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## MODELLING THE EFFECT OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION, POLITICAL INTEREST AND POLICY SATISFACTION ON YOUTH ONLINE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN MALAYSIA

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### Abstract

The non-participation of youths in the politics of their nation is a global phenomenon. Yet not much research is being carried out in this area. Thus, this study conducted a cross sectional survey of 168 randomly selected Malaysian undergraduate students of Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) to find out if Access to Information on Facebook and Twitter (APIFT), Political Interest (PI) and Policy Satisfaction (PS) leads to Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter (OPPFT). Data was analyzed using Partial Least Squares - Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The results of this study revealed there is a significant positive relationship between APIFT, PI and OPPFT, however PS was not significantly related to OPPFT. This shows that while PS does not lead to OPPFT among youths in Malaysia, APIFT and PI promotes OPPFT among this group. Consequently, access to information and political interest could be used to engender Malaysian youth's participation in politics. Aside empirically adding to the growing body of knowledge on political participation, this study has implication both in terms of theory and practice in the field of political communication.

**Keywords:** *Access to information, political interest, policy satisfaction, online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.*

### MENCONTOHI KESAN AKSES MAKLUMAT, MINAT POLITIK DAN KEPUASAN POLISI TERHADAP PENYERTAAN POLITIK ATAS TALIAN BELIA DI MALAYSIA

### Abstrak

Ketidakterlibatan belia dalam politik merupakan masalah global. Sehingga kini tidak banyak kajian dijalankan mengenainya. Kajian ini dijalankan secara tinjauan keratan rentas secara rawak ke atas 168 belia terdiri daripada pelajar tahap sarjana muda di Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) untuk menentukan sama ada Akses ke atas maklumat di Facebook dan Twitter (APIFT), Minat Politik (PI) dan Kepuasan Polisi (PS) menunjang kepada Penyertaan Politik Secara Dalam Talian di Facebook dan Twitter (OPPFT). Data dianalisis menggunakan Partial Least Squares – Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Hasil analisis menunjukkan terhadap hubungan positif yang signifikan di antara APIFT, PI dan OPPFT. Walau bagaimanapun PS tidak mempunyai hubungan yang signifikan dengan OPPFT. Dapatan ini menjelaskan bahawa akses kepada maklumat dan minat politik boleh digunakan sebagai petunjuk kepada keterlibatan politik dalam kalangan belian di Malaysia. Hasil kajian ini secara empirikal ini telah mengukuhkan ilmu mengenai penyertaan politik. Kajian ini memberi implikasi penting kepada teori dan praktis dalam bidang komunikasi politik.

**Kata kunci:** *Akses Maklumat, Minat Politik, Kepuasan Polisi, Keterlibatan Politik Dalam Talian, Facebook, Twitter*

## INTRODUCTION

Social media are Internet based tools that enable easy sharing and discussion of information (Adaja & Ayodele, 2013). They make it possible for users to search, create, collaborate and also organize content among themselves (Hamid, Ishak, Ismail & Yazam, 2015) thus engendering political participation. Online political participation in social media is multifaceted; first it has cognitive dimensions such as information seeking, and then behavioral dimensions such as expression. These two dimensions are particularly common among youths who use social media to express their political opinion through print, audio and even video capabilities (Kushin & Yamamoto, 2010). In fact, Vissers and Stolle (2014) noted that political use of social media by youths is one of the fastest growing examples of online political participation.

However, other scholars have argued that rather than the increase in youth online political participation noticed by some, there is actually a decrease or even in some cases, total non-participation of youths in politics (Seongyi & Woo-Young, 2011; Iyengar & Jackman, 2004; Mongkuo, Lyon, Hogan, & Delore, 2014; Wells & Dudash, 2007; Whiteley, 2011) yet, not much studies are being carried out in this area especially in relation to online political participation. Nevertheless, scholars (Chun, 2012; Dalton, 2008; Putnam, 2000) have observed that the responsibility for non-participation should not be placed squarely on the youths, but rather on the reason why they don't participate in conventional politics. They stated that youths are more likely to participate in engagement-based citizenship than duty-based citizenship which is practiced by older citizens.

Hence the argument that youths are less engaged in politics is neither true nor false, rather there is a need to look at unconventional forms of political participation (Dalton, 2008). Therefore, restricting the definition of political participation to the old which emphasized institutional political participation will indicate that youths do not participate. However, expanding the definition to more modern forms of participation might indicate different results. In the same vein, Salman and Saad (2015) recommended that online political activities among Malaysian youths should be further studied. Thus, this study assessed the effect of access to

information, political interest and policy satisfaction on online political participation with particular reference to Facebook and Twitter.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Social media is trendy, cheap and easy to access (Raof, Zaman, Ahmad & Al-Qaraghuli, 2013) especially to youths who make up half of the voters totaling 13.3 million. With this, online channels like Facebook and Twitter became avenues for political participation in Malaysia (Salman & Saad, 2015). This is because they support the democratization of knowledge and information (Sani, 2014) and are among the most popular social media in the country (Al-Rahmi & Othman, 2013; Hamid, Ishak & Yazam, 2015; Raof, Zaman, Ahmad & Al-Qaraghuli, 2013; Salman & Saad, 2015; Sani, 2014). Thus scholars (Kasmani, Sabran & Ramle, 2014; Pandian, 2014) asserted that the increase in political participation by Malaysian youths can be attributed to social media. Today, Facebook fan pages highlighting political activities as well as twitter exchanges between politicians and citizens have reshaped the media and political landscape in Malaysia (Sani, 2014).

However, despite these positive reviews on social media use by Malaysians (especially the youths) for political participation, Salman and Saad (2015) argue that unlike youths in other third world countries, those in Malaysia do not actively used social media for political participation as in a study of 1182 youths between ages of 18 to 25, they found that Malaysian youths use new media more for entertainment and social networking. Similarly, Freeman (2013) found that, Malaysian youths prefer to use social media for entertainment purposes. Yet, Pandian (2014) noted that proposals for more knowledgeable young voters to produce change in the Malaysian democratic stagnancy has a positive response because social media as a significant source of independent information in Malaysia has helped in achieving this.

Accordingly, the nature of access to information in Malaysia today has changed as online media in Malaysia has moved into mainstream media, hence challenging the hegemony of traditional media (Lumsden, 2013; Sani, 2014). Thus, apart from cheaper and easier access to online media, new media gained popularity in Malaysia because of the need for free flow of

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information not provided by mainstream media (Salman, Ibrahim, Abdullah, Mustaffa & Mahbob, 2011). Hence, there was increased use of social media especially Facebook as alternative sources to political news by Malaysians. Apparently, since the ruling party controls the press in Malaysia, social media served as alternative for political information and participation as through them youths got political information to take the necessary political action. Against this backdrop, the following hypothesis were formulated:

- H<sub>1</sub>** Access to political information on Facebook and Twitter is positively related to youth online political participation on Facebook and Twitter in Malaysia.

Additionally, political interest provides the motivation required to devote significant time and energy to participate in politics (O'Neil, 2006). Thus, political interest is not a measure of political participation (Shepperd, 2012) but a necessary condition of participation. Accordingly, Kruikemeier, Noort, Vliegenthart and De Vresse (2014), and Oser, Hooghe and Marien (2012) maintain that political interest is often a strong predictor of different political participation. This statement led to the proposition of this hypothesis:

- H<sub>2</sub>** Political interest is positively related to youth online political participation on Facebook and Twitter in Malaysia.

Furthermore, in a democracy, the major policy a government should pursue is one which will transform the lives of its citizens positively. Yet for this to happen, the voices of citizens need to be heard on various issues of policy importance. In the past this could be done via traditional media, however today social media has taken over this role by providing a direct link between the public and government (Johnson & Kaye, 2014) such that they are now used to engage in political activities that affect policy (Valenzuela, Kim & Gil de Zuniga, 2012). As a result, Malaysian citizens are now more expressive about the actions of government and opposition through social media (Pandian, 2014). Moreover, Razali (2013) observed that, citizens no longer trust information from traditional media, hence explanations offered by government through them about policies are no longer believed by them. Hence, the role of social media in this respect cannot be overstated.

Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

- H<sub>3</sub>** Policy satisfaction is positively related to youth online political participation on Facebook and Twitter in Malaysia.

### **Measures**

The measurement of all constructs in this study were derived from previous studies and were measured on a 7 points semantic differential scale thus:

#### **Access to Political Information on Facebook and Twitter**

Attention, exposure and reliance measures were used to measure Malaysian youths' access to political information on Facebook and Twitter with six items. The construct was measured multi-dimensionally, with access to political information on Facebook as one dimension and access to political information on Twitter as the second dimension

Accordingly, attention to Facebook and Twitter for political information was measured on a scale of 1 for "No Attention" and 7 for "Lots of Attention" as anchors and respondents were asked two questions on how much attention they pay to political information on Facebook and Twitter (Yamamoto & Kushin, 2014). For exposure to political information on Facebook and Twitter, the measurement of Bekafigo and McBride (2013) and Whiteley (2005) was adapted thus respondents were asked two questions on how often they use Facebook and Twitter to access political information on Facebook and Twitter using 7 response categories ranging from "1" for "Never" to "7" for "All the time". The scale for level of reliance on social media for political information was adapted from the measurements by Johnson and Kaye (2014) and Moy, Torres, Tanaka and McCluskey (2005) where respondents were asked two questions on how much they rely on Facebook and Twitter for political information on a 7-point scale of "1" for "Never Rely" and "7" for "Heavily Rely" as anchors.

#### **Political Interest**

The measures of political interest were adapted from Whiteley (2005). Eight items were asked in the context of Facebook and Twitter on a 7-point scale with "1" for "Strongly Disagree" and "7"

for “Strongly Agree” as anchors. The eight items were; “None of my friends on my network are interested in politics”, “I am too busy to worry about politics”, “I often discuss politics with my social network”, “Politics makes no difference to people in my social network”, “Politics has an impact on anything I do”, “I am very interested in politics”, “I know less about politics than most people in my social network”, and “Sometimes politics seems so complicated I cannot understand”.

### **Policy Satisfaction**

Policy satisfaction was measured by a mixture of process and outcome considerations (Whiteley, Clarke, Sanders & Steward, 2013). Thus, for policy process, the measurement of Whiteley (2005) was adapted. As a result, six items were asked with scales of “1” for “Not at all” and “7” for “A lot” as anchors. The items bordered on if respondents were involved in any of the following on Facebook and Twitter; “Have a say in how policies are made in their country”, “Have an opportunity to be involved in the policy making process of their country”, “Consulted about policy making in their country”, “Involved in the policy making process of their country”, “Discuss how policies are made among their Facebook and Twitter contacts”, and “Have influence on policy making when they and their friends communicate their opinion to government”. For policy outcome, the measurement of Shore (2014) and Whiteley, Clarke, Sanders and Steward (2013) was adapted. Hence, on a 7-point scale of “1” for “Very Dissatisfied” and “7” for “Very Satisfied” as anchors, respondents were asked one question on how satisfied they are with government policies in Malaysia.

### **Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter**

Online political participation on Facebook and Twitter was measured as a multi-dimensional construct with two sets of questions for Facebook and two sets of questions about Twitter. Hence, the first two sets of questions was on political activities performed and observed on Facebook, while the second two sets of questions were on political activities performed and observed on Twitter. These two sets of questions formed an index for online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.

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The scale for online political participation on Facebook was adopted from Vitak, Zube, Smock, Carr, Ellison and Lampe (2011). They developed an index item for political activities on Facebook by combining political activities performed and political activities observed on Facebook. For political activity performed the index represented “political activity of respondent on Facebook”, while for political activity observed the index represented “exposure to network’s political activity on Facebook”. Therefore, these two sets of items formed the index of respondent’s online political participation on Facebook.

Therefore, the first set of questions contained 10 items on political activities performed by respondents on Facebook, while the second set of questions contained 9 items on political activities observed by respondents on Facebook. One item (discussing political information in a Facebook message) was excluded from political activities observed because it is a political activity that can only be performed and not observed by friends in a network due to its private nature.

Accordingly, the 10 items for political activities performed were: “Discussed political information in a Facebook message”, “Posted or shared a status update about politics”, “Posted or shared a photo about politics” “Posted or shared a video about politics”, “Posted or shared a link about politics” “Posted a wall comment in a wall post about politics”, “Posted or shared a note about politics” “Joined or left a group about politics”, “Clicked ‘going’ for a political event”, and “Liked a political party or candidate’s page”. These 10 items were measured with a 7-point scale ranging from “1” as “Never” to “7” as “Very Often” as anchors.

The 9 items for political activities observed on Facebook were: “Posting or sharing a status update about politics”, “Posting or sharing a photo about politics” “Posting or sharing a video about politics”, “Posting or sharing a link about politics” “Posting a wall comment in a wall post about politics”, “Posting a note about politics” “Joining or leaving a group about politics”, “Clicking ‘going’ for a political event”, and “Liking a political party or politician’s fan page”. These 9 items were measured on a 7-point scale ranging from “1” as “Never” to “7” as “Very Often”.

For online political participation on Twitter, 7 items were adopted from Tumasjan, Sprenger, Sandner and Welpel (2010), Yamamoto and Kushin, (2013), Yamamoto, Kushin, and Dalisay, 2014). The 7 items were used for both political activities observed on Twitter and political activities performed on Twitter. For political activities performed on Twitter, the items included: “Tweet about politics”, “Retweet or quote a tweet about politics”, “Mention a politician or a political party”, “Reply a tweet about politics”, “Join a political discussion”, “Join a political debate”, and “Follow a politician or political party”. These items were measured on a 7-point scale ranging from “1” as “Never” to “7” as “Very Often”.

For political activities observed on Twitter, the items included: “Tweeting a message about politics”, “Retweeting or quoting a tweet about politics”, “Mentioning a politician or a political party”, “Replying a tweet about politics”, “Joining a political discussion”, “Joining a political debate” and “Following a politician or political party”. These items were measured on a 7-point scale of “1” for “Never” to “7” for “Very Often”.

### **Demographic Variables**

For ethnic groups in Malaysia, options were provided for the three major ethnic groups namely, Malay, Chinese, and Indian, and an additional option of “Others” was included for other minority ethnic groups in Malaysia (Wilson, Leong, Nge & Hong, 2011). Respondents from “Others” ethnic groups are Sabahans and Sarawakians like Dayak, Bidayu Iban, Dusun, Bajau, Jawa, Kadazan and Dusun. For religion, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Others served as options for religion in Malaysia. In terms of age, respondents are between the age ranges of 16 to 40. Thus, the options for age comprised: 16-20 years, 21-24 years, 25-29 years, 30-35 years and 36-40 years, while gender was dummy coded as “0” for male and “1” for female.

### **Methods and Results**

A cross sectional survey was used to collect data from 168 undergraduate students of UUM using structured questionnaire as instrument. The results of this study were analyzed



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descriptively using SPSS and inferentially using PLS-SEM. Additionally, due to the multi-dimensional nature of some constructs, they were measured at a higher level of abstraction forming a Hierarchical Construct Model (HCM). Specifically, the PLS-SEM analysis was conducted to determine the fitness of the research model in terms of reliability and validity of study items and constructs by assessing the first and second stage HCM.

Descriptively, Malays respondents were 98 in number accounting for 58.3% of respondents. Chinese accounted for 20.8% of respondents with 35 participants, while the Indians were 25 (14.3%), “Others” had 11 respondents accounting for the least percentage of 6.5%. In terms of religion, Muslims had the highest number with 104 indicating 61.7% of respondents, Buddhist were 31 (18.5%), Hindus 20 (11.9%), Christians 12 (7.1%), and “Others” had the least number with 1 representing 0.6%. The age distribution of respondents indicates, most undergraduates were between the ages of 20 to 24 years, as 92.3% of them representing 155 fall in this category. This was followed by those within the age range of 25 to 29 years with 6 (3.6%), then 15 to 19 years with 5 (3%), and 30 to 35 years with 2 (1.2%). For distribution of respondents based on gender there were more female than male undergraduates, as female accounted for 117 (69.6%), while male were 51 (30.4%).

Inferentially, the first and second stage HCM were analyzed before the structural model was assessed thus:

**Assessment of First Stage Hierarchical Construct Model**

Assessment of the first stage HCM can be seen as shown in Figure 1.1, Table 1.1, Table 1.2 and Table 1.3.

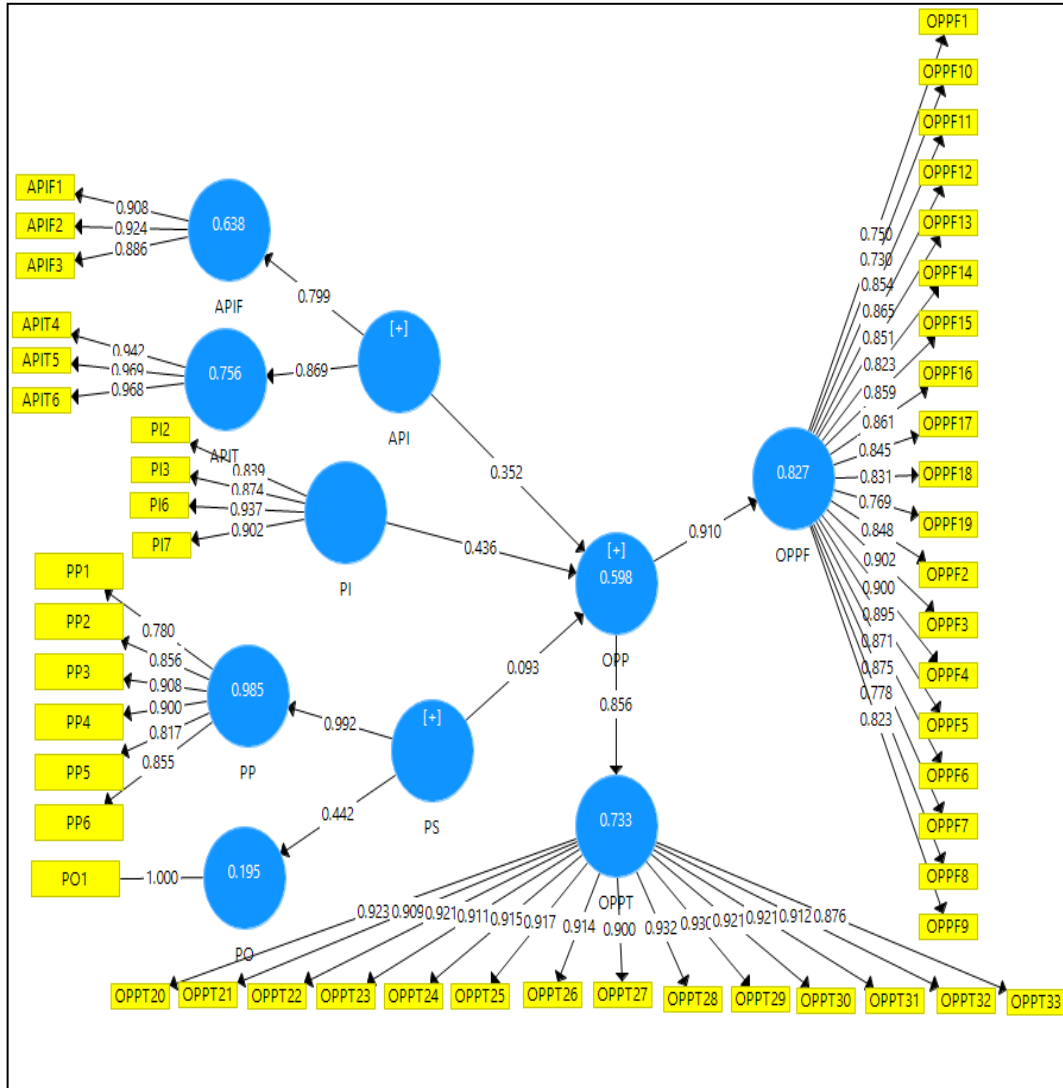


Figure 1.1. First Stage HCM

**Reliability**

The internal consistency and indicator reliability were conducted for this study. Specifically, composite reliability was used to determine the internal consistency reliability of this study construct (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010). Hair et al. (2010) recommended that composite reliability coefficient should be at least 0.70. Table 1.1 shows the composite reliability

coefficients of the latent constructs for this study range from .903 to .924 with each exceeding the minimum acceptable level of 0.70. This indicates sufficient internal consistency reliability (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011).

Additionally, indicator reliability was assessed by examining the outer loading of each constructs measure (Hair et al., 2011). Thus, the outer loadings of items in the questionnaire of this study should be 0.708 and above. As a result, out of the 54 items in this study, 4 items which were below the threshold of 0.708 were deleted while the 50 items left were retained for this study (See Figure 1.1)

### Validity

For validity, the convergent and discriminant validity were assessed. Convergent validity was carried out by examining the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of each latent construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Since the AVE of each latent construct should be at least 0.50 (Chin, 1998), Table 1.1 shows the values of AVE for this study was between .511 and .669 indicating acceptable levels and suggesting adequate convergent validity.

Table 1.1 *AVE and Composite Reliability*

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>AVE</b>	<b>Composite Reliability</b>
APIFT	0.610	0.903
PI	0.790	0.938
PS	0.643	0.924
OPPFT	0.595	0.980

Furthermore, AVE was as used to examine the discriminant validity of study constructs. To assess discriminant validity, the square root of AVE should be greater than correlations among latent constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Thus, as seen in Table 1.2, the correlations among the latent constructs were compared with the square root of AVE (in bold face). The AVEs were all greater than the correlations among latent constructs, indicating sufficient discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 1.2 Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion) for First Stage Constructs

Variables	APIF	APIT	OPPF	OPPT	PI	PO	PP
APIF	<b>.906</b>						
APIT	.398	<b>.960</b>					
OPPF	.586	.449	<b>.840</b>				
OPPT	.244	.655	.564	<b>.915</b>			
PI	.596	.433	.735	.495	<b>.889</b>		
PO	.164	.229	.123	.245	.240	<b>Single Item</b>	
PP	.524	.375	.595	.396	.672	.328	<b>.854</b>

Note: The values in bold are the square root of AVE across the diagonal, while off diagonal values are the correlation between the first stage constructs.

Additionally, discriminant validity was determined by comparing the indicator loading with other reflective indicators in the cross loading table to ensure that they are higher than other reflective loadings in the table (Chin, 1998). Thus as can be seen from Table 1.3, indicator loadings (in bold) were higher than the cross-loadings, indicating adequate discriminant validity.

Table 1.3 Cross Loadings for First Stage Items

ITEMS	APIF	APIT	OPPF	OPPT	PI	PO	PP
APIF1	<b>.908</b>	.321	.494	.166	.500	.131	.425
APIF2	<b>.924</b>	.407	.576	.295	.604	.189	.550
APIF3	<b>.886</b>	.349	.520	.195	.510	.122	.443
APIT4	.389	<b>.942</b>	.432	.648	.431	.231	.377
APIT5	.376	<b>.969</b>	.432	.613	.408	.191	.348
APIT6	.380	<b>.968</b>	.429	.624	.409	.238	.354
OPPF1	.508	.478	<b>.750</b>	.509	.722	.209	.656
OPPF10	.507	.321	<b>.730</b>	.491	.689	.013	.522
OPPF11	.477	.320	<b>.854</b>	.475	.574	.106	.451
OPPF12	.495	.345	<b>.865</b>	.442	.516	.040	.404
OPPF13	.473	.385	<b>.851</b>	.473	.507	.083	.396
OPPF14	.470	.329	<b>.823</b>	.458	.476	.104	.397
OPPF15	.442	.247	<b>.859</b>	.420	.528	.092	.451
OPPF16	.425	.333	<b>.861</b>	.475	.528	.082	.429
OPPF17	.365	.327	<b>.845</b>	.480	.556	.044	.389
OPPF18	.418	.318	<b>.831</b>	.444	.524	.076	.357
OPPF19	.472	.329	<b>.769</b>	.488	.530	.007	.377

OPPF2	.553	.359	<b>.848</b>	.422	.688	.180	.586
OPPF3	.588	.436	<b>.902</b>	.473	.722	.136	.593
OPPF4	.587	.418	<b>.900</b>	.470	.680	.142	.568
OPPF5	.553	.483	<b>.895</b>	.564	.708	.159	.591
OPPF6	.584	.456	<b>.871</b>	.476	.717	.171	.637
OPPF7	.523	.444	<b>.875</b>	.483	.684	.075	.573
OPPF8	.426	.412	<b>.778</b>	.478	.701	.132	.539
OPPF9	.469	.401	<b>.823</b>	.472	.668	.101	.562
OPPT20	.290	.638	.544	<b>.923</b>	.495	.220	.358
OPPT21	.246	.596	.553	<b>.909</b>	.510	.186	.382
OPPT22	.232	.610	.573	<b>.921</b>	.500	.179	.390
OPPT23	.242	.588	.573	<b>.911</b>	.501	.193	.363
OPPT24	.245	.581	.542	<b>.915</b>	.481	.183	.376
OPPT25	.209	.563	.556	<b>.917</b>	.495	.217	.375
OPPT26	.256	.631	.543	<b>.914</b>	.480	.182	.360

Table 1.3 continued

OPPT27	.225	.601	.496	<b>.900</b>	.456	.288	.368
OPPT28	.172	.604	.492	<b>.932</b>	.425	.242	.364
OPPT29	.205	.589	.497	<b>.930</b>	.446	.265	.359
OPPT30	.199	.602	.454	<b>.921</b>	.395	.258	.339
OPPT31	.154	.566	.470	<b>.921</b>	.377	.263	.364
OPPT32	.206	.635	.448	<b>.912</b>	.368	.233	.331
OPPT33	.230	.583	.458	<b>.876</b>	.384	.240	.330
PI2	.569	.351	.580	.353	<b>.839</b>	.299	.532
PI3	.432	.363	.641	.423	<b>.874</b>	.194	.617
PI6	.592	.390	.692	.444	<b>.937</b>	.217	.630
PI7	.531	.430	.691	.523	<b>.902</b>	.163	.606
PO1	.164	.229	.123	.245	.240	<b>Single Item</b>	.328
PP1	.296	.173	.358	.243	.408	.289	<b>.780</b>
PP2	.421	.225	.486	.215	.547	.268	<b>.856</b>
PP3	.433	.336	.482	.363	.536	.271	<b>.908</b>
PP4	.451	.354	.499	.363	.584	.275	<b>.900</b>
PP5	.503	.441	.628	.509	.718	.271	<b>.817</b>
PP6	.569	.383	.592	.331	.646	.307	<b>.855</b>

### Assessment of Second Stage Hierarchical Construct Model

The second stage HCM was also assessed by re-computing items in the first stage model to construct a simpler second stage model (Wilson & Henseler, 2007). As a result, the dimensions of the constructs in the first stage model in Figure 1.1 served as items for the construct in the second stage model in Figure 1.2.

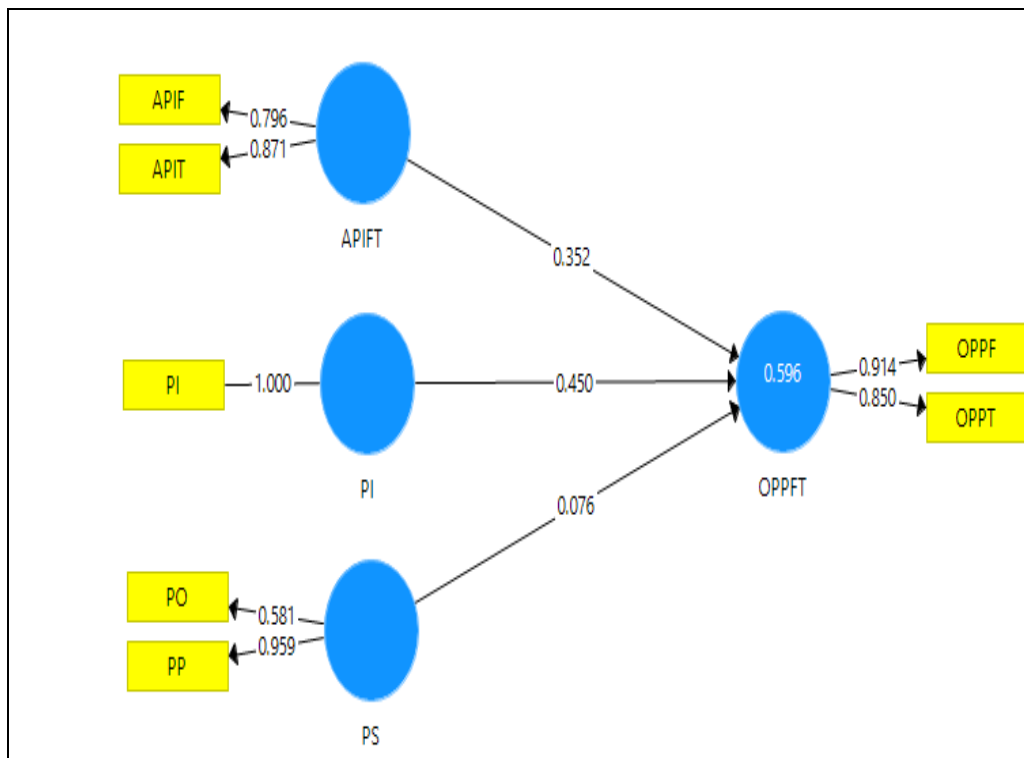


Figure 1.2. Second Stage HCM

Item loading in the second stage model in Figure 1.2 were all above the 0.708 threshold indicating sufficient indicator reliability (Afthanorhan, 2013). Also, results of the Fornell-Larker criterion in Table 1.4 and cross-loadings in Table 1.5 indicates adequate discriminant validity. Thus the conditions of reliability and validity has also been met for the second stage model.

Table 1.4 *Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion) for Second Stage Constructs*

Variable	APIFT	OPPFT	PI	PS
APIFT	<b>0.834</b>			
OPPFT	0.663	<b>0.882</b>		
PI	0.602	0.712	<b>1</b>	
PS	0.523	0.554	0.651	<b>0.793</b>

Note: The values in bold are the square root of AVE across diagonal, while off diagonal values are the correlation between the second stage constructs.

Table 1.5 *Cross Loadings for Second Stage Construct*

Items	APIFT	OPPFT	PI	PS
APIF	<b>0.796</b>	0.492	0.592	0.497
APIT	<b>0.871</b>	0.607	0.434	0.391
OPPF	0.608	<b>0.914</b>	0.734	0.548
OPPT	0.561	<b>0.850</b>	0.496	0.415
PI	0.602	0.712	<b>1</b>	0.651
PO	0.238	0.199	0.238	<b>0.581</b>
PP	0.525	0.574	0.673	<b>0.959</b>

### Assessment of Structural Model

An assessment of the structural model was carried out to lend empirical support to hypothesis formulated in this study by examining the significance of path coefficients (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2014). Thus, the estimates of the structural model are shown in Table 1.6.

Table 1.6 *Structural Model Assessment (Malaysia)*

	Relationship	Beta value	Std. Error	T value	p-Values	Findings
<b>H<sub>1</sub></b>	Access to Political Information on Facebook and Twitter -> Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter	.352	.074	4.744	.000	Supported
<b>H<sub>2</sub></b>	Political Interest -> Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter	.450	.067	6.730	.000	Supported
<b>H<sub>3</sub></b>	Policy Satisfaction -> Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter	.070	.061	1.242	.214	Not Supported

Table 1.6 shows the result of the hypothesis testing for this study. Specifically, hypothesis 1 predicted that APIFT is positively related to OPPFT. Results in Table 1.6, Figure, 1.2 showed a significant relationship between them. Likewise Hypothesis 2 which predicted that PI is positively related to OPPFT is supported. However, hypothesis 3 was not supported because the low estimates of the path coefficients indicates that PS is not positively related to OPPFT.

Furthermore, in assessing the structural model, coefficient of determination (R-Squared value) was used to explain the variance of the endogenous latent variable (Hair et al., 2011 & Hensler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009). The R-Squared value is the proportion of variation in the dependent variable that can be explained by one or more of the predictor variable(s) (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham, 2006). Although the acceptable level of the  $R^2$  value depends on the research context (Hair et al, 2010), Chin (1998) advises that the R-Squared values of 0.67, 0.33 and 0.19 in PLS-SEM can be regarded as substantial, moderate and weak respectively. The R-Squared value of the endogenous latent variable in this study is 0.596 (See Figure 1.2), suggesting that three sets of exogenous latent constructs (i.e access to political information on Facebook and Twitter, political interest and policy satisfaction) collectively explain 59% of the variance of the endogenous variable online political participation on Facebook and twitter. Thus, based on Chin's recommendation, this indicates that the R-Squared value for this study is within acceptable levels.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

Results of this study indicates that APIFT and PI leads to youth OPPFT in Malaysia, however, PS does not. Thus, the positive relationship between APIFT and OPPFT in hypothesis 1, is consistent with the findings of previous scholars (Engesser & Franzetti, 2011; Gil De Zuniga, Molyneux & Zheng, 2014; Moy et al., 2005; Potgieter, 2013; Verba, Scholzman & Brady, 1995; Wojcieszak, 2012). The studies of these scholars have shown overtime that political participation can stem from access to political information. Therefore, the more exposed citizens are to news and information about politics, the more they will participate in politics (Bae, 2014). Thus, using



social media like Facebook and Twitter to get news and send political messages has led to greater participation of Malaysian youths in politics.

Furthermore, the results of this study which reveals that PI is positively related to OPPFT is in line with the findings of Carlisle and Patton (2013) who discovered that Facebook users who are more interested in politics are more likely to participate in politics via Facebook. In fact, among all other predictors used for their study, political interest had the strongest impact. Similarly, Sheppard (2012) found that social media positively influences political interest and subsequent political participation. As a result, social media use promotes political interest and makes people in their network likely to participate in politics.

Additionally, the non-significant relationship between PS and OPPFT among Malaysian youths also find support with the statement of Campbell (2003) that the influence of policies on political participation could be negative in so many ways and this could foster non-participation. Thus it could be deduced that the level of satisfaction of Malaysian youth in policy making process and outcome influences their online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.

Consequently, based on the results of this study, this research has made contributions to the modelling of the relationship between access to information, political interest and policy satisfaction with political participation. Specifically, these relationships were modeled from the perspectives of social media with particular reference to Facebook and Twitter. Also, this study provided further empirical evidence to the field of social media and online political communication and participation because rather than focus on offline or traditional internet versions of variables in this study, it extended its scope to online versions on social media. This extension in scope is important because limiting research to offline forms of political participation will not adequately capture political participation in this digital age especially among youths. Thus, if the stakeholders in the media and political sector want to engender participation in politics, effort needs to be made to improve on youths' access to information, political interest and policy satisfaction. Generally, this study lends practical and theoretical implication to the phenomenon of political participation in Malaysia.

Nevertheless, despite the research objectives of this study being met, it has its limitations. The foremost limitation of this study is that the three variables (access to information, political interest and policy satisfaction) used in the study could only explain 59% of the variance of online political participation. This means that other variables not included in this study could explain the remaining 41%. Thus, it is recommended that subsequent studies could include other variables like political trust, political knowledge or political efficacy to further boost the variance explained of online political participation in their studies.

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