

VIVVOTE

***Shahidah Abd Razak¹, Asmidar Lokman², Shawal Sahid Hamid @ Hussain³
Nur Khairunnisa Liyana Ahmad⁴**

^{1,2,3} Faculty of Administrative Science & Policy Studies, UiTM Seremban 3, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

⁴ Faculty of Administrative Science & Policy Studies, UiTM Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia

*Corresponding author's email: shahidah056@uitm.edu.my

ABSTRACT

Voting is an act of civic participation in a community. It is the engagement between people in the community and the structure of the government. Civic participation in a community is being influenced by several factors such as knowledge, decision-making skill, attitude, and values. Since the awareness of voting among young people is still low, many of them are eligible voters but not registered due to their indifference towards voting responsibly. Many are reported as not interested to vote. As Malaysia has legislated the new law of 18 years as the minimum age to vote thus in 2023, all 18 years old will perform their civic duties as a citizen of this country to vote in the 15th General Election. Their participation and decision-making in the community are crucial. The purpose of this product is to create awareness among new young voters in executing their civic responsibility in the community. It is also offering an insight to the policymakers in strategizing the approach to encourage young people to go out and vote. Based on the model of forming a civic competence, this product/framework aims to assist the government in cultivating the value of civic participation among young people through voting. A survey was conducted to identify the level of civic participation and voting awareness among young people in the country. The survey found that the majority of the respondents are aware of voting responsibility and actively participate in their community.

Keywords: voting, community, civic participation, framework.

1. INTRODUCTION

Civic participation is one of the democratic values that nurture decision-making in society. The Malaysian Federal Constitution flourishes the values of democracy by giving the right to its people to be involved in the decision-making process. As more than 2/3 majority support the reduction of the voting age in national and state elections from 21 years to 18 years values of democracy among young people are strengthened. The Parliament passed the amendment on 16 July 2019. This ensures better participation of young people to be involved in the political process in Malaysia. Come 2023, young people of the age of 18 years will be casting votes and perform their civic duties as a citizen of Malaysia by voting in the 15th General Election. However, doubts have been cast by various parties in society on the ability of young people to decide responsibly. Many discussions have since been conducted to clear the air. With this, some question arises, whether young people will vote and vote responsibly; whether they are considered not doing their duty as a citizen by refusing to vote. The survey, therefore, is being conducted among 18-21 years old to identify their awareness of voting as civic participation.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

In the last election, the 14th Malaysian general election, about 1.5 million registered young voters failed to vote. This is alarming as it signals the indifference of young people in performing their rights and duty as a citizen. With the new legislation passed by the Parliament, firmer action should be taken to ensure the rights are not taken for granted by young people. Voting is part of their civic participation in

a community. Therefore, this study aimed at identifying the level of awareness of young people on voting and civic participation.

3. OBJECTIVES

This study is conducted to identify the level of voting awareness and civic participation of young people. This can provide UiTM data to hold an awareness campaign amongst UiTM students to vote. It can also serve as an insight to the policy makers in strategizing the approach to educate young people on the significance and responsibility as citizens and voters. As the values of democratic values flourish (vote 18), civic participation among youngsters is expected to increase. Therefore, this study is conducted to see the factors that led to their participation in voting among society.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

As countries progress, their history of struggles to achieve the current prosperity, stability and peace are often forgotten by the younger generation. Many are concerned that the patriotic sense of young people is fading. Studies have shown a low patriotic spirit among the younger generation has taken place both in Malaysia and in other countries, which makes patriotism a global issue (Sitti Hasnah et al. 2015). Since the spirit of patriotism is influenced by the environment, the practice of patriotism carried out by each of the generations after independence is not equal to the one practiced by the generation who lived during the colonial period. This phenomenon posed a major challenge to Malaysia as young people are reluctant to participate in voting, indicating a lack of patriotism. Voting can be associated with patriotism as patriotism is associated with the appreciation of national symbols and values on one side versus beliefs in protecting the country from "outsiders" on the other (Lay & Torney-Purta, 2001). Voting is considered a symbol of concern and awareness in ensuring the future of the country.

According to Campbell (2006), civic participation includes many sides of the political dimension of an individual, such as participation in elections and trust in the institutions of the State. The other dimensions of civic participation are political participation, social participation, cultural participation, and economic participation, all for the betterment of people's lives through the cooperation between citizens and government (Glaeser et al., 2007). This study focuses on social participation where young people's involvement in the community is examined which eventually leads to political participation materialized by voting. This is important as cooperation in the community is very important as the government cannot develop on its own. It needs the participation of its citizens. Higher participation indicates a higher level of patriotism among citizens.

4.1: Knowledge

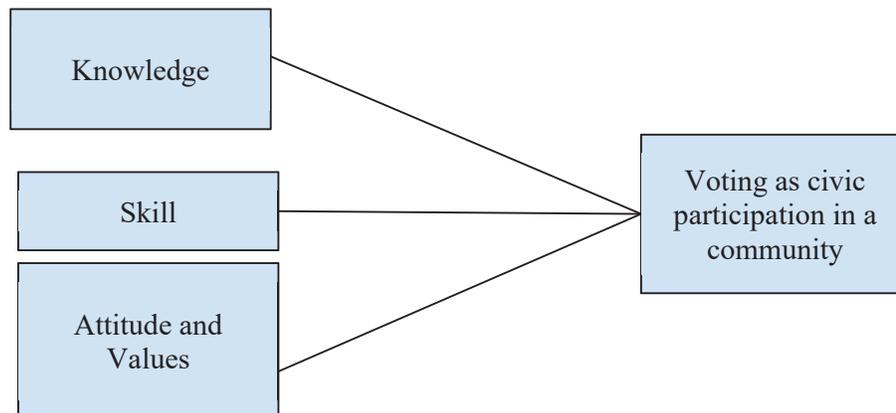
Several studies conducted on active citizenship found that the factor of knowledge contributes to civic participation. For example, the choice theory emphasizes how individuals seek civic political information based on their education, knowledge, and motivation. This is essential as they will use such information and efficacy to fit into the social norms regarding participation. This also emphasized personal/group incentives for participation. In the light of the theory, one way to encourage young people to vote is to offer civic education (Neuman & Neuman, 1986). Thus, making education one of the important elements in promoting civic participation within the society. Civic education in Malaysia is taught formally in schools where children are exposed to the history and the structure of the country. A more subtle civic education takes place in the daily activities of the school children. Activities such as singing the national anthem, hoisting the Malaysian flag during the assembly, reciting the Rukun Negara, or learning the national language, Bahasa Malaysia. Apart from having formal and informal civic education, access to good quality education is undeniable to make civic participation successful (UN, 2011). Hence recognizing the importance of civic education where the agent of civic participation is provided by the schools (Jurs, 2014).

4.2: Skill

Skill is another important factor in civic participation where decision making skill is key in guiding youth to vote. Studies found that psychosocial factors such as factions, race, traditional group, loyalties of the family rather than party manifesto, patronage, issue-oriented, and party loyalty are more important in decision making to vote. Other than that, kingship, caste, membership in a village faction and family play important roles in voters' choices (Muhammad & Hasan, 2016). This means the motivation to vote lies within the community a person lives in. Meanwhile, in Australia, it was found that young Australians will give their commitment to vote when it relates to social issues that they are involved in (Edwards, 2007; Winchester et al., 2016). This shows that by becoming an active part of the community, youth are more engaged with civic participation. Feeling the sense of belongingness to their community plays a very important role to influence their decision to vote. Without this civic skill, people fail to engage in voting (Livingstone & Markham, 2008).

4.3: Values

Values are defined as enduring beliefs that influence choices an actor makes from available means to achieve the desired end (Rokeach, 1973). Values, therefore, have a meaningful association with voting. This is because values are a long-lasting guide to a person in achieving something he aspires to. Values such as equality, freedom, national security, world peace are among some of them. Despite hundreds of values, all of the different value types identified in the general theory of value contents and structure (Schwartz, 1992) may be relevant in different circumstances. Malaysia being a country in the East is deep in values. Values such as respect, tolerance, acceptance, and peace-loving are among some of them. However, the value of voting is highly associated with a function of the ideological content of the political discourse (Barnea & Schwartz, 1998). Thus, may explain the reason why young people shun voting. Especially when voting is about electing politicians who later were found to be ineffective or corrupt. Based on the theory placing three components to civic participation, this study adopts the theoretical framework as follows;



Adapted from: The model of forming civic competence (Jurs, 2014)

5. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a quantitative method in which a cross-sectional research design was used. It is designed to collect data at a specific time. This study is interested in identifying the knowledge, skills, and attitudes/ values of young people in voting as a part of their civic participation. Therefore, a survey is deployed to gather relevant data from the identified sample who are the youth. Data was collected using cluster sampling due to the large population. The respondents will be representing the population of young people age 18-21 as this study is unable to sample the entire population. The instrument used is the questionnaire which was developed based on the theoretical framework. The questionnaire consists of four sections which include the demographic profile, civic participation, knowledge, skill,

values, and attitudes. The data was collected through a google form distributed to identified key respondents of the age required. The form was then distributed through the key respondents to the rest of the required respondents. The data were collected within four days to reach the required sample size of 384. The number of respondents however reached 903. The data was analyzed to find the mean to all variables stated. Mean is used to identify the central tendency of the variables tested.

6. SOLUTIONS

Campaigns on voting awareness through values of civic participation should be executed aggressively especially on the skill component. Syllabus in schools should also be more creative and embed hands-on experience to voting registration and the institution that manages the voting process in Malaysia. This framework will help the government and also the education system to come out with more specific planning and spread awareness among young people particularly to exercise their power as voters. Application, games, etc. can be used as a medium to cultivate the feeling of responsibility in society among young people. Universities also can have extracurricular activities that can help the student to express their feelings, discuss patriotic values and democracy.

7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

	Variables	Mean
1.	Civic participation	3.58
2.	Knowledge	4.56
3.	Skill	3.66
4.	Attitude and Values	4.37

Based on the data analyzed indicates that young people have low civic participation in their community with a mean score of 3.58. The highest mean is shown in knowledge on civic participation by most of the respondents with a mean score of 4.56. Whereas a lower mean score of 3.66 is reflecting that young people lack the skills in civic participation. However, young people have a positive attitude and good values towards civic participation shown by the mean score of 4.37. The overall result shows that it is not the lack of knowledge that becomes the barrier to civic participation and voting. However, it is the knowledge that has failed to be translated into skill in civic participation and eventually voting. This can be salvaged by attitudes and values that show high potential for youth's civic participation and voting. This led to the invention of this product where the highlight will be on building the skill of young people in civic participation based on the knowledge that they already possessed. Eventually leads to voting.

8. NOVELTY

This framework of innovation is aimed to shed knowledge on the importance of awareness or civic duties among young people in this country. This framework will assist youth, UiTM students particularly, to add their knowledge on the importance of becoming aware of their responsibility as citizens of this country. Other than being academically important, it also has the value of sustainable development. This product supports environmentally friendly, going paperless, and becoming a vital part of embracing Industry 4.0 by using a QR code. Since it is electronic-based, it is not bound to time limitations. Thus, available anytime and anyplace.

The framework also will offer the government a solution to create awareness among citizens particularly youngsters in exercising their rights as citizens of this country. This democratic value (the

right to vote) is very important in the policy-making of the country. This framework will help the government to come out with specific solutions as the young people are among the biggest group that will exercise their rights in the 15th General Election. The biggest target group will be secondary school and also tertiary education as they are among the leaders of the next generation. A revised syllabus containing games and applications is among the possible software in educating young people in exercising their rights as voters.

The finding will also assist the education system in schools and also universities in cultivating the values of democracy and responsibilities among the students. It is not only about voting but also about the responsibility as part of a community. The awareness should be cultivated since they are children and through the formal education system. They learn about respecting each other in a culturally diverse country. Among the values are, respecting each other, equality, and freedom. The school syllabus should be revised in line with educating young people on their rights and responsibility.

9. COMMERCIALIZATION

This framework can be used by the government as a tool for awareness among new young voters. It also can be sold to radio station Negeri Sembilan to discuss in their program during the upcoming election. A collaboration with Suruhanjaya Pilihan Raya Malaysia (SPR) and Akademi Pilihan Raya (APR) will be fully utilized with the new framework. APR, an already established program with students of UiTM, will create a module to be used in schools and universities to educate young voters on the importance of their participation in voting.

10. CONCLUSION

To successfully implement the passing of the law of minimum voting age of 18, the participation of the youth is needed. The findings show that the youth have lower skills in civic participation but high regard for knowledge on civic participation. They too have a positive attitude and values towards civic participation. With the support of knowledge and values and attitude, it is possible to harness the potential of youth in civic participation and eventually voting in the next election. Due to the importance of election for a democratic country, the participation of the youth is vital to ensure that democratic practices last. Therefore, the implementation of enhancing awareness on youths is very important for the nation's future.

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