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**COGNITIVE ENGAGEMENT AND ONLINE POLITICAL
PARTICIPATION ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER AMONG YOUTHS
IN NIGERIA AND MALAYSIA**

AISHAT ADEBISI ABDULRAUF



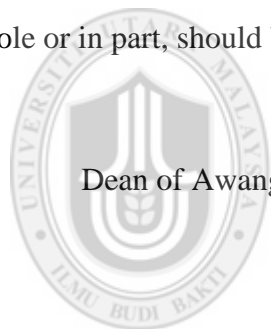
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Abstrak

Peranan media sosial dari segi penyertaan politik dalam talian tidak boleh dipandang remeh. Namun, agak kurang kajian dijalankan berkaitan fenomena ini, terutamanya dari perspektif perbandingan. Oleh itu, kajian ini menggunakan Teori Penglibatan Kognitif (CET) untuk mengkaji hubungan antara Akses kepada Maklumat Politik di Facebook dan Twitter (APIFT), Minat kepada Politik (PI), Kepuasan terhadap Polisi (PS) dan Penyertaan Politik dalam talian di Facebook dan Twitter (OPPFT) di Nigeria dan Malaysia yang digabungkan, serta secara individu mengikut negara. Peranan Pengetahuan Politik (PK) sebagai penyederhana dalam hubungan ini turut dianalisis. Satu kajian keratan rentas telah dijalankan ke atas 369 pelajar pra-ijazah daripada Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria dan Universiti Utara Malaysia. Borang soal selidik telah digunakan untuk mengumpul data yang dianalisis menggunakan Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) dan Partial Least Squares-MultiGroup Analysis (PLS-MGA). Hasil kajian menunjukkan semua hubungan langsung yang dihipotesis antara APIFT, PI, dan PS dengan OPPFT dalam kajian ini diterima bagi gabungan responden, responden Nigeria dan Malaysia secara individu, kecuali untuk hubungan antara PS dan OPPFT bagi responden Malaysia. Juga, PK tidak menyederhana hubungan antara APIFT dan OPPFT bagi responden gabungan serta responden Malaysia, bagaimanapun ia menjadi penyederhana untuk responden Nigeria. Begitu juga dalam hubungan antara PI dan OPPFT, PK tidak menyederhanakan hubungan bagi responden gabungan dan responden Nigeria, bagaimanapun ia menyederhana untuk responden Malaysia. Tambahan lagi, PK tidak menyederhana hubungan antara PS dan OPPFT bagi responden gabungan dan responden Malaysia tetapi menyederhana untuk responden Nigeria. Selain itu, bagi perbezaan negara dari segi hubungan langsung, tidak terdapat perbezaan yang signifikan antara responden Nigeria dan Malaysia dari segi hubungan antara APIFT dan OPPFT, bagaimanapun terdapat perbezaan yang signifikan bagi hubungan antara PI dan PS dengan OPPFT. Secara umumnya, kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa APIFT, PI dan PS mengurangkan jurang dalam OPPFT dalam kalangan belia di Nigeria dan Malaysia. Di samping itu, PK juga merupakan penyederhana yang berpotensi untuk hubungan ini. Dengan itu, kajian ini telah menyumbang kepada pemodelan hubungan antara CET dan penyertaan politik. Jadi, penemuan kajian empirikal ini menambah kepada pengetahuan mengenai penyertaan politik dalam talian.

Kata kunci: media social, penyertaan politik dalam talian, penglibatan kognitif, , Nigeria, Malaysia.

Abstract

The role of social media in online political participation cannot be understated. Yet, limited research has been conducted in this area. Thus, this study aims to investigate this phenomenon in comparative terms from the cognitive engagement perspective. This study adopts the Cognitive Engagement Theory (CET) to examine the relationship between Access to Political Information on Facebook and Twitter (APIFT), Political Interest (PI) and Policy Satisfaction (PS) and Online Political Participation of youth via Facebook and Twitter (OPPFT) in Nigeria and Malaysia combined, and each country individually. This study also analyses the moderating role of Political Knowledge (PK) in this relationship. A cross-sectional survey was conducted on 476 undergraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and Universiti Utara Malaysia. A questionnaire was used to collect data which was analysed using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) and Partial Least Squares-MultiGroup Analysis (PLS-MGA). Results reveal that APIFT, PI and PS lead to OPPFT among the youth in Nigeria and Malaysia, except the relationship between PS and OPPFT for Malaysian youth. Also, PK moderates the relationship between APIFT and OPPFT for the combined youth as well as Malaysian youth, but not for Nigerian youth. Furthermore, in the relationship between PI and OPPFT, PK does not moderate the relationship for the combined youth and Nigerian youth, but it does for the Malaysian youth. Additionally, PK is found not to moderate the relationship between PS and OPPFT for the combined youth and Malaysian youth but it does for Nigerian youth. Furthermore, for country differences in terms of direct relationships, there is no significant difference between Nigerian and Malaysian youth in terms of the relationship between APIFT and OPPFT, but there is a significant difference in the relationship between PI and PS with OPPFT. Generally, these findings suggest that from a social media angle, access to political information, PI, PK and PS are likely to reduce the gap in political participation among the youth in Nigeria and Malaysia. Consequently, this study contributes in the modelling of the relationship between CET and political participation. Thus, empirical findings of this study add to the body of knowledge on online political participation.

Keywords: Social media, online political participation, cognitive engagement, Nigeria, Malaysia

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List of Abbreviations

ABU- Ahmadu Bello University
AC- Action Congress
ACI- Arewa Christian Initiative
ACN- Action Congress of Nigeria
ANPP- All Nigeria's Peoples Party
APGA- All Progressive Grand Alliance
API- Access to Political Information
APIFT- Access to Political Information on Facebook and Twitter
APC- All Progressive Congress
AVE- Average Variance Extracted
BN- Barisan Nasional/ National Front
CET- Cognitive Engagement Theory
CMC- Computer Mediated Communication
CMV- Common Method Variance
CPC- Congress for Progressive Change
DAP- Democratic Action Party
EC (SPR) - Election Commission
EDA- Exploratory Data Analysis
EiE- Enough is Enough
FOIA- Freedom of Information Act
GE13- 13th Malaysian General Election
HCM- Hierarchical Component Model
HOC- Higher-Order Construct
HTMT- Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio
ICT- Information and Communication Technology
IM- Instant Messaging
INEC- Independent National Electoral Commission
LOC- Lower-Order Construct
LP- Labour Party

MCMC- Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission

MGA - Multigroup Analysis

n2n - Neighbour to Neighbour

OPP- Online Political Participation

OPPFT- Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter

PAS- Parti Islam Se-Malaysia

PI- Political Interest

PDP- Peoples Democratic Party

PK- Political Knowledge

PR- Pakatan Rakyat

PS- Policy Satisfaction

PTP- Political Transformation Programme

PAS- Pan Malaysian Islamic Party

PDP- Peoples Democratic Party

PLS- Partial Least Square

PLS-MGA – Partial Least Squares Multigroup Analysis

PLS-SEM- Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling

PKR – Peoples Justice Party

PRU13- Pilihanraya Umum ke-13

R² – R-Squared

SEM- Structural Equation Model

SES- Socio- Economic - Status

SMS – Short Message Service

SNSs- Social Networking Sites

SPSS- Statistical Packages for Social Sciences

UGC –User-Generated-Content

UMNO- United Malay National Organization

UPN- Unity Party of Nigeria

UK- United Kingdom

US- United States

UUM- Universiti Utara Malaysia

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The Internet, from its web 1.0 technology to its recent web 2.0 technology, has affected the way politics works (Dimitrova & Bystrom, 2013; Deursen, Dijk & Helsper, 2014; Iwokwagh & Okoro, 2012; Yamamoto & Kushin, 2013). It is a ‘deliberative space’ which is highly democratic (Cogburn & Espinoza-Vasquez, 2008), such that it has added to tools of politicking among citizens (Ternes, Mittelstadt & Towers, 2014). This has made it a powerful tool for political participation (Campante, Durante & Sobbrío, 2013).

Seemingly, the role played by the Internet in politics has led to the emergence of concepts, such as e-participation (Gibson & Cantijoch, 2013; Grönlund & Wakabi 2015; Vincente & Novo, 2014); cyber-democracy (Chun, 2012); digital democracy (Hyun, 2012); and ‘Netizens’. These concepts have led to situations where the Internet is being used as an important participation tool during political campaigns (Boubacar, 2005). Therefore, the Internet has made possible the provision of inexpensive news releases, such that political elites could communicate with voters and build online communities. Hence, the political lives of citizens and candidates have been strengthened by Internet through interactivity, which is crucial to the functioning of democracy (Zhao, 2014).

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