

Relationship Between Political Informativeness, Satire, Credibility, and Interactivity towards Attitudes of Young Voters' Voting Decision

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between the characteristics of online political campaigns and the attitudes and decisions of young voters. This study involved 330 young Malaysian voters in total. The sample, primarily Malay women aged 18 to 30 with diploma-level education, shows significant interaction with online political campaigns. People perceive these campaigns as highly informative, credible, and interactive, which significantly influences their voting decisions. Additionally, political satire within these campaigns enhances voter engagement. The significantly positive correlations observed suggest that digital platforms are increasingly central to political participation, highlighting their crucial role in defining future electoral strategies in Malaysia.

Keywords: Young voters, political informativeness, political satire & voting decision

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1.0 Introduction

In the 21st century, digital technology has significantly transformed political communication, with social media platforms becoming vital tools for political engagement and mobilisation. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok enable the real-time exchange of news, opinions, and political discourse—especially among young people—fostering greater awareness and active participation. This shift reflects a broader change in political behaviour, where user-generated digital content is increasingly shaping public opinion alongside, or even replacing, traditional media sources (An, 2024).

In Malaysia, Rosyidah et al. (2021) found a strong connection between social media use and political participation among East Coast youth, who spend two to four hours online daily, primarily consuming news. This highlights the influential role of online content in shaping young voters' political knowledge and engagement. Additionally, Malaysian politicians are using social media to mobilise support, create narratives, and interact directly with people (Hayat Adnan & Md. Ramly, 2021). Despite increasing digital engagement, young voters may still face challenges in discerning credible, informative, and impactful political content online.

The objective is to determine the relationship between political informativeness, satire, credibility, and interactivity in influencing the decision-making process of young voters. Figure 1 depicts the conceptual framework. Each attribute significantly impact how individuals perceive and react to political campaigns. Informativeness ensures voters receive pertinent and comprehensive information, while satire

provides an intriguing and often critical perspective. Credibility helps establish trust in the information, and interactivity stimulates direct involvement and feedback.

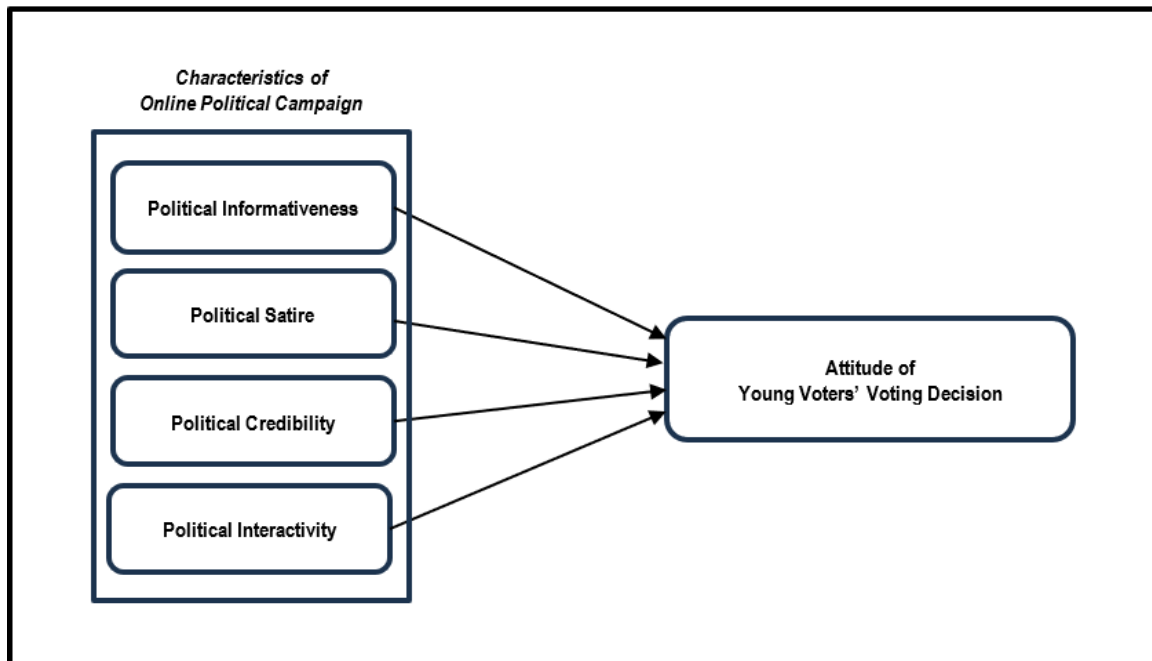


Fig. 1: A Conceptual Framework Showing the Relationship Between Online Political Campaign Characteristics and Attitudes of Young Voters' Voting Decision
(Source: Arora & Agarwal, 2020)

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 The Role of Young Voters and Online Political Campaigns in Malaysia

Young voters in Malaysia, aged 18 to 30, make up a vibrant and significant portion of the political population (Ganti et al., 2024). They differ from past generations that rely more on traditional media in that they are tech-savvy and actively involved with digital platforms. Their everyday lives revolve around social media, news websites, and other online spaces, where user-generated content, entertainment, and political information frequently coexist (Utari et al., 2023).

Young Malaysian voters regularly interact with political content on social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok, in contrast to earlier generations. They like, share, comment on, and produce their postings in addition to passively consuming information. Their political opinions are shaped by this interaction since conversations and arguments in their virtual communities affect their opinions and choices (Abdullah et al., 2021).

However, there are drawbacks to this digital interaction. Social media exposes young voters to both accurate and false information, even as it can swiftly disseminate political content and influence opinions. Understanding how political informativeness, satire, trustworthiness, and interactivity interact to impact their decision-making in online campaigns is crucial since online platforms' interactivity enables them to directly influence political narratives.

2.2 Political Informativeness in Online Political Campaigns

Political informativeness in online political campaigns refers to the calibre and comprehensiveness of political material offered via online platforms throughout election campaigns. Political campaigns in the digital age use a variety of online resources, including websites, digital advertisements, and social media, to spread knowledge about candidates, policies, and important issues.

Social media allows young voters to interact with campaign content by liking, sharing, and commenting. This interaction not only amplifies the reach of political messages but also creates a sense of participation and involvement. The goal is to educate voters by providing them with detailed and relevant content that can inform their decision-making process (Allam, 2020).

Furthermore, the immediacy of online communication allows campaigns to swiftly update and adapt their messages in response to current events. This ensures that voters receive timely and relevant information, crucial during rapidly changing political landscapes. For young voters, access to up-to-date content enhances their understanding of the political process and significantly influences their voting decisions. As a result, political information in online campaigns is critical to engaging and persuading this important group. Based on the provided information, we develop the following hypothesis:

H1: There is a significantly positive relationship between political informativeness and the attitude of young voters' voting decisions.

2.3 Political Satire on Young Voters' Decision-Making

Young voters' opinions are greatly influenced by political satire's use of irony, sarcasm, and comedy in online political campaigns (Feldman, 2024). Satire offers a distinct viewpoint that can highlight the discrepancy between political rhetoric and reality by concentrating on the absurdities and paradoxes in politics. This type of communication, which ranges from spoof news to editorial cartoons, emphasises the frequently absurd facets of political life and is therefore a powerful instrument for educating and entertaining young audiences.

The power of satire resides in its capacity to present political concerns in an interesting and approachable way. Satire can highlight political informational contradictions or inconsistencies that traditional reporting would overlook by exaggerating and hilariously portraying specific aspects of the story. In addition to bringing important topics to light, this strategy challenges viewers to think critically about the information they come across (Boukes & Hameleers, 2020).

Furthermore, satire can influence young voters by shifting their perceptions and stimulating political participation (Becker, 2020). By making political content more relatable and entertaining, satire can spark discussions and raise awareness about political issues (Peifer & Landreville, 2020). This engagement can motivate young voters to become more involved in political processes and advocacy, highlighting the powerful impact of satire in shaping political attitudes and encouraging civic involvement. Hence, the following hypothesis is posited:

H2: There is a significantly positive relationship between political satire and the attitude of young voters' voting decisions.

2.4 Political Credibility in Online Campaigns

Online political campaign evaluations by young voters are impacted by the legitimacy of political figures and their views are shaped by the accuracy, reliability, and integrity of political messages in this age of instantaneous information dissemination. Young voters, who spend a lot of time with digital content, need to be able to believe the information they see to make decisions (Marquart, Ohme & Möller, 2020).

The interactive nature of social media further complicates the relationship between credibility and voter attitudes. Young voters actively engage with political content by liking, sharing, and commenting, which can both amplify and scrutinize the credibility of the information. When campaigns present accurate and transparent information, they build trust and foster positive perceptions. Conversely, misinformation or a lack of fact-checking can quickly erode credibility and generate negative sentiments as political agents (Riedl et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the swift spread of information on the internet allows for the instant establishment or erosion of political credibility. Young voters, who are critical and engaged, rely on credible sources to guide their decisions. In today's politics, candidates' reputations are crucial; media coverage can boost or harm their credibility (Guido Gili & Massimiliano Panarari, 2020). Therefore, maintaining high standards of credibility is vital for online political campaigns to effectively influence and connect with this key demographic. Thus, the following hypothesis is postulated:

H3: There is a significantly positive relationship between political credibility and the attitude of young voters' voting decisions.

2.5 Political Interactivity on Young Voters' Decisions

Political interactivity plays a crucial role in shaping young voters' attitudes during online campaigns (Ohme, Marquart & Kristensen, 2020). Online platforms provide interactive communication between candidates and voters, in contrast to conventional media. Engagement through these interactive features significantly influences voter attitudes. When young voters comment, participate in polls or share posts, they become more invested in the political process. This involvement fosters a sense of connection and ownership over political discourse, leading to more informed and robust political preferences (Boulianne & Theocharis, 2020).

Interactivity also provides real-time feedback and dialogue, which helps build trust and credibility. Social media platforms have increased youth political participation in Malaysia due to their interactivity and attractiveness (Abdullah et al., 2021). Engaging directly with campaign content empowers voters and strengthens their connection to the issues and candidates.

However, the openness of online platforms can also expose voters to a wide range of opinions and potential misinformation. This exposure can lead to confusion or scepticism, emphasizing the need for campaigns to manage interactions carefully. Effective political interactivity requires thoughtful handling to ensure it enhances rather than undermines voter trust and decision-making. Hence, this study proposes:

H4: There is a significantly positive relationship between political interactivity and the attitude of young voters' voting decisions.

3.0 Methodology

This study employs a quantitative research design to investigate the relationship between political informativeness, satire, credibility, and interactivity towards attitudes of young voters' voting decisions. The study selected young voters in Klang Valley through simple random sampling by using a detailed questionnaire. Section A gathered demographic details like gender, age, race, education, and internet usage. Section B, adapted from a matured questionnaire, covered political informativeness, satire, credibility, and interactivity (Feldman, 2024). The survey, targeting students aged 21 to 40, received 330 completed responses out of 400 distributed online. We used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and AMOS 21.0 to analyze the relationships between the variables. Using the methods

outlined by Hoyle (1995) and Anderson & Gerbing (1988), we employed path analysis, factor analysis, and relationship analysis to examine latent constructs and measurable variables (Tavakol & Wetzel, 2020).

4.0 Findings

The study analyzed data from 330 respondents, including 147 males (44.5%) and 183 females (55.5%). Age-wise, 30.3% were between 26 and 30 years old, 29.1% were 18 to 25, 19.1% were 31 to 35, and 18.2% were 36 to 40, with 3.3% over 41. Racially, Malays made up 58.5% of the sample, Chinese 20.3%, and Indians 20.9%, with just 0.3% from other ethnic groups. The income distribution was as follows: 44.2% earned RM2,000 to RM3,000 monthly, 25.8% earned RM3,001 to RM4,000, 20.3% earned below RM2,000, 7% earned above RM5,000, and 2.7% earned RM4,001 to RM5,000.

Regarding education, 0.9% had a doctoral degree, 6.7% held a master's, 38.2% had a bachelor's, 40.3% possessed a diploma, 11.2% completed STPM, and 2.7% had SPM. All respondents had at least an SPM level of education. Internet usage patterns revealed that 37.9% spent over 120 minutes online daily, 34.5% spent 60 to 120 minutes, 26.4% spent 30 to 60 minutes, and 1.2% spent less than 30 minutes. For detailed demographic information, refer to Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Profile

Variable	Respondents (N=330)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	147	44.5
Female	183	55.5
Age		
18 – 25	96	29.1
26 – 30	100	30.3
31 – 35	63	19.1
36 – 40	60	18.2
41 & Above	11	3.3
Race		
Malay	193	58.5
Chinese	67	20.3
Indian	69	20.9
Others	1	.3
Income		
< RM2,000.00	67	20.3
RM2,000 - RM3,000	146	44.2
RM3,001 - RM4,000	85	25.8
RM4,001 - RM5,000	9	2.7
> RM5,000	23	7.0
Education		
PhD	3	.9
Master's degree	22	6.7
Bachelor's degree	126	38.2
Diploma	133	40.3
STPM	37	11.2
SPM	9	2.7
Others	0	0
Time Spent on the Internet per day		
< 30 minutes	4	1.2
30 - 60 minutes	87	26.4
60 - 120 minutes	114	34.5
> 120 minutes	125	37.9

Source: Author's data generated through AMOS 21.0

Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation values for political informativeness items. Respondents rated online political campaigns highly as sources of party activity updates ($M = 5.54$, $SD = 1.371$) and political party updates ($M = 5.48$, $SD = 1.344$). The ability to determine which party meets Malaysia's ideals scored a mean of 5.45 ($SD = 1.467$), while information richness received a mean of 5.38 ($SD = 1.393$). However, the belief that online campaigns provide all necessary information was rated slightly lower ($M = 5.27$, $SD = 1.393$). The overall mean for political informativeness was 5.42 ($SD = 1.253$), indicating a generally positive perception of online campaign content in shaping young voters' decisions.

Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviation Value for Political Informativeness

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
I found that online political campaigns that I saw contain of much information	5.38	1.393
I found that after watching online political campaigns, I got the information that I need	5.27	1.393
I found that online political campaigns on social media are a valuable source of information about parties' activities	5.54	1.371
I found that online political campaigns tell me which party have the features that I want for Malaysia	5.45	1.467
I found that online political campaigns keep me up to date about the party and politicians' activities	5.48	1.344
Total	5.42	1.253

Source: Author's data generated through AMOS 21.0

Table 3 presents the mean and standard deviation for political satire items. Humor and fun are the most engaging, with a mean score of 5.54 (SD = 1.565), followed by creative and entertaining content (M = 5.47, SD = 1.463). As a source of pleasure, political satire scored a mean of 5.32 (SD = 1.378), while enjoyment of such content rated slightly lower (M = 5.26, SD = 1.420). Satirical content that attracts attention and influences voting had a mean of 5.22 (SD = 1.586). The overall mean score is 5.36, reflecting a positive view of political satire among young voters.

Table 3. Mean and Standard Deviation Value for Political Satire

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
The element of humor and fun like political satire cartoons in certain online political campaigns can attract me to watch them a few times	5.54	1.565
I can say that online political satire can be a source of pleasure and entertainment	5.32	1.378
Online political campaigns that contain political satire do attract my mind and convince me to vote	5.22	1.586
I enjoyed seeing or watching political campaigns that contain political satire on online platforms	5.26	1.420
I found that the political satire element in online political campaigns is creative and entertaining	5.47	1.463
Total	5.36	1.293

Source: Author's data generated through AMOS 21.0

Table 4 presents the mean and standard deviation values for political credibility in online campaigns. Overall, respondents viewed these campaigns as credible (M = 5.10, SD = 1.564). Young voters agreed that such campaigns influence their decisions (M = 5.04, SD = 1.621) and considered them reliable (M = 5.03, SD = 1.567). Trustworthiness received a slightly lower mean of 5.02 (SD = 1.726). The overall mean score of 5.05 reflects a generally positive perception of political credibility among young voters.

Table 4. Mean and Standard Deviation Value for Political Credibility

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
I think online political campaigns are believable	5.10	1.564
I think voters can rely on online political campaigns	5.03	1.567
Online political campaigns are trustworthy	5.02	1.726
I personally think that because of online political campaigns, people will make a good decision for Malaysia	5.04	1.621
Total	5.05	1.498

Source: Author's data generated through AMOS 21.0

Table 5 shows the mean and standard deviation for Political Interactivity items. Respondents generally agree that online political campaigns offer various engagement opportunities (M = 5.40, SD = 1.449) and increase their interest in specific parties (M = 5.37, SD = 1.365). Many also share campaign content with friends (M = 5.07, SD = 1.729). However, fewer actively like or comment on posts (M = 4.82, SD = 1.796). The overall mean score of 5.17 reflects a positive perception, indicating that young voters value interactive features in online campaigns as part of their decision-making process.

Table 5. Mean and Standard Deviation Value for Political Interactivity

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
Online political campaigns allow me to respond in more than one way (e.g. participate in ongoing campaigns, click through to have detailed information etc.)	5.40	1.449
Online political campaigns increase my curiosity towards a certain political party	5.37	1.365
When I see political campaigns on a certain online platform, I usually share them with my friends	5.07	1.729
When I see political campaigns on a certain online platform, I actively participate in liking and commenting on the post	4.82	1.796
Total	5.17	1.363

Source: Author's data generated through AMOS 21.0

There is a notable correlation between political informativeness, satire, credibility, and interactivity in online campaigns and the attitudes of young voters. We conducted a Pearson correlation test to investigate the impact of these factors on the voting decisions of young voters in Klang Valley. This test also addresses hypotheses (H1, H2, H3, and H4). The correlation coefficient value's strength level is shown in Table 6.

H1: There is a significantly positive relationship between political informativeness and the attitude of young voters' voting decisions.

H2: There is a significantly positive relationship between political satire and the attitude of young voters' voting decisions.

H3: There is a significantly positive relationship between political credibility and the attitude of young voters' voting decisions.

H4: There is a significantly positive relationship between political interactivity and the attitude of young voters' voting decisions.

Table 6. Pearson's Correlation Scale (Senthilnathan, 2019)

Correlation Coefficient (r) Value	Indication
1	Perfect positive/negative correlation
± 0.90 to ± 0.99	Very high positive/negative correlation
± 0.70 to ± 0.99	High positive/negative correlation
± 0.50 to ± 0.70	Moderate positive/negative correlation
± 0.30 to ± 0.50	Low positive/negative correlation
± 0.10 to ± 0.30	Very low positive/negative correlation
± 0 to ± 0.10	Markedly low and Negligible correlation/negative correlation

Source: Author's data generated through AMOS 21.0

Table 6 and Table 7 indicate a strong positive correlation between all variables and young voters' decision-making in Malaysia. Political information ($r = 0.749$), satire ($r = 0.773$), credibility ($r = 0.728$), and interactivity ($r = 0.795$) all show significant correlations. According to Senthilnathan (2019), coefficients between 0.50 and 1 represent strong correlations. Therefore, H1, H2, H3, and H4 are accepted. These findings suggest that higher exposure to online political campaigns positively influences young voters' attitudes and decisions, reinforcing the importance of informative, credible, engaging, and interactive digital political content.

Table 7. Correlation Analysis Political Informativeness, Political Satire, Political Credibility, Political Interactivity and Young Voters Voting Decision (n=330). **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

	Political Informativeness	Political Satire	Political Credibility	Political Interactivity	Voters Decision
Political Informativeness	1	.739**	.715**	.774**	.749**
Political Satire	.739**	1	.716**	.820**	.773**
Political Credibility	.715**	.716**	1	.812**	.728**
Political Interactivity	.774**	.820**	.812**	1	.795**
Voters Decision	.749**	.773**	.728**	.795**	1

Source: Author's data generated through AMOS 21.0

5.0 Discussion

5.1 Political Informativeness and Voting Attitudes

Political informativeness positively influences young voters' attitudes ($r = .749$), supporting H1. This aligns with Allam et al. (2020), who highlighted the value of timely and accurate political content. High ratings for items like "online campaigns keep me up to date" indicate that young voters rely on clear and relevant information to shape their political choices and build confidence (Utari et al., 2023).

5.2 Political Satire and Voting Attitudes

Political satire shows a strong positive relationship with voter attitudes ($r = .773$), confirming H2. Satirical content is both creative and engaging, making complex political ideas easier to grasp. Respondents' appreciation for humorous content reflects their preference for emotionally resonant messages that stimulate political interest and critical thinking (Becker, 2020; Feldman, 2024).

5.3 Political Credibility and Voting Attitudes

Credibility is a key predictor of voting attitudes ($r = .728$), validating H3. Trustworthy and reliable messages—rated highly by respondents—are more persuasive. This supports research by Marquart et al. (2020), emphasizing that authenticity builds trust among critical and media-aware youth in an environment filled with misinformation.

5.4 Political Interactivity and Voting Attitudes

Political interactivity had the highest correlation with voting attitudes ($r = .795$), confirming H4. Respondents favoured features like commenting, sharing, and interactive posts. This supports Ohme et al. (2020), showing that interactivity enhances political involvement by fostering engagement and making young voters feel part of the political process.

6.0 Conclusion & Recommendations

In conclusion, this study underscores the strong influence of online political campaigns on young Malaysian voters, especially those actively engaged on social media platforms. To enhance future research, broader sampling should be considered, encompassing diverse regions, income groups, and educational backgrounds to ensure wider representation. The use of qualitative approaches such as interviews or focus groups could yield deeper insights into the motivations behind young voters' engagement with online political content. Longitudinal research would also be valuable in tracking behavioral changes over time, especially as social media trends evolve. Future studies could explore the impact of online campaigns on other demographic groups, including university students or older voters, to assess how digital media shapes political decisions across age groups. Moreover, examining the influence of political satire and humor on political preferences, as well as the ethical concerns surrounding online political manipulation, presents important new directions for understanding the dynamics of political communication in the digital age.

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Paper Contribution to Related Field of Study

This study contributes to political and communication research by highlighting the influence of online political campaigns on young voters' decision-making. It provides insights for policymakers to refine digital strategies and aids educators in fostering informed political participation, crucial for strengthening democracy in the digital age.

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