based on the respondents’ questionnaire responses, Pejuang garnered significantly fewer votes, with 21 respondents in contrast to the 84 respondents voting for Pakatan Harapan and 51 for Perikatan Nasional. An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test (*Refer to Appendix K*) yielded a low p-value of 2.6524E-06, which

provides statistically significant evidence to support the hypothesis, indicating that there is a significant difference in the influence of message framing across voting decisions.

#### **4.1.4 Social Influence**

To explore the final research question 'Is there a significant difference in the influence of social influence across voting decisions' in which the hypothesis generated states that there is a significant difference in the influence of social influence across voting decisions. The data analysis revealed once again that Pakatan Harapan (PH), Perikatan Nasional (PN), and Pejuang displayed the highest average scores, with Pakatan Harapan having an average of 19.30952381, Perikatan Nasional having an average of 21.2962963, and Pejuang having an average of 21.57894737. An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test (*Refer to Appendix L*) yielded a low p-value of 1.22161E-08. This low p-value provides statistically significant evidence to support the hypothesis, confirming that there is a significant difference in the influence of message framing across voting decisions.

#### **4.1.5 Social Media Coverage Effects**

This section aims to answer the fourth and final research question of 'How has different coverage of GE15 on social media affected voting decisions?'. This section of the research questionnaire is conducted through a more qualitative approach, utilizing the use of open-ended questions. Using keyword analysis, tabulating the frequency of set keywords as well as sentiment analysis. The first question within the questionnaire that is set to answer the research question is 'Why have you decided to vote/not vote during GE15?' (*Refer to appendix 13.0*) the most used keywords and their frequency percentages by respondents are 'Future' (6.7%), 'Civic

'Duty' (3.1%), 'Change' (2.9%), 'Responsibility' (2.9%) and 'Democracy' (2.5%). Whereas the next question 'How did seeing different coverages of GE15 through social media affect your voting decision?' (*Refer to Appendix M*) the most common sentiments and their frequencies are: 'Informed about political parties' (1.75%), 'Comparing opposing ideas and beliefs' (1.75%), 'Verifying candidate suitability' (1.46%), 'Understanding political leaders' (1.46%) and 'discussions and debates on social media' (1.17%). Their contextual significance will be elaborated further in the next section of this chapter.

## 4.2 Discussion

The findings have provided an understanding of the relationship between social media and communication strategy, message framing as well and social influence in shaping the voting decisions of 18-20-year-old first-time voters in Selangor. These findings have helped answer the four key research questions which shall be elaborated further below:

*RQ1: Is there a significant difference in the influence of communication strategy across voting decisions?*

The analysis has determined that the communication strategies that have been employed by political parties during the campaigning period had an impact on voting decisions. Perikatan Nasional (PN) has had a stronger online presence, this was potentially due to their effective strategy of adapting to the younger generation's digital consumption habits by pushing their campaigns and messaging onto platforms such as TikTok, specifically to garner the reach that the platform can give for young voters. Their approach has showcased the adaptability of political parties in reaching out to specific targeted groups of individuals through their use of

media expansion in their communication strategy. To further add to this, Perikatan Nasional has notably launched campaigns that were targeted for youth through the TikTok platform, and it is now clear to see the effectiveness of such campaigns. It is vital to understand and recognize the influence that these strategies have in shaping voting behaviour - particularly for the first-time voters who use social media to gather information.

*RQ 2: Is there a significant difference in the influence of message framing of political parties across voting decisions?*

To answer the second research question and determine the difference in message framing of communication strategy across voting decisions, it can be noted that those who are aligned with Pakatan Harapan had their party affiliation solidified before the election campaign, thus allowing them to have a larger cognitive bias when it came to their voting decision. This observation falls in line with the Agenda Setting Theory, which suggests that media and communication strategies involved, play a crucial role in influencing the issues that are subconsciously existing in the minds of young voters. Pakatan Harapan has taken a much longer route in terms of timeline in order to win the public's trust and sway netizens' opinions towards them. They have made multiple statements prior to the election campaign and maintained professionalism during times of questioning or crisis. In this case, it can be said that Pakatan Harapan's pre-existing positive appeal that they carried on during the campaigning and election period has contributed to the voting decisions of young voters who believe in the ideologies that the party stands by.

*RQ 3: Is there a significant difference in the influence of social influence across voting decisions?*

The findings have highlighted for the second research question of the role of social influence in shaping voting decisions among first-time voters that though there are instances in which social influence can be a pushing factor - such as in the case of Pakatan Harapan (PH) and Perikatan Nasional (PN) voters. This indicates that pre-existing communal biases exist within communities, particularly in Selangor, and young voters who are not very well-versed and informed about the political sphere could be subjected to pressure from their peers or generally more knowledgeable individuals to vote for parties that they might not otherwise have voted for. The research has highlighted that respondents feel the pressure of their civic duty and right to vote and would like to exercise that right, however, it also highlights that there is still a disconnect between how much 18-20-year-old first-time voters know and what they have been told to do.

Since GE15 is the first instance in which the voting age has been lowered significantly, it can be assumed that there is an expectation for these individuals to follow what has been shown to them, instead of forming their own biases. Though most respondents do believe that they should vote for the party they believe in, it begs the question of ‘where did this belief come from?’. There is also an indication that emerging political entities such as Pejuang are able to wield a considerable amount of influence which is in contrast to Perikatan Nasional in which loyalty to a previous Prime Minister and social influence play a much more substantial role. These findings validate the Propaganda Model as it suggests that various political actors, including newer parties, are able to leverage the media to shape public opinion.

*RQ4: How has different coverage of GE15 on social media affected voting decisions?*

The findings of this study through keyword and sentiment analysis have showcased that a large number of 18-20-year-old Selangor first-time voters are able to understand the importance of voting as well as their right to exercise their civic duty. It has also highlighted that this demographic primarily uses social media during the election period to gather more information and discuss with their peers to further understand the best candidate to lead the nation. This has brought forth an important point in which social media is an independent entity and although there are pages and online news sites that are strictly biased towards a particular candidate, media literacy is an important factor for these young voters to understand the candidates they are voting for and not all victim to fake news.

It is also important to note that the findings also highlight the key factors as to why certain individuals chose not to vote, in which they were not able to find enough information to feel well-informed to put in their vote, as well as they did not feel that their vote would be significant in the grand scheme of a nationwide election. Social media does showcase a large number of supporters for different parties, so the overwhelming sensation of feeling like a vote doesn't count should be a factor that can be elaborated on for further research.

Overall, the research results emphasize the interplay between social media and the communication strategies, message framing, and social influence that leads to an eventual voting decision. These findings highlight the importance of understanding the complex factors that contribute to political preferences, as well as provide insights for political parties and strategists who are aiming to engage with this particular demographic.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Summary of Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendation**

#### **5.0 Overview**

This chapter will highlight the summary of key findings along with conclusions as well as recommendations for future research that will further benefit the Malaysian political sphere and assist in creating a viable strategy that could be used to Target 18 to 20-year-old first-time voters or individuals who match the demographic that has been determined in this research.

#### **5.1 Summary of Key Findings**

The main purpose of this study is to determine the effectiveness of pre-electoral messaging specifically targeting first-time voters within the state of Selangor during the 15th general elections in Malaysia particularly using the use of social media. The main objectives of investigating the influence of communication strategy in the relationship between social media exposure to pre-elect or propaganda on voting decisions the role of message framing between political parties through social media exposure the role of social influence in the relationship between social media exposure as well as identifying the different relations and effects to seeing GE 15 coverage to social media. Due to the 15th general elections being the first general election in Malaysia to have lowered down the voting age from 21 to 18 understanding the demographic of 18 to 20 years old is crucial for elections moving forward this demographic is largely unexplored specifically within the context of Malaysian politics. This research aims to understand the perspectives of these first-time young voters as well as to further understand the types of influences that can affect their voting decision, particularly in understanding

communication strategy message Framing and delivery social influence as well as how social media itself plays a role in their voting decisions. Through the use of an ANOVA test that was utilized to answer the research questions which was further elaborated in the previous chapter, it is predetermined that there is a significant difference in the influence of communication strategy across voting decisions, particularly for PN and pH voters in which their Anova test had a P value of 3.11364e-06 whereas it was also determined that there is a significant difference in the influence of message framing across voting decisions with the Anova test resulting in a p-value of 2.6524e-06 as well as a significant difference in the social influence across voting decisions again with the p-value of 1.22161e-08. to use of keyword and frequency testing as well as sentiment testing it is predetermined that respondents understand their responsibility as Malaysian citizens and use social media to be more informed of general election proceedings as well as updates it is noted that a large frequency of respondents do believe that they need to vote in order to preserve the future of Malaysia as well as it is their civic duty and uses social media to be informed about political parties as well as to compare verify and understand candidates and political leaders which includes having discussions and debates on social media.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

To conclude This research it can be noted that it is important to inform individuals in charge of strategic communication of political parties of the impact of social media on the Democratic process as well as the need for responsible political communication practices especially in a digital age with the use of social media. this is largely due to the ability of social media to democratize information distribution as well as transform political campaign strategies by allowing a direct communication with the voters as well as a much wider audience reach. social

media's ability to create any situation into a viral moment as well as the ability to spread information with a click of a button can become a very powerful tool in the use of political Communications. in this digital age to use social media will only continue to grow and Rise as more and more individuals have access to not only smartphones and the internet as well. social media has become a pivotal tool that Society uses in order to communicate with one another and share opinions not only about political stances but also about the social stands of the country and the nation. individuals in charge of managing social media or managing political campaigns should be aware of what the public is generally stating on social media about the state of the nation as well as the state of the political candidates. Both the efficiency and the ethicality of using social media as a political tool has to be further explored in detail as there has to be a level of protection for youth and the general public to avoid cognitive dissonance and increase their media literacy to further understand and differentiate between sensationalize news or posts as comparison to information that is unbiased and factual. through this research it can be concluded that there is a significant difference in communication strategy message framing as well as social influence therefore it would also be important to know that these three factors could play a large role in tandem with social media and should be positioned in that way. and because social media has become a transformative tool that is used to gather and Garner information about not only the political stance of a Nation but also about candidates in general information should be more readily available on social media to access for the General Public and this information should not only come from The Stance of each individual candidate or from the political parties that are affiliated with the elections it should also come from Independent Media and new sites or alternative please citizen journalists who are able to inform the general public not only about procedure but also about the history and or factual based evidence of The candidates themselves. overall social media is a rapidly growing powerful tool that can be used to spread information and to create a campaign that will ultimately lead to a

voting decision however we cannot neglect that there are external factors that also play a role in tandem with social media that should be further explored.

### **5.3 Recommendation**

The first recommendation that is proposed is to perform larger and more in-depth research with comparative analysis including moderating and mediating factors as well as comparing voting decisions between different districts of slang or as this research focuses on slang or as a whole rather than each individual District as and their own status as a district in terms of socioeconomic power it would be important for future research to be more in-depth and comparing each district with one another to see if there are any specific socio-economic or individual influencing factors that can play a role in the voting decisions that goes in tandem with social media.

The second recommendation is to examine the research to a larger scope of study which includes content analysis for social media posting during election campaigns due to this research being largely focused on a quantitative measure there was little to no in-depth analysis in terms of the qualitative aspects of individual voters understanding the why an individual would vote is also important in order to strategize the what should we do to get these individuals to vote. content analysis of different types of social media posts on different social media channels but also further allows researchers to understand if there is a specific outline that can be used as a reference for those within the political Communications sphere to use in order to understand how to ethically and effectively run campaigns on social media.

The last future recommendation would be to perform the research on a scale that is beyond the scope of only Malaysia itself as there are neighboring countries such as Indonesia which already had a lowered voting age of 17 since its first Inception looking at things from a

cross-cultural analysis perspective would help further understand how a nation such as their neighboring ones are able to provide information for young voters and how they have utilized that information sharing platform and how it can be used for future election campaigns. As previously mentioned the study of the effectiveness of pre-electoral messaging specifically targeting first-time voters overall remains a largely unexplored bracket (Leong, 2015), This would be an opportunity to further explore and analyze effective pre-electoral messaging.

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## **Appendix**

### **Appendix A. Questionnaire Design**

#### **Appendix A.1 English Version**

Hello!

Thank you for participating in this study. Through this survey, we are aiming to explore 'The Impact of Social Media as a Communication Strategy on Voting Decisions of first-time voters in Selangor.' We would like to assure you that all responses you provide will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. Your individual answers will not be disclosed or attributed to you personally in any way. The survey data will be aggregated and analyzed as a whole to draw conclusions and insights. Participation in this survey is entirely voluntary. You have the right to skip any question you do not wish to answer or withdraw from the survey at any time without providing a reason.

Please ensure that you provide accurate and honest responses to the best of your ability. Should you have any concerns or questions regarding the survey or the confidentiality of your information, please contact me at 0127436@student.uow.edu.my

Thank you for your participation

Construct	Item	Type	Question	Choice
General Questions	GC1	MC	Age (During the voting period of GE15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 18</li> <li>- 19</li> <li>- 20</li> </ul>
	GC2	MC	Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Male</li> <li>- Female</li> </ul>
	GC3	MC	Voting District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ampang Jaya</li> <li>- Gombak</li> <li>- Hulu Langat</li> <li>- Hulu Selangor</li> <li>- Kajang</li> <li>- Klang</li> <li>- Kuala Langat</li> <li>- Petaling</li> <li>- Sabak Bernam</li> <li>- Sepang</li> </ul>
	GC4	MC	Highest Education Level Achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Highschool / SPM</li> <li>- A-Levels / Diploma / Bachelor's Degree</li> </ul>

	GC5	OE	Current Occupation (If none then input N/A)	
	GC6	MC	Do you have a preferred political party affiliation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Yes</li> <li>- No</li> </ul>
	GC7	MC	Which political party did you vote for during GE15?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Barisan Nasional (UMNO, MCA, MIC, etc.)</li> <li>- Pakatan Harapan (PKR, DAP, Amanah, UPKO)</li> <li>- Perikatan Nasional (PAS, Bersatu, Gerakan)</li> <li>- Pejuang</li> <li>- Bebas</li> <li>- I did not vote</li> <li>- Other</li> </ul>

	GC8	OE	Why have you decided to vote/not vote during GE15?	
	GC9	MC	How much time do you spend on social media on a daily basis?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Less than 1 Hour</li> <li>- 1-3 Hours</li> <li>- 3-5 Hours</li> <li>- More than 5 Hours</li> </ul>
	GC10	MC	Select the social media platforms you use on a daily basis to gather information on political issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Instagram</li> <li>- Facebook</li> <li>- WhatsApp</li> <li>- Twitter</li> <li>- Tiktok</li> <li>- Telegram</li> <li>- WeChat</li> <li>- Line</li> <li>- Other</li> </ul>
Communication Strategy	CS1	LI	I used social media as a means to gather information during GE15	Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree
	CS2	LI	I tend to trust information that comes directly from the	Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral,

			official pages of political parties I am affiliated with.	Agree, Strongly Agree
	CS3	LI	I was made aware of a political party's agenda for GE15 through social media channels.	Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree
	CS4	LI	I shared information I found on social media regarding GE15 to my family and friends.	Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree
	CS5	LI	I am more inclined to trust information that comes from online equivalents of reputable news pages (e.g. @NSTOnline, @themalaymail, etc.)	Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree
Message Framing and Delivery	MFD1	LI	I was more inclined to get information regarding GE15 from platforms that let me engage with other voters.	Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree
	MFD2	LI	I followed the same accounts/pages as my friends	Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral,

			and family to get information on GE15..	Agree, Strongly Agree
MFD3	LI		I actively follow GE15 news on social media in comparison to other platforms.	Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree
MFD4	LI		I follow official (verified) social media accounts of political parties that I am affiliated with.	Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree
MFD5	LI		I find politicians to be more authentic on their official (verified) social media channels in comparison to how they portray themselves in traditional news outlets	Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree
Social Influence	SI1	LI	My political beliefs do not change regardless of what is shown on social media.	Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree

	SI2	LI	I prefer to have the same political affiliations as my friends and family..	Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree
	SI3	LI	I am in a community where I share political party affiliations with my peers.	Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree
	SI4	LI	My political beliefs and the party I vote for do not have to have the same values.	Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree
	SI5	LI	I would vote for the party I believe would make the most significant change regardless of what my community believes in	Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree
Direct Effect	DE1	OE	How did seeing different coverages of GE15 through social media affect your voting decision?	

## **Appendix A.2 Bahasa Melayu Version**

Hello!

Terima kasih kerana mengambil bahagian dalam kajian ini. Melalui tinjauan ini kami menasarkan untuk meneroka 'Kesan Media Sosial Sebagai Strategi Komunikasi Terhadap Keputusan Pengundian pengundi kali pertama di Selangor.' Kami ingin memberi jaminan kepada anda bahawa semua jawapan yang anda berikan akan dirahsiakan dan tanpa nama. Jawapan individu anda tidak akan didedahkan atau dikaitkan dengan anda secara peribadi dalam apa jua cara. Data tinjauan akan diagregatkan dan dianalisis secara keseluruhan untuk membuat kesimpulan dan pandangan. Penyertaan dalam tinjauan ini adalah secara sukarela sepenuhnya. Anda mempunyai hak untuk melangkau sebarang soalan yang anda tidak mahu jawab atau menarik diri daripada tinjauan pada bila-bila masa tanpa memberikan sebab.

Sila pastikan anda memberikan respons yang tepat dan jujur mengikut kemampuan anda. Sekiranya anda mempunyai sebarang kemusykilan atau soalan mengenai tinjauan atau kerahsiaan maklumat anda, sila hubungi saya di 0127436@student.uow.edu.my

Terima kasih atas penyertaan anda

Construct	Item	Type	Question	Choice
Bahagian 1 : Soalan Umum	GC1	MC	Umur (Semasa tempoh mengundi PRU15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 18</li> <li>- 19</li> <li>- 20</li> </ul>
	GC2	MC	Jantina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lelaki</li> <li>- Perempuan</li> </ul>
	GC3	MC	Daerah Mengundi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ampang Jaya</li> <li>- Gombak</li> <li>- Hulu Langat</li> <li>- Hulu Selangor</li> <li>- Kajang</li> <li>- Klang</li> <li>- Kuala Langat</li> <li>- Petaling</li> <li>- Sabak Bernam</li> <li>- Sepang</li> </ul>
	GC4	MC	Tahap Pendidikan Tertinggi Dicapai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sekolah menengah/SPM</li> <li>- A-Levels / Diploma / Foundation</li> <li>- atau setaraf</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ijazah Sarjana Muda</li> </ul>
GC5	OE	Pekerjaan Semasa (Jika tiada maka masukkan N/A)	
GC6	MC	Adakah anda mempunyai gabungan parti politik pilihan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Iya</li> <li>- Tidak</li> </ul>
GC7	MC	Parti politik manakah yang anda undi semasa PRU15?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Barisan Nasional (UMNO, MCA, MIC, etc.)</li> <li>- Pakatan Harapan (PKR, DAP, Amanah, UPKO)</li> <li>- Perikatan Nasional (PAS, Bersatu, Gerakan)</li> <li>- Pejuang</li> <li>- Bebas</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Saya tidak mengundi</li> <li>- Lain Lain</li> </ul>
GC8	OE	Mengapa anda membuat keputusan untuk mengundi/tidak mengundi semasa PRU15?	
GC9	MC	Berapa banyak masa yang anda gunakan di media sosial setiap hari?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tak sampai 1 jam</li> <li>- 1-3 jam</li> <li>- 3-5 jam</li> <li>- Lebih daripada 5 jam</li> </ul>
GC10	MC	Pilih platform media sosial yang anda gunakan setiap hari untuk mengumpulkan maklumat mengenai isu politik.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Instagram</li> <li>- Facebook</li> <li>- WhatsApp</li> <li>- Twitter</li> <li>- Tiktok</li> <li>- Telegram</li> <li>- WeChat</li> <li>- Line</li> <li>- Lain Lain</li> </ul>

Bahagian 2 - Meneroka Strategi Komunikasi	CS1	LI	Saya menggunakan media sosial sebagai wadah untuk mengumpul maklumat semasa PRU15	Sangat Tidak Setuju, Tidak Setuju, Neutral, Setuju, Sangat Setuju
	CS2	LI	Saya cenderung untuk mempercayai maklumat yang datang terus dari halaman rasmi parti politik yang saya sertai.	Sangat Tidak Setuju, Tidak Setuju, Neutral, Setuju, Sangat Setuju
	CS3	LI	Saya dimaklumkan tentang agenda sebuah parti politik untuk PRU15 melalui saluran media sosial.	Sangat Tidak Setuju, Tidak Setuju, Neutral, Setuju, Sangat Setuju
	CS4	LI	Saya berkongsi maklumat yang saya temui di media sosial berkaitan PRU15 kepada keluarga dan rakan-rakan saya.	Sangat Tidak Setuju, Tidak Setuju, Neutral, Setuju, Sangat Setuju
	CS5	LI	Saya lebih cenderung untuk mempercayai maklumat yang datang daripada halaman berita yang bereputasi dalam	Sangat Tidak Setuju, Tidak Setuju, Neutral, Setuju, Sangat Setuju

			talian (cth. @NSTOnline, @themalaymail, dsb.)	
Bahagian 3 - Meneroka Pembingkaian dan Penyampaian Mesej	MFD1	LI	Saya lebih cenderung untuk mendapatkan maklumat mengenai PRU15 daripada platform yang membolehkan saya berinteraksi dengan pengundi lain.	Sangat Tidak Setuju, Tidak Setuju, Neutral, Setuju, Sangat Setuju
	MFD2	LI	Saya mengikuti akaun/halaman yang sama seperti rakan dan keluarga saya untuk mendapatkan maklumat tentang PRU15.	Sangat Tidak Setuju, Tidak Setuju, Neutral, Setuju, Sangat Setuju
	MFD3	LI	Saya aktif mengikuti berita PRU15 di media sosial berbanding platform lain.	Sangat Tidak Setuju, Tidak Setuju, Neutral, Setuju, Sangat Setuju
	MFD4	LI	Saya mengikuti akaun media sosial rasmi (yang disahkan) parti politik yang bergabung dengan saya.	Sangat Tidak Setuju, Tidak Setuju, Neutral, Setuju, Sangat Setuju
	MFD5	LI	Saya mendapati ahli politik lebih dipercayai pada saluran	Sangat Tidak Setuju, Tidak Setuju, Neutral,

			media sosial rasmi (yang disahkan) mereka berbanding dengan cara mereka menggambarkan diri mereka dalam saluran berita tradisional.	Setuju, Sangat Setuju
Bahagian 4 - Meneroka Pengaruh Sosial	SI1	LI	Pegangan politik saya tidak berubah tanpa mengira apa yang dipaparkan di media sosial.	Sangat Tidak Setuju, Tidak Setuju, Neutral, Setuju, Sangat Setuju
	SI2	LI	Saya lebih suka mempunyai fahaman politik yang sama seperti rakan dan keluarga saya.	Sangat Tidak Setuju, Tidak Setuju, Neutral, Setuju, Sangat Setuju
	SI3	LI	Saya berada dalam komuniti di mana saya berkongsi gabungan parti politik dengan rakan sebaya saya.	Sangat Tidak Setuju, Tidak Setuju, Neutral, Setuju, Sangat Setuju
	SI4	LI	Pegangan politik saya dan parti yang saya undi tidak semestinya mempunyai nilai yang sama.	Sangat Tidak Setuju, Tidak Setuju, Neutral, Setuju, Sangat Setuju

	SI5	LI	Saya akan mengundi parti yang saya percaya akan membuat perubahan yang paling ketara tanpa mengira apa yang komuniti saya percayai.	Sangat Tidak Setuju, Tidak Setuju, Neutral, Setuju, Sangat Setuju
Bahagian 5 - Pendapat Penutup	DE1	OE	Bagaimanakah melihat liputan berbeza PRU15 melalui media sosial mempengaruhi keputusan pengundian anda?	

### **Appendix A.3 Chinese Version**

你好！

感谢您参与这项研究。 通过这项调查，我们的目的是探讨“社交媒体作为沟通策略对

雪兰莪州首次选民投票决策的影响”。 我们向您保证，您提供的所有回复都将受到严

格保密和匿名。 您的个人答案不会以任何方式被披露或归因于您个人。 调查数据将作

为一个整体进行汇总和分析，以得出结论和见解。 参与本次调查完全是自愿的。 您有

权随时跳过任何您不想回答的问题或退出调查，无需提供理由。

请确保您尽最大努力提供准确和诚实的答复。 如果您对调查或您的信息保密有任何疑

虑或疑问，请通过 [0127436@student.uow.edu.my](mailto:0127436@student.uow.edu.my) 与我联系

感谢您的参与

Construct	Item	Type	Question	Choice
第 1 部分：一般 问题	GC1	MC	年龄 (GE15投票期间)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 18</li> <li>- 19</li> <li>- 20</li> </ul>
	GC2	MC	性别	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 男性</li> <li>- 女性</li> </ul>
	GC3	MC	投票区	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ampang Jaya</li> <li>- Gombak</li> <li>- Hulu Langat</li> <li>- Hulu Selangor</li> <li>- Kajang</li> <li>- Klang</li> <li>- Kuala Langat</li> <li>- Petaling</li> <li>- Sabak Bernam</li> <li>- Sepang</li> </ul>
	GC4	MC	达到的最高教育水平	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>高中 / SPM</li> <li>- A-Levels /</li> <li>Diploma</li> <li>- 学士学位</li> </ul>
	GC5	OE	当前职业 (如果没有则输入 N/A )	

	GC6	MC	您有首选的政党背景/联系吗？	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 有</li> <li>- 没有</li> </ul>
	GC7	MC	您在 GE15 届大选期间投票给哪个政党？	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Barisan Nasional (UMNO, MCA, MIC, etc.)</li> <li>- Pakatan Harapan (PKR, DAP, Amanah, UPKO)</li> <li>- Perikatan Nasional (PAS, Bersatu, Gerakan)</li> <li>- Pejuang</li> <li>- Bebas</li> <li>- 我没有投票</li> </ul>

	GC8	OE	您为何决定在本次选举期间投票 /不投票？( 您为什么在第 15 届 大选期间投票/不投票 ？)	
	GC9	MC	您每天花多少时间在社交媒体上 ？	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 少过1小时</li> <li>- 1-3小时</li> <li>- 3-5小时</li> <li>- 超过5小时</li> </ul>
	GC10	MC	选择您每天使用的社交媒体平台 来收集有关政治问题的信息。	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Instagram</li> <li>- Facebook</li> <li>- WhatsApp</li> <li>- Twitter</li> <li>- Tiktok</li> <li>- Telegram</li> <li>- WeChat</li> <li>- Line</li> <li>- Other</li> </ul>
第 2 部分 – 探索 传播策略	CS1	LI	我在第 15 届大选期间使用社交 媒体作为收集信息的手段	强烈不同意, 不同意, 中性的, 同意, 非常同 意

	CS2	LI	我倾向于相信直接来自我所属政党官方页面的信息。	强烈不同意, 不同意, 中性的, 同意, 非常同意
	CS3	LI	我通过社交媒体渠道了解某个政党在第 15 届大选中的议程。	强烈不同意, 不同意, 中性的, 同意, 非常同意
	CS4	LI	我曾经向家人和朋友分享了在社交媒体上找到的有关第 15 届大选的信息。	强烈不同意, 不同意, 中性的, 同意, 非常同意
	CS5	LI	我会更倾向于信任来自信誉良好的新闻页面的在线同等信息 (例如@NSTOnline、@themalaymail 等)	强烈不同意, 不同意, 中性的, 同意, 非常同意
第 3 节 – 探索消息框架和传递	MFD1	LI	我更倾向于从让我与其他选民互动的平台上获取有关第 15 届大选的信息。	强烈不同意, 不同意, 中性的, 同意, 非常同意
	MFD2	LI	我和我的朋友和家人一样关注相同的帐户/页面来获取有关 GE15 的信息。	强烈不同意, 不同意, 中性的, 同意, 非常同意

	MFD3	LI	与其他平台相比，我在社交媒体上更积极地收到有关 <b>GE 15</b> 的新闻。	强烈不同意, 不同意, 中性的, 同意, 非常同意
	MFD4	LI	我只关注我所属的官方政党经过验证的社交媒体帐户。	强烈不同意, 不同意, 中性的, 同意, 非常同意
	MFD5	LI	我发现政客在他们的官方 (经过验证的) 社交媒体渠道上比他们在传统新闻媒体上描绘自己的方式更加真实。	强烈不同意, 不同意, 中性的, 同意, 非常同意
第 4 节 – 探索社会影响力	SI1	LI	无论社交媒体上显示什么，我的政治信仰都不会改变。	强烈不同意, 不同意, 中性的, 同意, 非常同意
	SI2	LI	我更喜欢与我的朋友和家人有相同的政治立场。	强烈不同意, 不同意, 中性的, 同意, 非常同意
	SI3	LI	我所在的社区与我的同龄人有共同的政党背景。	强烈不同意, 不同意, 中性的, 同意, 非常同意

	SI4	LI	我的政治信仰和我投票支持的政党不必具有相同的价值观。	强烈不同意, 不同意, 中性的, 同意, 非常同意
	SI5	LI	无论我的社区信仰什么, 我都会投票给我认为能够做出最重大改变的政党。	强烈不同意, 不同意, 中性的, 同意, 非常同意
第 5 节 – 结案意见	DE1	OE	通过社交媒体看到有关第 15 届大选的不同报道对您的投票决定有何影响? (社交媒体上有关第 15 届大选的不同媒体新闻如何影响您的投票决定?)	

## **Appendix B. Age**

Age	Percentage (%)	Frequency
18	7.00%	14
19	29.00%	58
20	64.00%	128

## **Appendix C. Gender**

Gender	Percentage (%)	Frequency
Male	60.5%	121
Female	39.5%	79

## **Appendix D. Voting District**

Voting District	Percentage (%)	Frequency
Ampang Jaya	5.5%	11
Gombak	10.0%	20
Hulu Langat	12.5%	25
Hulu Selangor	20.5%	41
Kajang	4.5%	9
Klang	11.0%	22
Kuala Langat	1.5%	3
Petaling	25.0%	50
Sabak Bernam	3.5%	7
Sepang	6.0%	12

### Appendix E. Highest Education Level Achieved

Highest Education Level Achieved	Percentage (%)	Frequency
Highschool/SPM	4.0%	8
Diploma or Equivalent	23.5%	47
Bachelors Degree	72.0%	144

### Appendix F. Political Party Affiliation

Political Party Affiliation	Percentage (%)	Frequency
Yes	76%	152
No	24%	48

### Appendix G. Voting Decision

Which Political Party did you vote on? (Voting Decision)	Percentage (%)	Frequency
BN	11.0%	22
PH	42.0%	84
PN	25.5%	51
Pejuang	10.5%	21
Bebas	6.0%	12
I did not vote	5.0%	10
Other	0.0%	0

## Appendix H. Time Spent on Social media Daily

How much time do you spend on social media on a daily basis?	Percentage (%)	Frequency
Less than 1 Hour	1.5%	3
1-3 Hours	24.5%	49
3-5 Hours	60.0%	120
More than 5 Hours	14.0%	28

## Appendix I. Social Media Platforms Used

Social Media Platforms Used on a Daily Basis = >1	Percentage (%)	Frequency
Instagram	65%	130
Facebook	62%	124
WhatsApp	56%	112
Twitter	49%	97
Tiktok	32%	64
Telegram	16%	31
WeChat	6%	11
Line	2%	4
Other	2%	3

## Appendix J. RQ1 ANOVA

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
BN	21	327	1,557,142,857	7,857,142,857
BEBAS	12	194	1,616,666,667	8,333,333,333
PH	84	1333	1,586,904,762	4,573,006,311
PJ	19	317	1,668,421,053	1,561,403,509
PN	54	908	1,681,481,481	1,323,549,965
NOT	10	128	12,8	1,017,777,778

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	1,525,325,411	5	3,050,650,821	7,233,072,778	<b>3,11364E-06</b>	2,260,647,462
Within Groups	8,182,224,589	194	4,217,641,541			
Total	970,755	199				

## Appendix K. RQ2 ANOVA

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
BN	21	508	2,419,047,619	1,756,190,476
BEBAS	12	295	2,458,333,333	1,681,060,606
PH	84	1957	2,329,761,905	1,235,613,884
PJ	19	485	2,552,631,579	3,152,046,784
PN	54	1357	2,512,962,963	2,756,464,011
NOT	10	193	19,3	2,801,111,111

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	3,802,312,796	5	7,604,625,592	7,315,607,362	<b>2,6524E-06</b>	2,260,647,462
Within Groups	201,664,372	194	1,039,507,072			
Total	2,396,875	199				

## Appendix L. RQ3 ANOVA

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
BN	21	419	1,995,238,095	5,747,619,048
BEBAS	12	248	2,066,666,667	1,224,242,424
PH	84	1622	1,930,952,381	101,199,082
PJ	19	410	2,157,894,737	2,035,087,719
PN	54	1150	212,962,963	2,325,646,401
NOT	10	160	16	7,111,111,111

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	3,431,327,332	5	6,862,654,664	1,013,622,575	1,22161E-08	2,260,647,462
Within Groups	1,313,462,267	194	6,770,424,056			
Total	1,656,595	199				

## Appendix M. RQ4 Keyword and Sentiment Analysis

Keyword	Frequency	Frequency (%)
Future	32	6.70%
Civic Duty	15	3.10%
Change	14	2.90%
Responsibility	14	2.90%
Democracy	12	2.50%

Sentiment	Frequency	Frequency (%)
Informed about political parties	6	1.75%
Comparing opposing ideas and beliefs	6	1.75%
Verifying candidate suitability	5	1.46%
Understanding political leaders	5	1.46%
Discussions and debates on social media	4	1.17%