

Determinants of Campus Political Participation: A Case Study of AM, AC, and AT Faculties at UiTM Sabah, Malaysia.

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Abstract

In recent years, students' involvement in campus politics is not exhilarating compared to the early 1970s, when politics on campus started to arise. Participation in campus politics is not only focusing on campus elections but also on activism and debate, as well as discussion. This activity has a significant contribution for the future of democracy in Malaysia among the young generation. It is crucial to address these issues with the university students to ensure significant actions could be taken to encourage their participation and to prevent their existence in politics from lessening. Therefore, the researchers believe that there are several factors that are associated with students' participation in campus politics. In this quantitative exploratory study, descriptive analysis was used to determine the mean for the variables. Furthermore, inferential analysis using Kruskal-Wallis and Spearman were observed. The findings highlighted a significant difference in students' participation in campus politics between the Faculty of Administrative Science and Policy Studies (AM), the Faculty of Accountancy (AC), and the Faculty of Plantation and Agrotechnology (AT). On top of that, the factor of social media has a weak to moderate positive correlation among the three factors studied.

Keywords: Campus election, campus politics, student body, student government, students' political participation, students' politics.

INTRODUCTION

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In the year 2019, the Constitution (Amendment) Act 2019 in Malaysia was gazetted into law on September 10th. It lowered the voting age to 18 years, allowed for younger electoral candidates, and introduced automatic voter registration for adults aged 18 and above. According to data from the Election Commission (EC) in 2022, there are 1.4 million voters aged 18 to 20 (Kamarul Azhar 2022). Subsequently, the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) of Malaysia reported that there are 1.1 million students enrolled in university. This indicates that the new voters in Malaysia primarily consist of university students. University has long been regarded as an important space for enabling the engagement of students with politics and their participation in civil society more widely (Loader et al. 2015). University offers a distinctive environment where students can debate, examine political concepts,

and get involved in politics, such as through campus politics (Furlong et al. 2007). In a survey among undergraduates in Malaysia, student organisation involvement, campus freedom, and political literacy significantly predicted political participation (Ibrahim, 2024). Politicisation among students in university refers to campus politics, which is a combination of any activities associated with organising and managing the student body that significantly impact the higher education institutions, their system and every party involved generally (Klemencic & Park, 2018). However, in a recent study, the majority of young people in Malaysia are less interested in participating in politics (Muhammad et al. 2021). Given that campus politics is significant to students' engagement in actual politics, it is essential to explore campus political participation among university students to understand democratic participation among the younger generation in Malaysia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Model

This study uses the Civic Voluntarism Model (CVM), developed by Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry Brady (1995). Resources (time, money, skills), psychological engagement (interest, efficacy, knowledge), and recruitment networks (requests to participate) are the three factors that determine political participation. The authors of the model hypothesised that the three main reasons why people do not participate in political and civic activities are (a) because they cannot, (b) because they do not want to and (c) because nobody asked (Alscher et al. 2025). There are three independent variables in this study. The first independent variable is academic environment under the recruitment networks, which influences participation by providing institutional opportunities (Verba et al., 1995); the second variable is political knowledge under psychological engagement, which increases efficacy and likelihood of participation (Brady et al., 1995); and the third variable is social media under recruitment networks and resources, which lowers participation barriers and expands networks (Xenos et al., 2014).

University Students' Activism

University student activism in Malaysia flourished in the 1960s, whereby they were focusing on issues such as poverty, national language policies, and foreign conflicts. It has gone down in history as "the golden age of student movements". However, the Universities and University Colleges Act (UUCA) made its appearance as late as 1971, regulating students' activities, and in the 1975 amendments, it provided tighter controls on the involvement of students in real politics and heralded the

"subdued age of students". These restrictions included prohibitions on political participation, assembly, and affiliations with external political parties or organisations (Wan Kamal Mujani et al. 2014). Nonetheless, in the post-UUCA amendment and implementation of Undi18, student engagement has increased but is still cautious (Mohd. Zain et al. 2023).

As per Klemencic & Park (2018), political activities at the campus are a source of political information, knowledge, and interest, and all these are strong predictors of political participation. The campus setting directly and indirectly impacts the students' political behaviours. The academic environment is composed of students, teachers, administration, curriculum, and policies. Problems such as financial, bureaucratic, and governance issues are also haunting public sector universities. These problems related to academics, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities are one of the major sources and indicators of political participation. Students take a very keen interest in campus issues and try their best to overcome these. Different levels of expectation among students also motivate them to take part in political activities on campus (Yeoh, 2006; Khan & Rehman, 2018). Social networks and critical mass are very important, and the campus offers excellent opportunities for students with similar political interests to find each other and form dense social networks. These networks subsequently serve to support collective action and political engagement (Bennett 2003).

Academic Environment

A significant body of research posits that university academic and social experiences are crucial for political development. Scholars such as Brosz & Hoff (2021) and Spruill & Mondak (2020) found that exposure to diverse perspectives through coursework and extracurricular activities fosters political identity adjustment and openness to opposing views. However, this established view is not universal. Zagrebin & Kalinin (2021) found no significant impact from academic or social activities, presenting a direct contradiction. This discrepancy suggests that the relationship between the university environment and political development may be highly dependent on unmeasured contextual factors, such as national political culture or institutional mission. The present study addresses this gap by investigating this relationship within the distinct context of UiTM Sabah, aiming to clarify the conditions under which the academic environment does or does not influence student political participation on campus.

Political Knowledge

Political knowledge refers to ideal or basic knowledge in political grounds that can influence students' participation in the importance of campus politics at the university level. Generally, lack of political awareness can have an impact on the standard of democratic governance by causing people to make ill-informed decisions, favour policies, and participate in politics less (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 2023). According to Ojeda & Peacock (2020), political engagement can be causally impacted by education; the researchers propose that the causal effect of education on involvement is mostly driven by greater political knowledge and efficacy. Subsequently, Turner & Patel (2023) noted that encouraging meaningful participation among students in higher education contexts requires an awareness of political concepts, procedures, and challenges. The authors cite several obstacles that prevent students from developing political literacy, including a lack of information availability, a lack of interest in political matters, and the belief that politics has no bearing on students' daily lives. The authors' findings highlight the importance of political literacy for students and add to the continuing conversation about how education shapes knowledgeable and engaged citizens.

Social Media

According to Rhoads & Berdan (2020), the use of social media in the classroom can be a successful teaching strategy for raising undergraduate students' awareness, engagement, and participation in the political processes of their university. Smith et al. (2019) highlighted that there was a positive correlation between students' usage of social media and their involvement in political organisations, demonstrations, and other activist undertakings on campus. Based on Lim & Tan (2017), the use of social media is strongly positive for enhancing awareness of campus political issues among students. However, the researchers advise that the effects of social media are not always the same and might vary depending on contextual and individual factors. Therefore, they recommend that future studies keep examining the complex ways that social media affects students' political engagement and awareness on campus. It means that, even though it proves that social media influences students' awareness of the importance of campus politics, it does depend on how the student manages and utilises various social media platforms. Alper & Kahn (2021) adds significant insight into the nuanced relationship between college students' use of social media and political engagement. Through a comprehensive analysis of extant literature, the writers underscore the potential advantages and obstacles that social media poses in promoting political participation. Their findings highlight the necessity for educational institutions to

acknowledge the influence of social media on students' political identities and to establish welcoming spaces that promote engagement.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study is an exploratory study; therefore, there are two research questions (RQ) that have been addressed with two research objectives (RO).

RQ1 How does the level of participation in campus politics differ among students from the Faculty of Administrative Science and Policy Studies (AM), Faculty of Accountancy (AC), and Faculty of Agrotechnology (FA)?

RO1 To compare the level of students' participation in campus politics between the Faculty of Administrative Science and Policy Studies (AM), Faculty of Accountancy (AC), and Faculty of Agrotechnology (FA).

RQ2 How are social media usage, academic environment, and political knowledge associated with campus political participation?

RO3 To examine the association between academic environment, political knowledge and social media with the level of students' participation in campus politics.

METHODOLOGY

Sample Size

This exploratory study targeted a sample of 180 respondents, consistent with Roscoe's (1975) recommendation that samples between 30 and 500 are suitable for preliminary analyses. Given the study's multivariate nature (factor analysis), this size aligns with Comrey & Lee's (1992) guideline that 100–200 cases yield reliable factor structures.

Quota sampling and purposive sampling were employed in this study to meet the objectives of the study. Quota sampling was used to ensure proportional representation of faculties: 60 students from the Faculty of Administrative Sciences and Policy Studies (AM), 60 students from the Faculty of Accountancy (AC) and 60 students from the Faculty of Plantation and Agrotechnology (AT). All the faculties that had been chosen are from University Technology MARA (UiTM) Sabah Branch, Campus Kota Kinabalu. This is aligned with Etikan & Bala's (2017) recommendations for exploratory studies with stratified non-random subgroups. Meanwhile, purposive

sampling (Patton, 2002) targeted students with varying political engagement levels to capture diverse motivations and barriers.

The three faculties were selected based on the background of their fields as well as their participation trends in campus politics at UiTM Sabah. The Faculty of Administrative Science and Policy Studies (AM) is highly active in campus politics and consistently secures positions within the Supreme Council of the Student Representative Council. Conversely, the Faculty of Accountancy (AC) shows moderate participation but often manages to attain posts in the Supreme Council, despite lacking a political science foundation in their field. Similarly, the Faculty of Plantation and Agrotechnology (AT) tends to send a larger number of participants; nonetheless, they struggle to secure representation in the Supreme Council of the Student Representative Council.

Data Collection

This study has attained a Branch Ethics Review Committee approval letter for UiTM Sabah on 10th January 2025 with reference number BERK/1/2025/MR419 and aligns with ICH Good Clinical Practice Guidelines, Malaysia Good Clinical Practice Guidelines and the Declaration of Helsinki.

The measurement used in this study is a five-point Likert scale for all variables, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The questionnaire consists of 5 sections: Section A (Demographic Information), Section B (Academic Environment Influence), Section C (Political Knowledge Influence), Section D (Social Media Influence) and Section E (Level of Students' Participation in Campus Politics Based on Faculty).

This study is a quantitative study where data was collected using a questionnaire adapted from an online survey using Google Forms. The analysis conducted in this study employs SPSS software to assess the two objectives. The background of the respondents was outlined using descriptive analysis, and the mean score for each faculty was reported accordingly. Furthermore, a Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted to determine whether the differences are statistically significant. Additionally, to tackle the second objective, the Spearman Rho test was utilised to investigate the correlation between participation and each predictor.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Reliability and Normality Test

Acceptable reliability, $\alpha \geq 0.8$: Good reliability and $\alpha \geq 0.9$: Excellent reliability (but may indicate redundancy). Based on Table 1 the analysis yielded $\alpha = 0.869$ (based on 20 items), exceeding the threshold of 0.7 recommended for social science research (Awang, 2015; Hair et al., 2017). This confirms the scale's high reliability for measuring campus political participation and the factors such as academic environment, political knowledge and social media, that associate in the Malaysian university context.

Table 1:
Reliability Test

Construct	Cronbach Alpha	No Of Items
All section	0.869	20

Kolmogorov- Smirnov test is used to test the normality of the questionnaire to determine whether it is normally distributed. Presented in Table 2, all variables show <0.05 , which significantly deviate from normality $*p* < 0.001$. Therefore, nonparametric tests are used to test this study.

Table 2:
Normality Test

Variable	Mean	Sd	Kolmogorov- Smirnov
Level Student Participation	3.1522	0.46957	<0.001
Academic Environment	3.5922	0.89651	<0.001
Social Media	4.3167	0.7062	<0.001
Political Knowledge	3.7600	0.81368	<0.001

Respondents Background

Table 3 illustrates that the study's respondents include 122 females (67.8%), which is a greater number than the 58 males (32.2%). The age group of 21-23 has the highest representation, with 79 individuals accounting for 43.9% of the total respondents. Furthermore, 111 individuals, representing 61.7%, are enrolled as diploma students, while 69 individuals, accounting for 38.3%, are degree students. A total of 60 respondents, representing 33.3%, were selected from each faculty, while 140 respondents, accounting

for 77.8%, reported no prior experience as student representatives at the faculty level.

Table 3:
Demographic Profile

	N	%
Gender		
Male	58	32.2
Female	122	67.8
Age		
18-20	81	45
21-23	79	43.9
24 and above	20	11.1
Current Academic Undertaking		
Diploma	111	61.7
Degree	69	38.3
Faculty		
AM	60	33.3
AC	60	33.3
AT	60	33.3
Experience of Being Student Representative at Faculty		
Have Experienced	40	22.2
Never Have Experienced	140	77.8

Objective 1: To Compare the Level of Students' Participation in Campus Politics Between the Faculty of Administrative Science and Policy Studies (AM), Faculty of Accountancy (AC), And Faculty of Agrotechnology (FA)

The first objective of this study is to compare the level of students' participation in campus politics between the Faculty of Administrative Science and Policy Studies (AM), the Faculty of Accountancy (AC), and the Faculty of Agrotechnology (FA). The Kruskal-Wallis test was employed. Table 4 of the Kruskal-Wallis test yielded a significant result $\chi^2(2) = 15.398$, $*p* < .001$, indicating that participation levels differ across at least three faculties. AT had the highest mean rank, 100.4, suggesting greater participation than the other faculties, AC followed 91.8 while AM had the lowest participation at 79.3. This finding is supported by the voters' turnout in the campus election in Table 5 whereby AC scores 99.3% and AT is 99.01%, while AM had a lower turnout of 85.02%. Considering the respondents' backgrounds, it is noteworthy that only AM has formal education focused on government and politics. Interestingly, there has been a decline in voter turnout for campus elections over the past two years,

with this group exhibiting the lowest level of participation in the study. This contradicts previous studies (Delli Carpini & Keeter 2023, Ojeda & Peacock 2020), which indicate that knowledge of politics is one of the factors contributing to political participation. Nonetheless, Zagrebin & Kalinin (2024) noted that faculty choice does not significantly impact students' political orientations.

On the other hand, the finding for AT is the highest and it aligns with Table 5 for voters' turnout as well as Table 6 on the number of candidates for campus election. For the year 2023/2024 it had 99.01% turnout and in the year 2024/2025 it reached 100%. Meanwhile for the candidate for the election, it increases to 100% for 2023/2024, from 3 candidates to 6 candidates in 2024/2025. For AC as the second highest in the Kruskal-Wallis Table 4, the voters' turnout has decreased from 99.3% to 85.79% in 2024/2025, while the candidates for election have increased 66.76% from 3 candidates to 5 candidates. Despite the decrease in turnout for AM, the candidates for campus election have increased 40%, from 5 candidates in 2023/2024 to 7 candidates in 2024/2025. These results, however, may also be attributed to the fact that AM has the largest student population in UiTM Sabah. Consequently, they managed to present a greater number of candidates, and the voter turnout may be attributed to the students' mobility. According to Dhal (1971), as the population grows, an individual's perceived influence on the election outcome decreases. This may apply to AM, as it is the largest faculty, thus complicating efforts to motivate all students to participate.

Table 4:

The Kruskal Wallis Test on Level of Students' Participation in Campus Politics Between the Faculty

Variable	Faculty	N	Mean Rank	Test statistics χ^2	df	Sig.
Level Student Participation	AM	60	79.3	15.398	2	<.001
	AC	60	91.8			
	AT	60	100.4			
N = 180						

Table 5:
Percentage of Voter Turnout in UiTM Sabah's Election 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 Based on Faculties

Faculty	Election 2023/2024 (%)	Election 2024/2025 (%)
AM (Admin. Science & Policy Studies)	85.02%	75.26%
AC (Faculty of Accountancy)	99.30%	85.79%
AT (Faculty of Agrotechnology)	99.01%	100.00%

Source: Hal Ehwal Pelajar UiTM Sabah

Table 6:
The Number of Candidates for Election 2023/2024 and Election 2024/2025 at UiTM Sabah

Faculty	Election 2023/2024 (Candidate)	Election 2024/2025 (%)	Change
AM (Admin. Science & Policy Studies)	5	7	+40%
AC (Faculty of Accountancy)	3	5	+66.7%
AT (Faculty of Agrotechnology)	3	6	+100%

Source: Hal Ehwal Pelajar UiTM Sabah

Objective 2: To Examine the Association Between Academic Environment, Political Knowledge and Social Media with the Level of Students' Participation in Campus Politics.

The second objective for this study is to examine the association between three different variables consist of academic environment, political knowledge and social media, with the level of students' participation in campus politics. This objective is to examine the respondents, the test used is Spearman rho. According to Hair et al. (2019) for exploratory studies, $\rho \geq 0.3$ with $*p* < 0.05$ is practically significant., while according to Field (2018) Spearman's ρ values between 0.1–0.3 indicate weak relationships, 0.3–0.5 moderate, and >0.5 strong.

Firstly, referring to Table 7 for the academic environment association with students' participation shows $\rho = -0.040$ with $*p* > .05$, therefore it indicates no correlation between students' academic environment with students' participation in campus politics. Based on Table 8, it indicates that discussions on political topics in classrooms have not significantly encouraged respondents to participate in campus

politics, as evidenced by the lowest mean score in the survey responses. This suggests that although political discussions may be present in academic settings, they may not be engaging enough or structured in a way that effectively encourages students to take part in political activities. The existing literature consistently establishes a strong correlation between academic environment and political participation (Brosz & Hoff, 2021; Spruill & Mondak (2020). However, Zagrebin & Kalinin (2024) noted that academic performance and faculty choice do not significantly impact students' political orientations. Rather, the influence of teachers and disciplines of a socio-political orientation leads to an increase in political literacy and greater involvement of students in the political sphere. Furthermore, these findings align with recent research showing that academic environments alone, without targeted democratic education or active engagement opportunities, may have limited impact on student political participation (Sadeli, 2025).

Table 7:

The Spearman Correlation Matrix of Level of Students' Participation and Academic Environment, Political Knowledge and Social Media

Variable	1. Participation	2. Academic Env.	3. Political Know.	4. Social Media
1. Student Participation	1.000	-0.040	0.139	0.243**
2. Academic Environment	-0.040	1.000	0.733**	0.340**
3. Political Knowledge	0.139	0.733**	1.000	0.498**
4. Social Media	0.243**	0.340**	0.498**	1.000

Table 8:

Descriptive Analysis on Academic Environment Influence Students' Participation

	Disagree Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
1. My academic coursework has made me more aware of the importance of campus politics	15	9	51	61	44	3.61
2. Discussions on political topics in the classroom have encouraged me to participate in campus politics	22	24	54	52	28	3.22
3. The lecturers in my faculty play a role in shaping my interest in campus political activities	7	14	45	65	49	3.75

4. I believe that my exposure into current political issues in class has increased my understanding of the political dynamics on campus	5	12	41	73	49	3.82
5. The programs and events organized by my faculty encourage me to engage in campus political activities	12	11	59	62	36	3.55
N=180						

Secondly, political knowledge association with students' participation, $\rho = 0.139$ with $*p* > .05$, indicating there is association between students' political knowledge with students' participation in campus politics, but it is weak. This suggests that while political knowledge may contribute to engagement, it is not a major driving factor in student participation. This is supported by Table 9, the findings from the survey conducted in this research, which showed that students strongly agree (mean = 4.15) that political knowledge helps them make informed decisions about campus political events such as voting in student elections. Furthermore, students expressed agreement (mean = 4.14) that political knowledge is important in understanding the role of student representation in campus politics. Literature suggests that political knowledge is important in encouraging political participation (Ojeda & Peacock, 2020; Delli Carpini & Keeter, 2023; Turner & Patel, 2021), however past studies also suggest that knowledge alone is insufficient to motivate participation without meaningful channels for engagement (Edera, 2023). Consequently, prior research corroborates the findings of this study.

Thirdly, only social media shows ($\rho = 0.243$, $*p* < .01$). Which means social media has a weak but significant positive correlation with students' participation in campus politics. Furthermore, Table 10 reinforces the impact of social media on student political engagement. The highest mean score of 4.37 shows that majority of respondents strongly agree that social media influences student political participation in campus politics. This is a compelling indication that social media plays a crucial role in shaping political engagement among students. Additionally, 66 respondents agree and 93 strongly agree that social media influences voting behavior during campus elections, as reflected in the mean score of 4.36. These findings align with the previous study by Rhoads & Berdan, 2020; Smith et al., 2019, where social media correlates with political participation. Nonetheless, the weak correlation in the findings is corroborated by Motta et al. (2018) whereby despite social media's success as a tool for political engagement, it has simultaneously led to information overload and misinformation, hence discouraging students political engagement. Accordingly, social media presents challenges in terms

of misinformation and ideological echo chambers (Alper & Kahn 2021). While according to Amsalem & Zoizner (2023) in a preregistered meta-analysis of 76 studies (N=442,136), they reveal no evidence of any political learning on social media in observational studies, and statistically significant but substantively small increases in knowledge in experiments.

Table 9:
Descriptive Analysis on Political Knowledge Influence Students' Participation

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Stronly Agree	Mean
1. Political literacy gained through my studies helps me actively participate in political organizations or movements on campus	13	17	59	61	30	3.43
2. I believe that political knowledge is important for understanding the role of student representation in campus politics	4	5	29	65	77	4.14
3. The more I know about political processes, the more likely I am to engage in campus political activities	13	19	50	62	36	3.49
4. Political knowledge helps me make informed decisions about campus political events, such as voting in student elections	3	9	20	74	74	4.15
5. I feel that understanding political issues increases my interest in participating in campus elections and other political activities	13	11	54	63	39	3.57
N = 180						

Table 10:
Descriptive Analysis on Social Media Influence Students' Participation

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
1. I believe that social media influences the political participation of students in campus elections	2	2	17	64	95	4.3778
2. I believe that social media influences the voting behavior of students during campus elections	2	2	17	66	93	4.3667
3. I believe that social media significantly influences the political participation of students in campus elections	1	3	22	70	84	4.2944
4. I believe that social media enhances the effectiveness of student association campaigns	1	3	19	65	92	4.3556
5. I believe that social media can lead to political polarization within student associations	1	6	29	66	78	4.1889
N = 180						

RECOMMENDATION AND IMPLICATION

The implications of such findings point to the necessity of enhancing student engagement in campus politics through targeted intervention on salient factors such as political knowledge and social media usage. Despite the correlation analysis indicating that political knowledge and social media usage have weak moderate positive correlations and weak positive correlation, respectively, with student engagement, there are areas in both aspects to intervene. Improvement in either variable would help facilitate the cultivation of a politically more engaged student body at UiTM Sabah.

First and foremost, the positive correlation coefficient in political knowledge suggests a trend. While not statistically reliable, it hints that as political knowledge increases, participation might also tend to increase, but the link is very weak and inconsistent. This supports that knowledge does not automatically translate into participation, echoing results from prior studies indicating students may possess political knowledge but remain inactive (Edera, 2023; Medina et al., 2025). Therefore, universities should pair efforts to increase political knowledge with structured

opportunities for active involvement in campus politics (Edera et al., 2023). University can run workshops and seminars on campus governance, electoral processes, and the impact of student representation on university cultures would also equip the student body. Additionally, requesting educators to integrate political discussion into their current classes will enable students to critically address actual political issues in society. This integrated approach addresses the gap between knowing and doing that emerged in the data (Edera *et al.*, 2023).

Secondly, the discovery that social media exhibits a "weak but significant" link with political participation is impactful due to its complexity. It indicates that social media is a significant component, but not the entirety of the situation. Therefore, student government and university should strategically use multiple types of social media for communication as channels of communication instead of focusing on one single social media. Previous studies demonstrate that platform diversification enhances political knowledge and mobilization effectiveness by engaging a wider and more diverse student demographic (Intyaswati *et al.* 2021). Given the positive correlation between social media and political participation, in terms of student campaigning during the campus study body elections, it is important for the student government to be social media savvy. Studies on student engagement have emphasized that tailored social media skills correlate with higher political mobilization and participation (Puspasari *et al.* 2024). Nonetheless, due to echo chamber of social media, it is suggested that student government alongside university promote digital literacy and civil discourse especially in identifying misinformation and algorithms bias.

RESEARCH LIMITATION AND FUTURE SUGGESTION

This study is an exploratory study that investigated three faculties namely Faculty of Administrative Science and Policy Studies (AM), Faculty of Accountancy (AC), and Faculty of Agrotechnology (AT). Although the results provide useful information on student political involvement in these faculties, they are not representative of all UiTM Sabah students. Faculties such as Business Management (BA), Applied Science (AS), Hospitality and Tourism (HM), and College of Computing, Informatics, and Mathematics (CS) are not included in the study and therefore restrict the generalization of the results. In addition, because the study employed survey data, the answers were susceptible to self-reporting biases that may have influenced the quality of the data. The students might have overestimated or underestimated their extent of engagement due to social desirability bias. Aside from that, while the study was founded on political knowledge, learning environment, and social media as they relate to student motivation, other determinants such as personal interest, socioeconomic status, and peer group were not given much

consideration.

To increase the representativeness and usefulness of future research, future research is suggested to have more respondents by including all faculties in UiTM Sabah. The addition of colleges such as Business Management (BA), Applied Science (AS), Hospitality and Tourism (HM), and the College of Computing, Informatics, and Mathematics (CS) would allow more representative research on student participation in campus politics. By adding students from various areas of study, subsequent research can provide a better picture of the determinants of, or hindrances to, political engagement among students. Finally, future studies should utilize qualitative methods like focus groups or one-on-one interviews to better understand the reasons why student participation in campus politics is encouraged or discouraged. Qualitative method study of attitudes among students could shed some light on obstacles and solution mechanisms of greater political participation by students at the university level. Finally, further studies need to consider other variables that can possibly influence student political participation, such as institutional support, home life, and belonging to a peer group. The formulation of how these external circumstances influence academic, and internet participation can lead to a more explanatory account of student political participation.

CONCLUSION

The exploratory study aimed to contribute to preliminary understanding of level of students' political participation and what prompts students to involve themselves in campus politics among three faculties, namely, Faculty of Administrative Science and Policy Studies (AM), Faculty of Accountancy (AC), and Faculty of Agrotechnology (AT) at UiTM Sabah. As evident in the study, there are significant differences in participation levels among the faculties, with AT students exhibiting the highest participation and voter turnout, followed by AC, and the lowest participation observed in AM. Interestingly, despite AM students' formal education in government and politics, their participation was lowest, suggesting that political knowledge alone may not directly translate into political engagement in a campus context, aligning with recent debates in the literature.

The study also explored the associations between academic environment, political knowledge, social media, and student participation. Results indicate that academic environment and political knowledge have weak, non-significant associations with participation, whereas social media shows a weak but significant positive correlation. This highlights the growing importance of social media as a communication tool and

engagement platform in campus politics, while traditional academic factors may play a limited role in fostering participation.

Overall, this study contributes important contextual insights by demonstrating the variability of political participation across faculties with different academic focuses and underscores the nuanced role of social media in political engagement among students. These findings provide a foundation for future confirmatory research and suggest that efforts to enhance campus political participation should consider targeted social media strategies along with fostering practical engagement opportunities beyond academic knowledge alone.

The result of this study cannot be generalized since it is an exploratory study. It is not yet representative of the student voice from every faculty involved, nor is it yet tackling the ingrained social and cultural reasons that might be suppressing participation. These are gaps that future research will have to try to fill, seeping into each and every corner of UiTM Sabah in the interest of creating a fuller picture of political participation among students.

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Author contributions

Afiq Daniel Bin Ahmad Raud was a student from the Faculty of Administrative Science and Policy Studies at UiTM Sabah Branch. He was responsible for all aspects of this work, including conceptualization, methodology, formal analysis, investigation, data curation, and writing (original draft, review, and editing).

Muhammad Asyari Bin Markus was a student from the Faculty of Administrative Science and Policy Studies at UiTM Sabah Branch. He was responsible for all aspects of this work, including conceptualization, methodology, formal analysis, investigation, data curation, and writing (original draft, review, and editing).

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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