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

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Graduate School
of Arts And Sciences

Universiti Utara Malaysia

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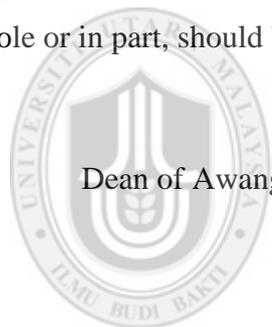
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Abstrak

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- Barisa 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

R^2 – 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).

Furthermore, the Internet has made it possible to use global social media within the realm of politics (Valenzuela, 2013), education, business and international relations (Olabamiji, 2014; Uzochukwu, Patricia & Ukueze, 2014). Specifically, using social media for political participation has provided new online opportunities for citizens to be connected to the democratic process, making it possible for them to participate in various forms of political activities that were not available before (Groshek, 2012; Kauffman, 2009; Van Wyngarden, 2012). Evidently, social media play an important role in political participation (Hirzalla & Zoonen, 2011; Yamamoto & Kushin, 2013).

In the past, socio-economic, demographics and psychological factors alone determined political participation; however, in the digital age, evidence suggests that Information and Communications Technology (ICT) plays an equally important role (Carter, 2006; Tolbert & McNeal, 2003). Consequently, this study embodies an interplay of technology, communication and politics. As such, the Cognitive Engagement Theory (CET) is used to address these interrelated factors from interdisciplinary (media and politics) and cross-national (Nigeria and Malaysia) perspectives.

1.2 Statement of Problem

For over a decade, cross-national and interdisciplinary research has rapidly gained relevance in the social sciences; yet, there is still scarcity of both types of study. This is quite surprising especially with regards to media and politics, which are two

interdependent social systems with a long established relationship (Engesser & Franzetti, 2011). Despite the fact that comparing this phenomenon in different countries could add to the development of this field, this subject area is dominated by nationally-oriented investigations (Casteltrione, 2014). Corroborating this, Azarian (2011) noted that cross-national comparative study is a method of research with many advantages and extensive applications. However, not much attention has been paid to this method of research. Thus, a better understanding of these related fields could be acquired by a comparison of two countries (Engesser & Franzetti, 2011). Although a number of comparative studies have been conducted in countries with advanced democracies, not much has been done in countries with weaker democracies (Engesser & Franzetti, 2011; Tworzecki & Semetko, 2012).

Specifically, Valenzuela (2013) noted that many studies in this area have been carried out in countries, like the United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK), where democracy has been the system of government for centuries but not in countries that are just emerging democracies. On a similar note, in a meta-analysis of studies on social media and political participation, Boulianne (2015) found that most studies are in advanced democracies, and only a few in new democracies, and much less from a cross-national perspective. Hence, she advocated further research to be conducted on a cross-national level. Therefore, due to paucity of comparative studies on social media and online political participation in countries with non-advanced democracies, like Nigeria and Malaysia, this study intends to fill this identified gap.

Additionally, most studies on political participation have been conducted on offline political participation. Admittedly, some studies (Baker & Vreese, 2011; Dimitrova & Bystrom, 2013; Dimitrova et al., 2014; Hirzalla & Zoonen, 2011; Lee, Shah, & McLeod, 2012; Ostman, 2012; Porter & Hellsten, 2014; Quintelier & Theocharis, 2012) have been conducted on online political participation per se; however, they have all examined the relationship between online political participation and consequent offline outcomes. As such, Dimitrova and Bystrom (2013) noted that research on the impact of new media and political participation (Bryan, 2013); and social media and political participation (Bakker & De Vreese, 2011), have a positive impact; nonetheless, these effects also have been found for offline participation.

Although, it is important for citizens to participate in politics offline (Dagona, Karick & Abubakar, 2013; Okoro & Nwafor, 2013; Olabamiji, 2014), Ostman (2012) argued that online political participation via social media is equally important. Yet, despite popular accounts of the positive relationship between social media and political participation, scholars (Bae, 2014; Carlisle & Patton, 2013) have maintained that not many quantitative studies have looked at the kinds of political participation activities on social media. Rather, the focus of most of these studies has been on traditional Internet and online participation (Casteltrione, 2015), with a particular bias for elections (Dimitrova & Bystrom, 2013; Dimotrova, et al., 2014); while a limited number of studies have analyzed the types of online political participation activities that can be found on social media. Therefore, this study investigates the nature of

online political participation occurring within Facebook and Twitter among the youth in Nigeria and Malaysia.

Additionally, participation of individuals in politics of their nation is a crucial element of democracy (Varnali & Gorgulu, 2014). Therefore, concerns for declining political participation (Friedland, 2010; Gibson, Howard & Ward, 2000; Saldana, McGregor & Gil De Zuniga, 2015) and its implication for the proper functioning of democracy have prompted scholars to investigate what stimulates citizens to participate in politics (Carlisle & Patton, 2013; Lee, Shah & McLeod, 2012). Increasingly, the focus of this democratic deficit (Casteltrione, 2012) has been on the youth. This is because surveys have shown this group is particularly apathetic to political life (Agboola, 2013; Bakker & De Vreese, 2011; Baumgartner & Morris, 2010; David, 2013; Theorcharis & Quintelier, 2014; Ward & Vreese, 2011; Yamamoto & Kushin, 2013).

Accordingly, Putnam (2000) and Chun (2012) indicated a great decline in political participation among the youth in developed and developing countries. In agreement, Ekwonchi and Udenze (2014) claimed that apathy of youth toward politics is a global phenomenon which has led to an increased call for the youth to participate in politics (Livingstone, Bober, & Helsper, 2011). This phenomenon is worrying because early political participation is a strong indicator of future democratic involvement, which can help to sustain democracy (Bennet, 2008, Mongkuo, Lyon, Hogan & Delore, 2014).

Conversely, other studies have indicated a steady rise in participation of youth in politics through the social media (Chun, 2012; Potgieter, 2013). Bakker and De Vreese (2011) questioned whether this rise is sufficient to sustain democratic institutions and increase participation of youth in politics. This doubt may not be unconnected to the fact that scholars (Bae, 2014; Freeman, 2013; Salman & Saad, 2015) have reported that social media is used by youth for predominantly entertainment-oriented purposes. As a result, Dimitrova, Shehata, Stromback and Nord (2014) argued that technology is not a strong enough motivator for political participation by the youth; rather, other influencers could be responsible for propelling them to participate in politics.

The above arguments indicate two perspectives of the engagement of the youth in politics: participation and non-participation (Bennet, 2008). Consequently, David (2013) recommended a way out of these arguments is that subsequent studies on new media and political participation should not measure political participation of youth using traditional forms of online participation (Internet). Rather, a new kind of measurement that suits the notion of political participation (through social media) by the present generation should be used. This may provide a solution as to why some researchers have found a decline in participation of the youth in politics. This is in line with Casteltrione (2014) who also observed the need for cross-national comparative studies in political research due to different results from studies of this nature. Moreover, Salman and Saad (2015) recommended that online political activities among Malaysian youth should be further studied. Seemingly, these preceding

arguments point to a great potential for research on online political participation via social media. Therefore, this study conducted a survey in Nigeria and Malaysia, to investigate how the youth virtually participate in the political process.

Furthermore, Wojcieszak (2012) observed that research in the area of social media and political participation is not well theorized. As a result, Vitak, Zube, Smock, Carr, Ellison and Lampe (2011) recommended that an investigation into social media usage for political participation from a cognitive engagement (access to information, political knowledge, political interest and policy satisfaction) perspective should be conducted. Similarly, Johnson and Kaye (2009) suggested that the role of alternative sources of political information, like Facebook and Myspace in political participation should be investigated, just as Shore (2014) noted that less research has been done on policy satisfaction compared to other cognitive engagement variables. This may not be unconnected to its expansive nature and dynamic character which make capturing the idea of policy satisfaction quite ambiguous (Whiteley, Clarke, Sanders & Steward, 2013). Although studies like Mushtaq and Baig (2015) have examined the connection between access to information, political knowledge and political participation, they were in the traditional media and traditional political participation context. Thus, this study investigates the features of the CET in relation to online political participation via Facebook and Twitter.

Also, limited studies have examined whether youth participate more in politics through learning about politics on social media. Although some studies have used political knowledge as an independent variable (Carpini & Keiter, 1996); and other studies have used it as dependent variable (De Vreese & Boomgarden, 2006; Grönlund & Milner, 2006), no known study has found out the moderating role of political knowledge in motivating online political participation via social media. This indicates that previous studies have investigated the direct relationship between political knowledge and other variables, and no known past research has used political knowledge as a moderator variable. To address this gap, the present study extends the CET by assessing the role of political knowledge in moderating the relationship between access to political information via Facebook and Twitter, political interest and policy satisfaction with online political participation via Facebook and Twitter.

Additionally, the introduction of a moderator in the present study is necessitated by the fact that Henseler and Fassott (2010) noted that despite the importance of moderators in understanding complex relationships as stated in the literature, the moderating effect has not been considered in a lot of Structural Equation Models (SEM) and this has led to a lack of relevance in various research. Moreover, since there are inconsistencies in findings from past research on online political participation by youth, introducing a moderator is necessary. This is because Baron and Kenny (1986) advised that moderators should be introduced when there are inconsistent

relationships between a predictor and a criterion variable. Therefore, this further supports the introduction of the moderator, 'political knowledge', in this study.

Methodologically, some researchers (Baarda, 2011; Nontynen, 2011; Powerbank, 2013; Van Wyngarden, 2012) in this area have focused on the content analysis of political activities on social media rather than its users. However, Dimitrova et al. (2014) noted the effect of online political participation on social media is not only a matter of content but also the characteristics of the users; hence, it is important to look at the users of social media for political participation through a survey. Moreover, most cross-national comparative studies (Hyun, 2012; Valeriani & Vaccari, 2015; Saldana, McGregor & Gil De Zuniga, 2015) of this nature have utilized secondary data for their analysis. Consequently, this study used cross-sectional survey to collect primary data from youth who use Facebook and Twitter for online political participation in Nigeria and Malaysia, after which the data were analyzed using Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM) analysis.

1.3 Research Questions

In line with the research problem above, the following research questions are proposed:

1. To what extent does access to political information on Facebook and Twitter influence online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria and Malaysia combined and each country individually?
2. To what extent does political interest influence online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria and Malaysia combined and each country individually?
3. To what extent does policy satisfaction influence online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria and Malaysia combined and each country individually?
4. Does political knowledge moderate the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter, political interest, policy satisfaction and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter among youth in Nigeria and Malaysia combined and each country individually?
5. Is there a significant difference between Nigerian and Malaysian youth in terms of the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter, political interest and policy satisfaction with online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter?

1.4 Research Objectives

The main objective of this research is to investigate the influence of cognitive engagement on online political participation among youth in Nigeria and Malaysia.

Consequently, the specific objectives of this study are:

1. To determine the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria and Malaysia combined and each country individually.
2. To assess the relationship between political interest and online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria and Malaysia combined and each country individually.
3. To examine the relationship between policy satisfaction and online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria and Malaysia combined and each country individually.
4. To analyze the moderating effect of political knowledge on the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter, political interest, policy satisfaction and online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria and Malaysia combined and each country individually.

5. To investigate the differences between Nigerian and Malaysian youth in terms of the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter, political interest and policy satisfaction with online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter.

1.5 Significance of Research

As an interdisciplinary and cross-national comparative study, this research will be of benefit to scholars conducting studies in both new and old political and communication sciences in Nigeria and Malaysia.

Practically, this study could serve as a guide to policy-makers, the media, governmental and non-governmental organizations, on the nature of online political participation of youth, which will further help in better policy formulation by the government and other stakeholders.

Theoretically, this research extends the CET previously used for conventional mass media and conventional political participation to unconventional media (social media) and unconventional political participation (online political participation).

Methodologically, as against the first generations data analysis techniques used by most previous studies, second generation PLS-SEM is used to analyze the data for this study. Therefore, PLS is used to predict and explain the relationship between features

of cognitive engagement and online political participation, while at the same time, highlighting the moderating effect of political knowledge in the study.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study is limited to Facebook and Twitter in terms of social media, and two tertiary institutions in Nigeria and Malaysia in terms of location. The institutions are Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria and Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), Kedah. Consequently, undergraduates of both institutions form the population of the study. Also, only four features of the CET (access to political information, political knowledge, political interest and policy satisfaction) are used in this research, while the fifth feature, education, is not included.

1.7 Rationale for Comparative Study

Comparison is a situation where two or more cases (in the case of this study, two countries) are distinguished in respect of certain phenomena in the society in order to examine their similarities and differences (Azarian, 2015). Thus, comparison is central to empirical social science research that wants to find out why there are variations or connections between certain happenings in two or more societies (Smelser, 1973). Accordingly, by investigating certain phenomena in different countries, cross-national research can assist in the appraisal of generalization of results while at the same time, serve as a source of generating hypothesis and theories (Warnick & Osherson, 1973). Hence, to test theory in its general formulation, a cross-national comparative study is

needed. This is because by comparing certain social science phenomena in different countries, a clearer view of such phenomena emanates (Hantrais & Mangen, 1996) and also empirical relationships among variables can be tested (Lipjart, 1975).

Consequently, cross-national comparative studies have been increasingly receiving more attention, despite numerous limitations and constraints associated with comparison (Azarian, 2015). This is because they generate new perspectives to important issues in different countries (Hantrais, 1995). Furthermore, cross-national research helps researchers confront findings in an attempt to detect and provide a better picture of similarities and differences, not only in each country, but also to get possible explanations in terms of national likeness and unlikeness (Hantrais, 1995).

Therefore, since this is a cross-national comparative study between Nigeria and Malaysia, the comparative approach is appropriate because it helps to provide a better picture on the issue of social media and online political participation of youth, which has already generated differing views from different scholars in the past. Nigeria and Malaysia may not have been a focus of much comparative study. However, politically, the similarities between the two countries are quite significant. The roots of these similarities stem from their shared history as British colonies and members of the Commonwealth, a heritage which has led to some similarities in spite of their differences.

Another basis for comparison is that both countries belong to the category of nations in the second wave of democracy (Huntington, 1991) (see Table 1.1). ‘Waves of democracy’ popularized by Huntington (1991), represent the rise in global levels of democracy or periods of transition to democracy. A wave is a move from non-democratic to democratic regimes within a certain period (Dooremspleet, 2000; Kurzman, 1998; Weinberg, 2013), although there are also reverse cases in between.

Table 1.1

Waves of Democratization

Wave	Period	Countries
First Long Wave	1828-1926	US, UK, France, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Switzerland, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, etc.
Second Short wave	1943-1962	Nigeria, Malaysia , Uruguay, Brazil, Costa Rica, Italy, Germany, Peru, Argentina, Austria, Venezuela, etc.
Third Wave	1974 till date	South Africa, Taiwan, South Korea, the Philippines, Japan, Spain, Indonesia, Portugal, Cambodia, Mongolia, etc.

Source: Huntington (1991)

Accordingly, there are first, second and third waves of democracy (although a fourth wave has emerged with the Arab spring revolution, this study focuses on the initial three waves). Countries in the second and third wave democracies are also sometimes called “semi-democracy”, “quasi-democracy”, “flawed democracy”, “hybrid democracy” or “new democracy” (Lumsden, 2013). Most of these countries are in

places like Africa, Asia, East Europe, Latin America and Southern Europe. Evidently, they are dispersed geographically (heterogeneous), unlike those in the first wave democracy that were mainly concentrated in the Western industrialized countries (homogeneous).

Apparently, the democratic structures in countries that belong to the second and third wave democracies are not as strong as those of the first wave. Consequently, African and Asian countries in the second and third waves of democracy are trying to strengthen their political systems since democracy seems to be the most preferred system of government globally (Olabamiji, 2014). Obviously, like most post-colonial multi-ethnic countries, Nigeria and Malaysia, which are also countries struggling to build a stable democracy, belong to this group. Bah (2004) indicated that since their independence, Nigeria and other post-colonial, multi-ethnic nations have been going through transformations aimed at consolidating their democracy and bringing about a one-nation state. Democratic consolidation means making concerted efforts to increase political participation (Potgieter, 2013) and decreasing factors that reduce its significance. Hence, political participation is different in democratic and non-democratic regimes. This makes it an essential part of democratic consolidation since the democratic system of any country can only be strengthened by the level of participation of individuals in a society. This participation is what makes for a strong and sustainable democracy (Casteltrione, 2015). In fact, the main ingredients of

modern democracy are active participation and free exchange of ideas by citizens (Ojebuyi & Salawu, 2015).

Furthermore, these two countries are compared because statistics of both countries in terms of Facebook and Twitter use is quite significant. With about seven million users (Seal World, 2014), Nigeria is the country with the second largest Facebook population in Africa after Egypt (CP Africa.com, 2014). By the second quarter of 2015, there were a total of 7.1 million daily active users and 15 million total monthly active users as released by Facebook (Emmanuel, 2015). This makes Nigeria, Africa's biggest user of Facebook. Also, it is the third Twitter nation (with 1.67 million tweets) in Africa after South Africa and Kenya (Dagona, Karick & Abubakar, 2013). Seemingly, Facebook and Twitter rank among the most visited websites in the country (Seal World, 2014). Likewise in Malaysia, 13.3 million individuals, representing 45.5% of the population of the country, use Facebook. This makes Malaysia the eighth most "Facebooking" nation in Asia, hence occupying the 18th position in the world (Borneo Post Online, 2013). Subsequently, by November 2015, Malaysia had 18 million Facebook users (Internet World Statistics, 2015), making Facebook the most popular social media in Malaysia (Goi, 2014). Also, as at February 2014, Malaysia had about 3.5 million Twitter users (Leaping post, 2014) who sent millions of tweets daily (Net up Asia, 2014). Specifically, 5.4 million tweets were posted in Malaysia per day in 2014 (David, 2015).

Furthermore, political participation by youth on Facebook and Twitter is a major feature in both countries. Their use was most prominent in Nigeria during the 2011 general elections (Olabamiji, 2014); and in Malaysia during the 2008 general elections (Kasmani, Sabran & Ramle, 2014; Salman & Saad, 2015). As such, this social media use in both countries offers this research a great opportunity to investigate the influence of cognitive engagement on online political participation by youth in both countries.

1.8 Background on Nigeria and Malaysia

This is a brief background of both countries of comparison, indicating their geographical location, estimated population and cultural and linguistic features.

1.8.1 Nigeria

Nigeria is the most populous black African country in the world (Ondieki, 1997), with a population of about 170 million people, where the youth makes up about 70% of the population (Factbound Research, 2011; Nigerian Monitor, 2013; Otas, 2011). It practices the presidential system of government and leaders are chosen through an election. It is located in West Africa, South of the Sahara and is bordered by the Gulf of Guinea in the South, Chad and Niger in the North, Cameroon in the East and Benin Republic in the West. It is geographically divided into two (popularly called 'North' and 'South') by River Niger and Benue. The North wholly occupies the northern portion, while the East and West occupy the Southern portion (Ejobowah, 1999). It

has 36 states and six geopolitical zones (North-East, North-West, North-Central, South-South, South-West and South-East). The inhabitants of the North are mostly Muslims (where sharia law is practiced), and the South is mostly occupied by Christians. The north which makes up two-thirds of the country is dominated by Hausa/Fulani; however, there are pockets of Christians there too.

Nigeria is the most ethnically heterogeneous country in Africa (Bah, 2004). Although, the total number of ethnic groups in the country is highly debatable (Ejobowah, 1999), they number about 250 to 400 groups. Each region contains dominant ethnic groups and a significant number of minority ethnic groups. The three major ethnic groups in Nigeria (Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo) account for two-thirds of the population of the country (Bah, 2004).

Furthermore, the major religious groups in Nigeria are Islam and Christianity. In addition to these two world religions, are the traditionalists who practice indigenous religions. Interestingly, despite the global status of the two world religions, they are not devoid of ethno-cultural affiliations in Nigeria (Bah, 2004). This has resulted in overlaps with regards to ethnic and religious affiliations. The Hausa/Fulani are regarded as Muslims, while Yoruba and Igbos are seen as Christians. These generalizations do not take into consideration the fact that there is a strong Yoruba Muslim community and an equally strong Hausa Christian community. Hence, this blurs the division between these groups (Iroghama, 2012).

1.8.2 Malaysia

Malaysia is a Southeast Asian nation of 30 million people that professes democracy (Lumsden, 2013). The system of government in Malaysia is parliamentary and electoral democracy is the way through which their leaders are elected. It is a country known for its plurality as it is divided economically, socially, politically and culturally along ethnic lines. Representing 16 states and territories, Malaysia is made up of the West and East Peninsular (MCMC, 2012). Some of the people of Malaysia live in East Malaysia (i.e., Sabah, Sarawak and Labuan) while the majority is in Peninsular Malaysia (West Malaysia).

Malaysia's population is basically categorized as *non-bumiputera* (non-indigenous) and *bumiputera* (indigenous), in which about 60% of the population are Malays, 24% Chinese and 7% Indians (Kwintessential, 2014). The Chinese and Indians who emigrated during the colonial rule are the non-indigenes while the Malays are the indigenes. Accordingly, Malaysia has three major ethnic groups, Malay, Chinese and Indian, and some minor ones, like Iban, Bidayuh, Kadazan, Melanau, etc.

In addition to linguistic and cultural differences, religion also distinguishes the different ethnic groups (Saravanamuttu, 2006). Although Malaysia is a Multics religious society, Islam is the official religion in the country with over 60% of its citizens practicing the religion; however, the constitution guarantees religious freedom to practice other religions.

1.9 Conceptual Definition of Terms

The conceptual definitions of key variables in this study are as follows:

1.9.1 Cognitive Engagement

Cognitive engagement refers to how much citizens are willing and able to learn about politics via media which eventually leads to participation. It involves the amount of effort individuals are willing to invest in seeking to participate in politics and also how long they persist in doing so. The key features of cognitive engagement are education, access to information (media consumption), political knowledge, political interest and policy satisfaction (Charles, 2010).

1.9.2 Access to Information

Access to information is the media consumption of citizens in a society. It denotes individual's acquisition of information on recent political happenings in a society via the media. The media may range from traditional to new media, as the case may be.

1.9.3 Political Knowledge

Political knowledge encompasses information about government, what it does, its leaders, rules of the game, political parties, history and issues. Hence, it could broadly be classified as knowledge about institutions (how things operate) and knowledge about current events (leaders and their position) (Fraile, 2011).

1.9.4 Political Interest

Political interest is the motivation of citizens to participate in politics (O'Neil, 2006; Whiteley, 2005). This is because it propels individuals to acquire political information which leads to knowledge that can assist in assessing political alternatives. Accordingly, Charles (2010) explained that those who are apathetic to politics will not participate in it. On the other hand, this apathy could be what propels individuals to participate in politics in an effort to make things better.

1.9.5 Policy Satisfaction

Policies are plans that determine the course of actions and/or inactions taken by a government (Eyo, 2013). There are decisions of the government aimed at improving the lives of its citizens. Therefore, policy satisfaction indicates whether citizens approve or disapprove of government decisions and actions that affect them.

1.9.6 Social Media

Social media refers to Internet-based applications that enable the creation and exchange of User-Generated-Content (UGC) (Adaja & Ayodele, 2013; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), where the users are both consumers and creators of print, photos or video content (David, 2013). These applications make it possible for users to not just share and discuss content, but also search, create, collaborate and organize content among themselves (Hamid, Ishak, Ismail & Yazam, 2015). They are advanced communication tools in terms of interactivity and connectivity (Chun, 2012), that

foster communal interaction. They are also an interactive, participatory and cost effective media system (Titus-Fannie, Akpan & Tarnongo, 2013; Iwokwagh & Okoro, 2012; Okoro & Nwafor, 2013), which are distinct from traditional Internet sources (Yamamoto & Kushin, 2013). Specifically, they include Social Networking Sites (SNSs), like Facebook and microblogging sites, like Twitter (Johnson & Kaye, 2014).

1.9.7 Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter

Online political participation refers to political activities performed online with the aim of influencing government actions (Valenzuela, Kim & Gil de Zuniga, 2012). It encompasses engaging in the following on Facebook and Twitter: joining protests, signing a petition, exchanging opinions about politics, engaging in discussions and reading the opinions of others about politics, sending and receiving messages via Facebook and/or Twitter from the government or elected representatives or political parties, visiting social media sites about politics, tracing news about politics and mobilizing friends to join a particular political cause.

1.9.8 Youth

The concept of youth generally refers to boundaries defining transition from one state of human life to another. Youth could be seen as a period between childhood and maturity. Specifically, the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate Office (2014) defines it as individuals above 16 but under 19 years of age, while the United Nations (2014) defines it as those between 15 to 24 years. Youth in Nigeria are defined as citizens of

either gender within the ages of 18 to 35 years (National Youth Policy, 2001). This definition is also in line with that of the African Youth Charter. On the other hand, the Youth Society and Youth Development Act of Malaysia defines youth in Malaysia as those within the age of 15 to 40 years (Malaysian Youth Community, 2008).

1.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter introduces this research by explaining the background to the study from traditional Internet political participation to social media online political participation. This is followed by a detailed explanation of the problem of the study, where research gaps are identified, specifically in terms of theoretical, methodological and practical gaps. Accordingly, the research objectives and questions provide insights into what the study aims to achieve, after which the significance of the research is explained. Subsequently, the motivation for the comparative research is elaborated in the rationale for the study. Finally, the conceptual definitions of key terms in the study are presented.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Social media is a daily feature in the digital age used by millions of individuals worldwide (Afouxenidis, 2013). Its proliferation has transformed the political landscape today (Bae, 2014). Consequently, political participation, which is an important criteria for consolidated democracy (Awopeju, 2012; Mann, 2011; Moy, Torres, Tanaka & McCluskey, 2005; Rontynen, 2011; Varnali & Gorgulu, 2014), is one area where this change is most significant (Bryan, 2013).

Against this backdrop, this chapter explains concepts related to this study after which gaps in literature are identified. Consequently, relevant studies on online political participation on Facebook and Twitter are reviewed within the framework of the CET, with the aim of filling gaps in the literature in this area of study.

2.2 Online Political Participation

Online political participation is basically political participation that takes place on the Internet. They are digital modes of participation which are categorized as non-conventional forms of political participation. These non-conventional (also known as non-electoral or non-institutional) forms of participation have been on the increase since the last decade (Shore, 2014), such that Pattie, Seyd and Whiteley (2003) noted

that citizens have abandoned conventional forms (e.g., traditional voting) of political participation. Accordingly, the extent of increase in non-conventional forms of political participation has led scholars (Inglehart & Catterberg, 2002; Shore, 2014; Vrablikova, 2014) to clamor for the ‘normalization of the unconventional’. These unconventional ways of participating in politics have brought about a variety of activities, now referred to as political participation, thus making the democratic experience more diverse. Along with the diversity in activities known as political participation, emerges diversity in findings on studies in this area.

Research in the field of new media and political participation has produced contrasting evidence and created strong academic debates. These debates particularly concern the role of the Internet and social media in political participation. Specifically, there are doubts concerning the use and the effect of the Internet on political participation (Livingstone, Bober, & Helsper, 2011). These doubts have led to inconsistencies in research findings on this issue. Specifically, Baumgartner and Morris (2010) and Charles (2010) indicated that findings show mixed results on the Internet’s ability to encourage political participation, while others indicated either positive or negative results. Kenski and Stroud (2006) believe these inconsistencies may be due to methodological differences in research on the Internet and political participation. Also, these differences could be because of the context of the research or operationalization of the concept of political participation.

Consequently, there are three schools of thought on the relationship between Internet and political participation (Casteltrione, 2015). Some scholars (Johnson & Kaye, 2003; Tolbert & McNeal, 2002) are of the belief that the Internet has positive impact on political participation. This group of scholars are known as the optimists because they are in support of the mobilization thesis of the Internet. The ideas of these optimists is supported by Boulianne (2009) who in a meta-analysis of 38 studies with 166 effects, found that the Internet is positively related to political participation because it reduces the cost of accessing political information and makes it more convenient to participate in politics. The second group of scholars (Calenda & Maijer, 2009; Kenski & Stroud, 2006; Moy et al., 2005; Norris, 2001, 2002; Wang, 2007) minimized the mobilizing power of the Internet and stressed the tendency of the Internet to reinforce existing participatory trend. They are known as the normalizers who believe in the reinforcement potential of the Internet; while scholars (Scheufele, Nisbert & Brossard, 2003) in the third group of thought are the pessimists who believe the Internet has little or even negative influence on political participation. Thus, despite the positive roles played by the Internet in political participation, these groups of scholars have reported that there is nothing inherently democratic about the Internet.

Successively, a similar scenario on the three schools of thought in the relationship between the Internet and political participation has emerged on the relationship between social media and political participation (Casteltrione 2015). Although it is widely assumed that social media can positively change the way the public participates

in politics (Dimitrova & Bystrom, 2013), this revolutionary potential is still a matter of debate. As a result, researchers have also produced contrasting evidence in relation to the relationship between social media and political participation. Obviously, the genesis of these arguments could be traced to before the emergence of social media, when the Internet was used as a tool for political participation. This lends credence to Stranberg's (2014) statement that Norris's (2001a, 2001b) argument on the ability of Internet to reinforce or mobilize participation is still relevant after over a decade as it can also be applied to social media.

Therefore, a look at the relationship between social media and political participation brings to fore three important arguments (Bekafigo & McBride, 2013; Porter, 2014). Specifically, these arguments border on whether social media use for political participation has a negative or positive impact (Dagona, Karick & Abubakar, 2013), or in another sense, whether it has mobilization or reinforcement potential (Deursen, Dijk & Helsper, 2014; Kruijemeier, Van Noort, Vliegenthart, & De Vreese, 2014; Quintelier & Vissers, 2008; Valenzuela, Kim & Gil de Zuniga, 2012). Some say it has mobilizing effect (Gil de Zuniga et al., 2012; Towner, 2013; Xenos et al., 2014), others, reinforcement (Carlisle & Patton, 2013; Gustafson, 2012; Raine & Smith, 2012, Vitak et al., 2011), while the rest believe it has limited or negative influence (Baumgartner & Morris, 2010; Valenzuela et al. 2009) on political participation.

Consequently, Yamamoto and Kushin (2013), Kruijemeier, Noort, Vliegenthart and De Vresse (2014) and Xenos, Vromen and Loader (2014) reported mixed results on

whether or not social media propels citizens to participate in politics. On the optimistic side is a positive relationship and on the pessimistic side is a negative relationship. In a related study, Oser, Hooghe and Marien (2012) raised concerns that while increased social media access and use promotes the mobilization thesis, they could also widen the gap between those who participate and those who do not participate online. The reason for this could be because new media technologies have no predictable and absolute positive or negative effects. In contrast, mobilization (expansionary) theorists (Stranberg, 2013; Carlisle & Patton, 2013) believe that even though social media may not result in direct behavioral changes, it represents a critical aspect of the political participation process from a democratic participation perspective since they make citizens feel empowered and involved in the political process. Also, Stranberg (2013) averred that social media leads to political engagement of citizens, including non-active users who have no strong interest in politics and those who accidentally encounter political content on it.

Carlisle and Patton (2013) and Chun (2012) reported that social media has become a new mobilization tool for gathering and coordinating citizens on important political issues. Oser, Hooghe and Marien (2012) stressed that online political participation via social media is a unique kind of participation that makes it possible for those who ideally might not have had the opportunity to participate in politics to do so. Furthermore, in a micro-level analysis of Korean youth by Chun (2012), he revealed that social media has mobilized new users into the political process, hence, rejecting

the reinforcement thesis. Similarly, in an examination of 36 studies with 170 effects, Boulianne (2015) found that social media use has a strong influence on political participation.

Conversely, Chun (2012) stated that reinforcement theorists believe interaction via social media is weak, and hence, can have no significant effect in boosting reductions in political participation. Thus, it has no genuine mobilization capacity for political participation. Supporting this view, Bekafigo and McBride (2013), Gil de Zuniga, Puig-l-Abril and Rojas (2009) and Wang (2007) maintained that social media is not a mobilizing tool for new political participation but rather a reinforcement of older traditional political participation format, where the young, poor and uneducated are left behind. Hence, social media will not stimulate new citizens to become politically involved (Kruikemeier, Noort, Vliegenthart & De Vresse, 2014); rather, it is just one more tool for citizens already politically engaged (Kirk & Shill, 2011).

Generally, from these preceding arguments, it is evident that scholars have not agreed on the new media's positive role in political participation. However, among the three aforementioned arguments (optimist/mobilizers, normalizers/reinforcers and pessimist/negative), the mobilizers seem to have the most support even though there is no conclusive evidence in their favor. Thus, there is a need for more studies of this nature to clarify these arguments (Casteltrione, 2015).

2.2.1 Conceptualizing Online Political Participation on Social Media

Political participation encompasses different activities making it difficult for scholars to agree on the content and scope of the phenomenon. This has led to formulation of different definitions of the concept (Wajzer, 2015). Besides, the definition of political participation in the past, as activities carried out by citizens to influence government actions, has made it impossible for researchers to grasp the diverse nature of political participation and the role new media plays in this endeavor (Casteltrione, 2015). These past definitions are too narrow as they focus on the mobilization aspect of political participation, not taking into consideration such online political participation activities, such as following news or discussing political events among friends online.

Specifically, Verba et al. (1995) viewed political participation as a government-oriented activity and not the citizen-oriented form of today (Casteltrione, 2015). Hence, there is need for an all encompassing definition of political participation in order to properly capture the rise of the role of digital technology in political participation activities (Casteltrione, 2015). Norris (2002) agreed that the old definitions of political participation are inadequate and incommensurate with the contemporary world which is multidimensional and complex. Hence, taking into consideration the increase in new types of, and purpose for, political participation, Casteltrione (2015) defined political participation as activities meant to influence the actions of the government and political behavior of citizens in a society. This

definition includes mobilization-oriented activities as well as communicative activities in political participation.

In furtherance of the above, Wajzer (2015) believes the two major problems associated with conceptualizing political participation are: ascribing political characteristics to any social behavior, and strong presence of normative elements, especially in studies on democratic societies. Hence, political participation should not encompass behaviors which are not political in nature. He further noted that three major factors that determine the difference in conceptualizing political participation are: object of research, time of research and socio-cultural context in which a researcher functions.

Accordingly, understanding the concept of online political participation entails demystifying arguments which have plagued the definition of political participation in the digital age. Since the late 1960s, the definition of political participation has changed significantly from what it was decades ago (Gustafsson, 2012; Potgieter, 2013), most especially in terms of its historically narrow definition and scholars' preoccupation with electoral participation in the past. In the present age, the list of activities considered as political participation is expanding on a daily basis (Mann, 2011).

Fenton and Barassi (2011) advised that increased usage of social media for political participation calls for a reconsideration of the meaning of political participation in society. Evidently, traditional measure of political participation by influential writings of scholars like Verba, Schlozman and Bradley (1995) are inadequate in capturing the concept of political participation in the digital age. There are now more ways to be active than what was available to previous generations. This change is brought about by the shift from how citizens participated in the past to what is obtainable today. Currently, political participation is a dynamic concept which traditional definitions cannot take care of, as they are too restrictive in the era of social media. Therefore, expanding the definition through conceptualization will allow for the inclusion of online political activities (Hooghe, 2014).

However, conceptualizing online political participation on social media requires distinguishing first generation Internet (web 1.0) usage for political participation from social media (Web 2.0) use for political participation (Carlisle & Patton, 2013). This is because the Internet has a passive political influence on users' behavior while social media has a more active influence. Social media's active influence results from features, such as interactivity, which make it different from first generation applications. Consequently, with the rising role of social media in politics, participation has taken new forms. For example, liking a political post on Facebook to indicate political preferences in terms of politician, political party or political movement is now considered as participation. Additionally, posting a political

message on social media or joining discussion on social media has become widespread over the years (Hooghe, 2014).

Consequently, the debate on digital modes of political participation today centers around two main issues. These issues border on the belief that most online political activities are merely communicative acts which can simply be referred to as ‘clicktivism’ (Hooghe, 2014) or ‘slacktivism’ (Chun, 2012). Another issue is the decision on whether or not political participation on social media could be likened to offline political acts, or distinctively, online political acts (Christensen, 2012).

Accordingly, since the classical definition of political participation refers to activities to influence government action either directly or indirectly (Hooghe, 2014), whether political participation on social media is seen as a mere communicative act or not, so long as it influences government action or decision, then it can be considered as political participation. This argument is in line with the definition of political participation by Valenzuela, Kim and Gil de Zuniga (2012) as activities aimed at influencing government action, whether online or offline. Obviously, in light of recent social and technological changes, political participation is increasingly personalized and occurs largely outside the domain of institutionalized policy-making. It encompasses a wider set of phenomena than before; thus, political participation activities online can now be seen as less instrumental, but more expressive.

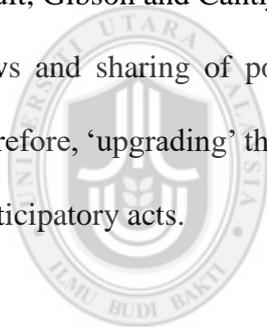
This is not surprising as all political acts (whether online or offline) involve some form of communication. Besides, Olabamiji (2014) averred that communication is the center of all political activities, just as Verba et al. (1995) stated that political participatory activities are inherently “information-rich” acts. Similarly, Livingstone, Bober and Helsper (2011) and Valenzuela (2013) noted that individuals are engaged in a wide range of communication activities that could be considered participation. In essence, it could be deduced that as part of democratic activities, some forms of communication are also part of political participation today (Moy, Torres, Tanaka & McCluskey, 2005). Moreover, embedded in the definition of democracy is that it is a form of participation where there is freedom to publicly express views on political issues (Potgieter, 2013).

Therefore, this opinion of scholars on the features of online political participation further portends the need for an updated conceptualization of the term, ‘political participation’. Perhaps, operational definition of online political participation on social media as suggested by Van Deths (2014) may be an adequate solution to this need. Though, when operationalizing, Hooghe (2014) suggested the inclusion of political motivation. This is because motivation is an important element which must be present for participation to occur. Thus, political motivation makes it possible to include online political participation activities on social media as forms of political participation. This, Hooghe believes, will help in clarifying the concept of online political participation on social media. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the

boundaries of motivations, aims and intentions are quite blurred. This makes it problematic to differentiate participation and non-participation. This is because motivation can only be defined by the person involved and it may be difficult to determine if individuals participate for personal or political reasons. Fortunately, political acts backed by political motivation, are sometimes relatively easy to determine on social media; however, this is not absolute.

Furthermore, the concept of political communication as noted earlier is another reason why operationalization is important (Van Beths, 2014). Literature has shown that a significant number of communication activities now count as online political participation. For example, some scholars (Gil de Zuniga et al. 2010; Hirzalla & Van Zoonen, 2011) see political information-seeking on social media as part of political participation; whereas others see following political events in news and discussion about politics as communication activities (Casteltrione, 2015). This difference in opinion may be because in the past, offline versions of political information-seeking were seen as political communication and not political participation. However, Hoffman (2012) maintained that in online activities, it is quite difficult to draw the boundaries of political participation and political communication as these activities are traditionally communicative.

Evidently, without including the concept of political motivation, such political communicative acts may not be regarded as participation (Hooghe, 2014). Thus, seeking and sharing political news or commenting on these contents may traditionally not be seen as political participation as they are not backed by the motivation to express a political purpose in the first instance. However, on social media, such political communication activities can be seen, read or viewed by a large group of people due to high connectivity on these platforms. This makes it have a higher chance of reaching and motivating citizens in these networks. Moreover, social media also make it possible for the sender's political belief and intention to be expressed. As a result, Gibson and Cantijoch (2013) maintained that the status of attention to political news and sharing of political news are elevated once they are performed online, therefore, 'upgrading' these activities from the level of communicative acts to genuine participatory acts.



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Stranberg (2013) agreed that online political participation on social media has strengthened citizens' position in the communicative system and increased participatory activities at the expense of traditional forms of participation. Hence, citizens' political action on Twitter is a type of political participation (Hosch-Dayican, Amrit, Aarts & Dassen, 2014). Correspondingly, Vitak et al. (2011) found that the most common political activity on Facebook is posting politically-oriented wall posts or status updates. These forms of political participation are of course traditionally communicative acts. Therefore, it can be deduced that quite a number of

communicative acts on social media can now be operationally defined as political participatory acts.

Furthermore, in addressing the debate on digital modes of political participation, it is noteworthy that there are ongoing debates on specific forms of online activities that fall within the sphere of political participation. It is widely agreed that online forms of traditional offline political acts belong to a wide range of political participation (Gibson & Cantojih, 2013; Hirzalla & Van Zoonen, 2011). Thus, online and offline acts are different activities that occur in different scenarios (Valenzuela, 2013). Nevertheless, Charles (2010) and Vitak et al. (2011) are of the opinion that online political participation mirrors real world political participation (Vitak et al. 2011). Hence, it is important to operationalize them in a research to avoid methodological errors. This is because even though online political participation activities are similar to offline political activities, they might not occupy the same sphere of activity. For instance, sending a letter to a politician could count as political participation; likewise, sending a tweet to the same politician. Despite the fact that the former is communicated to a smaller audience and the latter a larger audience, it still counts as political participation. However, the latter is more complex than the former, showing online political participation activities are more complex in nature than their offline counterparts. This makes classification of online acts quite difficult. Hence, it is important to properly conceptualize online political participation and its sub-categories for effective measurement in quantitative studies.

2.3 Gaps in Literature

A number of comparative studies (Calenda & Meijer, 2007; Casteltrione, 2014; Gibson, Howard & Ward, 2000; Hyun, 2012; Sheppard, 2012; Tecscher, Mykkanen & Moring, 2012; Valeriani & Vaccari, 2015; Saldana, McGregor & Gil De Zuniga , 2015; Whiteley, 2005; Xenos, Vromen & Loader, 2014), have been conducted in advanced democracies, like the US, UK, Canada, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Australia, Italy, Spain and Germany, while others have being carried out in industrial and emerging nations, like China, Japan, Mexico and Russia (Engesser & Franzetti, 2011). However, not much has been done in non-advanced democracies (Engesser & Franzetti, 2011; Potgieter, 2013; Tworzecki & Semetko, 2012).

Corroborating this, Valenzuela (2013) affirmed that many studies of this nature have been done in countries with advanced democracies, leaving aside the countries in non-advanced democracies. Hitherto, the few comparative studies on political participation conducted in new democracies, include countries like Ghana and Tanzania (Ocran, 2014) or Chile, South Africa, South Korea and Poland (Potgieter, 2013) or the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland (Tworzecki & Semetko, 2012). Apparently, there is a scarcity of comparative studies on online political participation in Nigeria and Malaysia.

Although non-comparative studies on social media and political participation have been conducted in Nigeria and Malaysia, most Nigerian studies (Dagona, Karick &

Abubakar 2013; Iwokwagh & Okoro, 2012; Okoro & Nwafor, 2013; Olabamiji, 2014; Titus-Fannie, Akpan & Tarnongo, 2013) have investigated the connection between social media and elections alone, likewise Malaysian studies (Abd Rahman, Hamzah, Ngah, Mustaffa & Ismail, 2014; Sani & Zengeni, 2010). Seemingly comparative studies investigating online political participation as a whole in Nigeria and Malaysia are rare. Therefore, this study fills the gaps in literature on aspects of online political participation in Nigeria and Malaysia. Due to paucity of research in this area, this study explores the cross-national and interdisciplinary combination of media and political systems in Nigeria and Malaysia.

Furthermore, studies of this nature have usually been a combination of civic engagement and political participation (O'Neil, 2006; Sheppard, 2012; Uzochukwu & Ekwogha, 2014; Whiteley, 2005). Although there is an overlap between these two phenomena, maintaining conceptual distinctions between them is critical for separating the political aspect from the larger civic sphere. Civic engagement encompasses a lot more activities than political participation, making it a diverse phenomenon (Pattie, Seyd & Whiteley, 2003). Hence, this study focuses on political participation alone, especially online political participation.

Additionally, gaps in theory have also been identified in studies of this nature. For instance, social capital theory (Gibson, 2000; Gil de Zuniga, Jung & Valenzuela, 2012; Mann, 2011; Waren, Sulaiman & Gafar, 2014), civic voluntarism model (Charles,

2010; Mann, 2011), and uses and gratification theory (Chan, 2012; Kenneth, 2012; Okoro & Nwafor, 2013) have been widely used in previous studies. However, Bae (2014) particularly noted that with respect to the latter, political participation on social media has moved beyond the uses and gratification theory. Hence, it is pertinent to look for a theory beyond the traditional uses and gratification approach. Thus, looking at this phenomenon from a cognitive engagement perspective has been encouraged (Vitak et al., 2011) and is carried out in this study.

2.4 Online Political Participation on Social Media

Social media are online forums that build a network of contacts from individual to groups (David, 2013), characterized by a network logic (D'heer & Verdegem, 2014). The notion of logic takes cognizance of the fact that in a narrow sense, social media shapes media, while in a broad sense, it shapes society. Accordingly, one of its most visible impacts on society today is its effect on political participation (Chan, 2012; Rahmawati, 2014; Vincente & Novo, 2014), especially online political participation (Kasmani, Sabran & Ramle, 2014). As a result, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of studies in the area of online political participation (Bakker & De Vreese, 2011; Bekafigo & McBride, 2013; Quintelier & Theocharis, 2012; Varnali & Gorgulu, 2014).

This interest was heightened when Obama successfully used social media to campaign for and win the US presidential elections (Cohen & Kahne, 2012; Johnson & Kaye, 2014; Salman & Saad, 2015; Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2013; Valenzuela, Kim & Gil de Zuniga, 2012; Xenos, Vromen & Loader, 2014). This significant role played by social media in American politics is predictable because a 2013 study by the Pew Research Center found that there was an increase in political activities on social media from 2008 to 2012. Accordingly, in 2012, almost 40% of Americans participated in one form of political activity or another on social media (Smith, 2013).

Furthermore, in another Pew Research Center Project, Raine, Smith, Schlozman, Brady and Verba (2012) discovered that 60% of American adults use social media and of these users, 38% used it to promote politically related content, 35% to mobilize people to vote, 34% to post their political thoughts, 33% to repost political content, 31% to propel others to take political action, 28% to post links to political contents, 21% to belong to a group and 20% to follow elected officials.

Similarly, from a global perspective, current studies have shown that new media have made way for new types of political participation from citizens using social media (Hosch-Dayican, Amrit, Aarts & Dassen, 2014). These new types of participation, is called online political participation (Gibson & Cantijock, 2013; Gil de Zuniga, Veenstra, Vreg & Shah, 2010; Rojas & Puig-i-Abril, 2009). It is noteworthy however, that of all the social media sites available, the most popularly used for online political

participation are Facebook and Twitter (Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2013). This is in addition to them being among the 10 most visited sites globally (Adaja & Ayodele, 2013; Bae, 2014; Social Bakers.com, 2012) (See Table 2.1). Similarly, Policy and Legal Advocacy (2011) noted that of the six broad classifications of social media, three are most relevant to politics. Predictably, Facebook and Twitter belong to two of these three most relevant groups. Consequently, Facebook and Twitter are the focus of this study because they are among the most popular social media used in political participation.

Table 2.1

Ten Most Visited Sites in the World

Rank	Site	Visit Share (%)
1	Facebook	64.69
2	YouTube	19.64
3	Yahoo! Answers	1.15
4	Twitter	1.11
5	MySpace	0.79
6	Tagged	0.43
7	My Yearbook	0.40
8	LinkedIn	0.32
9	My Life	0.32
10	Meebo	0.26
11	Others	10.89

Source: Adaja and Ayodele (2013)

2.4.1 Online Political Participation on Facebook

Facebook was created in 2004 but was only opened to the public in 2006 (Rahmawati, 2014). Though initially a modest invention by Mark Zuckerberg and his friends (Asekun-Olarinmoye et al., 2014), it is presently one of the largest social media sites

in the world (Raof, Zaman, Ahmad & Al-Qaraghuli, 2013), so much so that by September 2012, it had about one billion registered users (Boulianne, 2015; Ternes, Mittelstadt & Towers, 2014) and one trillion page viewers (Adaja & Ayodele, 2013). Subsequently, the number of Facebook users increased to 1.11 billion users in 2013 (Statistics Brain, 2014) while the number of monthly and daily users by the third quarter of 2014 was 1.35 billion and 864 million, respectively (Smith, 2014). By March 2016, Facebook had 1.65 billion monthly active users and 1.09 billion daily active users (Smith, 2016).

Furthermore, Facebook is currently available in 70 different languages (Olabamiji, 2014), including English and Bahasa Melayu which are the lingua franca in Nigeria and Malaysia, respectively. Additionally, Facebook provides a mixture of interpersonal and mass communication which were not in existence before. This is in addition to permitting users to engage in several forms of Computer-Mediated-Communication (CMC), like posting messages on an individual's profile page or on the wall of Facebook friends' profile pages. These forms of CMC enable users to be exposed to political participation. As a result, citizens acquire greater political knowledge and increased political interest as it affords them no additional costs and provides them with access to large amounts of political information (Vitak et al., 2011). Clearly, this makes Facebook a legitimate location for online political participation (Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2013). It is no surprise therefore that it contains a lot of political identities and conversations.

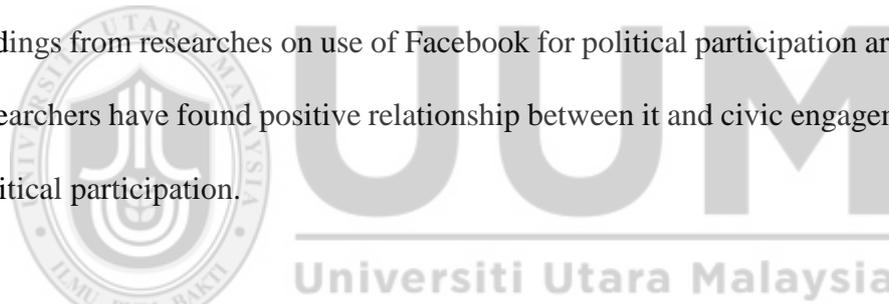
Furthermore, features of Facebook could be used in so many ways for online political participation through direct (instant messaging, messages and wall postings) and indirect means (posting notes, status update) through which users interact (Vitak et al., 2011; Warren, Sulaiman & Jafar, 2014). Specifically, some political activities that exist through standard Facebook features, include posting political messages on a personal or friends' wall, sharing political opinion, joining political groups, becoming a fan of political candidates by liking their pages and posting comments on friends' posts about politics (Vitak et al., 2011). Obviously, Facebook duplicates direct forms of traditional participation in which many real-world participation activities take place online (Warren, Sulaiman & Jafar, 2014). In fact, Facebook allows citizens to participate in politics freely (Raof, Zaman, Ahmad & Al-Qaraghuli, 2013).

Notably, President Obama used Facebook (Zhao, 2014) during his campaign for his first term in office and it is attributed to his winning the elections. Consequently, the 2008 presidential race in the US was dubbed "the Facebook election" (Johnson & Kaye, 2014). Seemingly, Facebook has transformed social relations and also has the potential to be a powerful political tool as it offers new possibilities for the changing patterns of political participation (Ternes, Mittelstadt & Towers, 2014).

Additionally, social media are part of the political culture of youth (Young, 2012) and they spend more time on Facebook than other sites (Olabamiji, 2014). In fact, Smith (2014) claimed that 66% of the world's youth population use Facebook. Hence, despite its social use, it makes sense that the political actions of youth will also find a

home there. Consequently, scholars (Raine et al., 2012; Vesnic-Alujevic, 2012; Vissers & Stolle, 2014) have found that there is a positive relationship between Facebook use and online political participation among the youth.

On the contrary, Theocharis and Quintelier (2014) found that Facebook use by the youth is negatively related to political participation, whether online or offline. Rather, Facebook leads to clearly entertainment-oriented purposes. Supporting this argument, Ternes, Mittelstadt and Towers (2014) maintained that although Facebook's popularity globally cannot be questioned, its role in political participation is questionable, as political action on it is still limited. Therefore, they concluded that findings from researches on use of Facebook for political participation are not clear as researchers have found positive relationship between it and civic engagement, and not political participation.



2.4.2 Online Political Participation on Twitter

Twitter is one of the world's most important social media platforms and very useful in political participation (Hosch-Dayican, Amrit, Aarts & Dassen, 2014). It belongs to the microblogging category of social media. Microblogging encompasses the best of Electronic Mail (E-mail), Short Message Service (SMS), blogging and Instant Messaging (IM). It may also include links, photos and audio clips.

Twitter is the most popular microblog (Rahmawati, 2014) on social media, thus providing individuals with a variety of microblogging opportunities (Larsson & Moe,

2012). It is also used to mobilize and gather news as well as for communicative purposes. This exemplifies the new participatory culture and democratization of the media. Additionally, Twitter provides an important platform for people to come together, thus forming online communities from which members gain immense public experiences (Varnali & Gorgulu, 2014).

Twitter was created by Jack Dorsey in 2006 as a microblogging site where messages of up to 140 characters can be shared (Tumasjan et al., 2010). These messages are called tweets and they can be shared through retweeting by other users. Tweets can be categorized using hashtag (#), while the social relationship on Twitter is labelled in terms of 'follower' and 'following' (Rahmawati, 2014). Twitter had 20 million unique monthly visitors in 2010 (Tumasjan et al., 2010) and 645,750,000 million registered users by 2014 (Statistica, 2014). However, by 2015, the number of registered users had increased to 1.3 billion and 120 million unique monthly visitors (Smith, 2016). Subsequently, by the first quarter of 2016, this number had increased to 310 million users (Smith, 2016; Statistica, 2016).

However, unlike Facebook, there is no reciprocal (Kwak, Lee, Park & Moon, 2010) or technical requirement in Twitter friendship model. Users choose Twitter accounts to 'follow' and they have their own group of followers. Affirming this, Kim and Park (2012) stated that only 22.1% of Twitter users do have a reciprocal relationship. This

indicates that Twitter is not used for interpersonal communication among 'Twitterians' but as a mass communication tool.

Nevertheless, Lorentzen (2013) noted that Twitter offers users greater control of information sources as they can choose which hashtags to follow, making political participation on Twitter a one-way communication. Therefore, Twitter does not support deliberative democracy. Conversely, some researchers (Larsson & Moe, 2012; Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2013; Tumasjan et al., 2010) have argued that Twitter is widely used for discussions about politics and not only for one-way communication. Besides, Varnali and Gorgulu (2014) explained that the structural orientation of Twitter is such that discussions are dispersed throughout a network of interconnected profiles; thus, conversations are not bounded by spaces or groups. For example, through a hashtag (#), an individual could discuss a certain political issue without any preexisting connection or prior knowledge of each other. As a result, Rahmawati (2014) affirmed that Twitter enables its users to engage in public/political discourse (Park, 2013) by joining the debate, hence increasing political participation. This allows for different views and multiple voices to be aired, hence promoting deliberative and healthy democracy.

Accordingly, Twitter's use for online political participation can be broadly classified into two. First, it serves as a direct communication channel between citizens and elites; and second, it is an alternative tool for political discourse and mobilization (Kim & Park, 2012). Thus, political activities available on Twitter include, posting political

tweets, retweeting or quoting political tweets, following politicians, political parties or political Twitter accounts and also replying tweets from these groups.

Like Facebook, Obama successfully used Twitter during the US elections (Zhao, 2014), hence popularizing its use in politics. This has made it a legitimate communication channel in the political arena (Tumasjan et al., 2010) and a known feature of American political life (Raine et al., 2012). Twitter was also used by citizens, political parties and candidates to disseminate content in the German 2009 elections (Tumasjan et al., 2011). This may not be unconnected to the fact that before the election, 71% of all the 1.8 million German users visited Twitter (Tumasjan et al., 2010). Likewise, Twitter was used in the 2008 and 2010 Swedish (Larsson & Moe, 2012; Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2013) and South Korean (Chun, 2012) elections. The same can also be said for the 2008 Malaysian general elections (Kasmani et al., 2014) and the 2011 Nigerian general elections (Olabamiji, 2014). Consequently, Twitter has been praised as a champion of democracy. This is because it allows ‘average citizens’ to participate in the political process (Bekafigo & McBride, 2013), making it an effective tool for passing information between politicians and candidates (Hosch-Dayican, Amrit, Aarts and Dassen, 2014).

It is noteworthy that most of the peak periods of Twitter use for political participation are event-related (Lorentzen, 2013), especially during elections and protests (Tumasjan et al., 2010; Vatandas, 2103). During these periods, there are increased

activities of politicians, political analysts and citizens. As a result, hashtags are usually created for such events. For example, #PRU13 for Malaysian 2013 general elections, #ausvote for Australian 2010 elections, #Iran for 2009 Iranian elections, #val for Swedish elections in 2010, #occupy gezi and #Gezi Park for Tunisian protest (Zhao, 2014).

As a result, a number of studies (Kasmani, et al. 2014; Lorentzen, 2013; Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2013; Larsson & Moe, 2012; Vatandas, 2103) on political participation on Twitter have analyzed content of political activities during these peak periods of its use. However, this is not to say that other studies have not also looked at general political conversation or participation on Twitter (Tumasjan et al., 2010).

2.5 Online Political Participation of Youth on Social Media

Online political participation on 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 youth who use social media to express their political opinion through print, audio and even video capabilities (Kushin & Yamamoto, 2010). Social media is a way to link youth to the political process since they spend an increasing amount of time in the online world (Agboola, 2014). Specifically, as at the end of the first quarter of 2016, Smith (2016) noted that 91% of millennials (15 to 34 year olds) used Facebook. These millienials are a significant part of the youth population. Additionally, youth are part of the

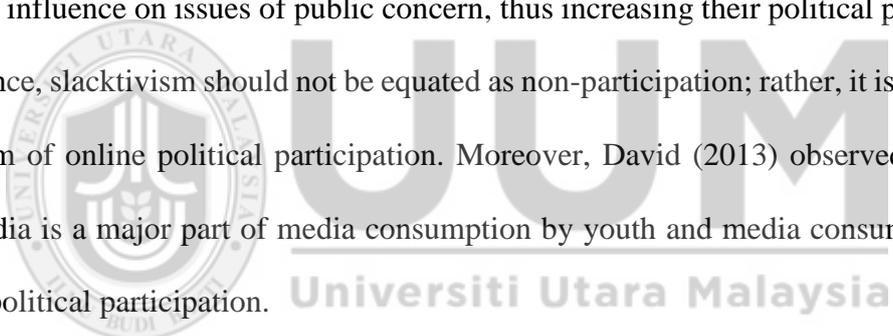
highest percentage of global Twitter users in the early part of 2016 with 18 to 29 year olds, representing 37% of users and 30 to 49 year olds, representing 25% of users.

Thus, social media, especially Facebook and Twitter, have provided youth with new ways of political participation and democratic citizenship (Ke & Starkey, 2014; Oser, Hooghe & Marien, 2012). This has led to increased use of social media for political purposes by youth (Uzochukwu, Patricia & Ukueze, 2014; Vissers & Stolle, 2014). Notably, studies conducted in the US (Kushin & Yamamoto, 2010) and Sweden (Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2013) have shown that social media has significantly influenced political participation among youth. In the US particularly, Yamamoto and Kushin (2013) credited social media with stimulating the involvement of youth in the 2008 elections by enabling the exchange and creation of political content online. In fact, Steffan (2013) noted that there was a 600% increase in youth online political participation on social networks between 2008 and 2012. Equally, Vitak et al. (2011) noted that youth in the US use social media for political participation, especially for informational use because it is accessible at any time of the day and also less stressful as with just a few clicks, participation occurs.

Yamamoto, Kushin and Dalisay (2013) added that there is a rise in use of social media among youth to get various kinds of political information. This may not be unconnected to the fact that social media sites have created new opportunities for user-centered, interactive political experiences. Consequently, Stieglitz and Dang-Xuan

(2013) and Vitak et al. (2011) noted that the most common form of participation by youth is the informational type. Notably, the youth use Facebook mostly for political participation that is communicative in nature (Vitak et al., 2011). This has raised concerns that the youth are becoming “slacktivists”. Slacktivism refers to the act of engaging in political participation that requires less commitment, and hence, little or no impact on effecting change (Christensen, 2012).

However, Cohen and Kahne (2012) explained that participatory politics are communication-and peer-based acts. Therefore, youth use them to exert their voice and influence on issues of public concern, thus increasing their political participation. Hence, slacktivism should not be equated as non-participation; rather, it is a legitimate form of online political participation. Moreover, David (2013) observed that social media is a major part of media consumption by youth and media consumption leads to political participation.



Xenos, Vromen and Loader (2014) found that social media use propels youth to participate in politics in Australia and the UK. Likewise, Calenda and Meijer (2009) reported that in the Netherlands and other Western European countries, social media use by youth features prominently in political participation. Equally, in Russia, Koltsova and Shcherbak (2014) reported that in the 2011/2012 campaign, social media use by youth was responsible for unpopularity of the ruling party from 64% of votes in 2007 to 49% in the 2011 elections. Furthermore, findings from a study conducted

in the Philippines show special attention is paid to social media and their role in democratic participation among youth. Due to easy access, there is a growing number of youth who engage in political activities online. This has led to a shift from political participation offline to online political participation. This indicates that social media is a fertile ground for political participation and by extension, a variety of political activism in the Philippines (David, 2013).

However, some scholars have noted that there is decrease or non-participation of youth in politics. Specifically in South Korea, Seongyi and Woo-Young (2011) reported that youth are disengaged from politics due to rigorous academic challenges. Likewise, in the US, there was a drop in political participation by youth from one-half in the 1970s to less than one-fifth in 1998. This drop continued up to the last two decades. In fact, Wells and Dudash (2007) stated that less than 40% of American youth participated in the 2004 presidential elections. Notably, this disengagement among American youth could be traced as far back as 1972 when 18 year olds were first eligible to vote (Iyengar & Jackman, 2004; Wells & Dudash, 2007).

Mongkuo et al. (2014) also reported various forms of decline in political participation among American youth from 1996 to 2012. The same trend was witnessed in Britain where there was a decrease in political participation of youth from 66% in 1987 to 44% in 2010 (Whiteley, 2011). However, this disengagement is from traditional political participation. Thus, it is noteworthy that the non-participation of youth in

conventional politics is being attributed to the inaccessibility of forms of traditional participation to them. Nevertheless, Potgieter (2013) explained that because of fraudulent elections and general distrust in the electoral process, youth in developing countries tend to participate in more unconventional forms of political participation than those in countries with advanced democracies. This supports Norris's (2002) notion that lack of interest in traditional forms of political participation have brought about new forms of political participation, like online political participation.

Furthermore, some scholars (Chun, 2012; Dalton, 2008; Putnam, 2000) have reported that the blame for non-participation should not be placed squarely on the youth, but rather on the reasons why they do not participate in conventional politics. They stated that youth are more likely to participate in engagement-based citizenship than duty-based citizenship as practiced by older citizens. Hence, the argument that youth 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 youth do not participate. However, expanding the definition to more modern forms of participation might indicate different results. On a general note, it is evident that social media provides youth in many nations the means for political participation (Theocharis & Quintelier, 2014). As a result, Titus-Fannie, Akpan and Tarnongo (2013) predicted that its use for political purposes could surpass the dominating social use the youth put it to. This is because social media

makes the political system more accessible to youth, hence providing an avenue to discuss politics. It has moved from motivating online visits to political action, such that if they do not result in direct behavioral change, they still signify some form of political participation (Titus-Fannie, Akpan & Tarnongo, 2013).

2.5.1 Online Political Participation on Social Media among Youth in Nigeria

Increased use of social media by Nigerian youth for political participation (Dagona, Karick & Abubakar, 2013; Olabamiji, 2014) has led to a political revolution in the country. This revolution is not the one as in Egypt and Tunisia, but that of freedom of expression and access to information (Agboola, 2014). This Nigerian revolution could be likened to the statement of Campante, Durante and Sobbrío (2013) that the world is going through a “communication revolution” which has provided opportunity for democratic development.

Notably, the proliferation of social media in Nigeria is attributed to the mobile phone revolution that permeated the country in mid 2000 (Otas, 2011). In early 2000, the total number of mobile phone lines in Nigeria was less than 300,000; however, by 2007, mobile telecommunication covered 60% of the country (Agyeman, 2007). Thus, due to booming telecommunication infrastructure, 53% of the country’s population is now connected to the Internet (Otas, 2011). Consequently, as at 2011, 87 million of Nigeria’s 150 million population owned mobile phones and 44 million had Internet access, three million were on Facebook and 60,000 on Twitter (Shehu Musa Yar’Adua

Foundation, 2011); by 2013, there were 149 million mobile lines, 112 million of which were in use. This made Nigeria one of the highest mobile phone markets in the world and the largest mobile market in Africa (Ifukor, 2010). In fact, Emmanuel (2015) noted that 100% of the 15 million active monthly Facebook users in Nigeria do so on their mobile phones.

Accordingly, Internet-enabled mobile phones have become cheaper, making it possible for Nigerian youth to carry out political participation activities on their mobile phones. The Nigerian Monitor (2013) reports that youth, who make up over half of Nigeria's 160 million people, are the bulk of social media users. Predictably, Adaja and Ayodele (2013) discovered in their study that 54% of undergraduates use Facebook, followed by Myspace and 13% use Twitter, while the rest use other new or social media platforms.

Consequently, blogging was first used by youth in the 2007 general elections for monitoring, measuring and mobilizing different aspects of the elections (Ifokur, 2010). Although it was a new creation at that time, it marked the beginning of social media's link with political participation in Nigeria. Subsequently, social media was widely used for political participation in Nigeria in May 2011 (Titus-Fannie, Akpan & Tarnongo, 2013). It became a veritable tool for political expression during the elections when youth had restricted access to traditional media. This represented a paradigm shift in political participation in the country (Titus-Fannie, Akpan &

Tarnongo, 2013). Correspondingly, there was a rush by Nigerian politicians to make their presence felt on Facebook and Twitter (Otas, 2011; Policy and Legal Adocacy, 2011). In fact, all major presidential aspirants and political parties had Facebook and Twitter accounts. Additionally, debates were established online using Twitter and Facebook, because they were the most popularly used social media by Nigerian youth (Otas, 2011; Uzochukwu, Patricia & Ukueze, 2014). Thus, social media was embraced by youth and political elites as a communication and participation tool (Okoro & Nwafor, 2013; Olabamij, 2014).

Consequently, online forums on social media, like Enough is Enough (EiE) Nigeria (Otas, 2011), Reclaim Naija (Policy and Legal Advocacy Center, 2011); Sleeve Up (Otas, 2011); Neighbour2Neighbour (n2n), Alliance for Good Governance, and Arewa Christian Initiatives (ACI) (Titus-Fannie, Akpan & Tarnongo, 2013) were created during the elections. Therefore, social media provided a forum through which ordinary Nigerians felt empowered to express themselves politically as they were used for political information, discussion and mass mobilization for political participation (Iwokwagh & Okoro, 2012). Citizens were announcing election results on social media as soon as they were made available from the polling units. Thus, social media breathed new life into political participation in Nigeria (Olabamiji, 2014).

Subsequently, the popularity of social media for political participation further increased in 2012 and 2014, when following the success of its use in Arab spring, Nigerians witnessed the power of social media for practical expression of public opinion (Ekwenchi & Udenze, 2014). This was when the public protest on the fuel subsidy removal led to the “Occupy Nigeria Protest” in 2012 (Hari, 2014) and the ‘Bring Back our Girls’ protest in 2014 (Ojo, 2014). In the case of the former, Facebook and Twitter were effectively used by youth to mobilize citizens to express public opinion against the government. Hence, they promoted awareness and interaction by making online political participation in Nigeria easier and cheaper (Okoro & Nwafor, 2013).

Furthermore, social media bridged the knowledge gap between those who had access to traditional political information and those who did not (Olabamiji, 2014) and also motivated political participation through access to information, especially among youth (Ojo, 2014). This enabled youth to cultivate rational thinking capability as they exchanged information with elites on policy processes and outcomes. As a result, increasing use of social media in the country put pressure on the government to address more public issues (Hari, 2014), and in the process, change how Nigerian youth participate in politics (Uzochukwu & Ekwugha, 2014).

2.5.2 Online Political Participation on Social Media among Youth in Malaysia

The Internet transformed Malaysia's media and political landscape by opening political discourse (Lumsden, 2013) when it emerged in the country in the 1990s (Sani, 20014; Wilson, Leong, Nge & Hong, 2011). Malaysia was the first country in Southeast Asia to offer Internet access to the public (George, 2005; Teng, 2012), such that by year 2000, there were 17 million Internet users (Sani, 2014), that increased to 56% of the 28.9 million people by 2011 (Freedom House, 2011).

Like the Internet, social media was widely diffused in Malaysia with a penetration rate of 84.7% by February 2010. This made it the top online activity in the country. Since then, adoption of social media has grown significantly in Malaysia (Hamid, Ishak, Ismail & Yazam, 2013) and the demand for it is still on the increase (Hamid, Ishak & Yazam, 2015). Although there are locally created social media sites, such as myfriends2u.com and ruangz.com, the patronage for these sites is low (Hamid, Ishak, Ismail & Yazam, 2013). However, Facebook, Friendster and Twitter have recorded high usage in excess of seven million users in the country alone. In addition, Al-Rahmi and Othman (2013) reported wide access and use of social media among Malaysian youth, of which the most used, are Facebook and Twitter.

Hamid, Ishak and Yazam (2015), in a survey of students who are active users of social media, found that Facebook is among the most influential media of undergraduates in

Malaysia. In fact, Facebook always occupies the top spot among the most visited websites in the country (Hamid, Ishak & Yazam, 2015; Sani, 2014, Salman & Saad, 2015). This is no surprise because in year 2000, there were 9.5 million Facebook users in Malaysia (Sani, 2014). Subsequently, this number increased rapidly, such that over 50% of Malaysians which constitutes 78% of the Malaysian online population, use Facebook (Social baker, 2012). By 2015, 10 million Malaysians visited Facebook daily and 15 million visited the site monthly (Statistica, 2016).

Generally, social media is trendy, cheap and easy to access (Raof, Zaman, Ahmad & Al-Qaraghuli, 2013), especially to youth 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 democratization of knowledge and information (Sani, 2014) and are among the most popular social media in the country (Raof, Zaman, Ahmad & Al-Qaraghuli, 2013). Additionally, scholars (Raof, Zaman, Ahmad & Al-Qaraghuli, 2013; Kasmani, Sabran & Ramle, 2014; Pandian, 2014a) have asserted that increase in political participation by Malaysian youth 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 political landscape in Malaysia (Sani, 2014). This indicates Twitter is also a legitimate and frequently used political and communication tool in Malaysia (Kasmani et al., 2014).

Furthermore, notable politicians have social media accounts, as some like former Prime Minister Tun Mahathir Mohamad, and others like Anwar Ibrahim, Lim Kit Siang and Lim Guan Eng, communicate with citizens through them (Rusli, 2008). The current Prime Minister, Mohd Najib Tun Razak, also interacts with citizens on Facebook and Twitter, specifically through his Twitter account #Tanyanajib. In fact, he had the second highest total followers on Twitter in Malaysia with 2,697,166 as at the second quarter of 2014 (Social Baker, 2016).

This points to the fact that social media is a useful tool in mobilizing youth to engage in the political process as it has provided an opportunity for them to communicate with political elites, hence creating a feeling of being heard. Thus, social media has provided an avenue where Malaysians can express political views and interact on issues related to politics or with politicians. Hence, it is used by electoral candidates to communicate political programs and voters can also communicate with candidates (Raof, Zaman, Ahmad & Al-Qaraghuli, 2013).

Accordingly, the effect of social media in politics was felt most during the 13th Malaysian general elections in 2008. It was an important tool used by youth for deliberation on political issues during the elections (Rajaratnam, 2009; Sanni & Zengeni, 2010). Youth in Malaysia were able to participate politically online as most of them were either on one social media site or another, or multiples, of which the most popular was Facebook. As a result, the 2008 Malaysian General Elections (GE

13) was defined as a social media elections (Kasmani, Sabran & Ramle, 2014). Although social media was not directly responsible for candidates or parties that won in the elections, it however helped (Salman & Saad, 2015) in allowing political information to be passed during the elections, thus strengthening the democratic process (Sani, 2014).

Therefore, #PRU13 was one of the popular hashtags used before the GE13. This made Twitter an avenue for getting political information as Malaysians' use of Twitter for political deliberations during this period was evident. Hence, contribution to hashtags flow on information was seen as a form of online political participation (Kasmani, Sabran & Ramle, 2014). As such, in a content analysis of political tweets with the hashtag #PRU13 (Bahasa translation for the 2013 general elections in Malaysia) by Kasmani, Sabran and Ramle (2014), it was revealed that a lot of political discourse went on using Twitter at that time.

However, despite these positive reviews on social media use by Malaysian youth for political participation, Salman and Saad (2015) argued that unlike youth in other third world countries, those in Malaysia do not actively use social media for political participation. In fact, Freeman (2013) found that Malaysian youth prefer entertainment news online to other forms of activities. Similarly, in a study of 1,182 youth between ages of 18-25 years, Salman and Saad (2015) found Malaysian youth use new media more for entertainment and social networking. Pandian (2014a) noted that proposals

for more knowledgeable young voters to enhance Malaysia's democratic institutions has received positive response because social media, as a significant source of independent information in Malaysia, has helped in achieving this.

2.6 Cognitive Engagement Theory

The Cognitive Engagement Theory (CET) which is used as the theoretical underpinning for this study was propounded by Ronald F. Inglehart in 1977. It was initially proposed as Cognitive Mobilization Theory (Alaminos & Panalva, 2012; Dalton, 1984). The cognitive mobilization theory was derived from the concept of cognitive mobilization which basically means political participation is affected by better educated citizens who have increased access to information (Inglehart, 1977; 1990).

Specifically, cognitive mobilization entails the reduction in the cost of acquiring political information and the increased ability of citizens to process this information. Subsequently, these political resources and skills make it easier for citizens to understand how policies are made in a democracy, hence engendering participation. Thus, cognitive mobilization is synonymous with the concept of public opinion, where informed citizens discuss public issues. It embodies the idea of traditional political communication where people meet physically and discuss. This discussion is facilitated by political knowledge and group decision-making. Hence, it reflects formal education, political information and other cognitive skills.

Accordingly, Dalton (1984) noted that the CET basically explains the concept of cognitive mobilization. Therefore, it aims at explaining the fact that political participation is as a result of an individual's education, access to information, political knowledge, political interest and policy satisfaction (Pattie, Seyd & Whiteley, 2004) (see Figure 2.1). Education, in this case, emphasizes the level of higher education a citizen has attained. Access to information refers to how individuals use media to get political information. Political knowledge entails the understanding of citizens on how the democratic system works or about political personalities or events, etc. Political interest encompasses what propels citizens to want to participate in politics, while policy satisfaction is about whether or not citizens are content with policy decision-making processes or generally policies that the government of a particular country makes in the interest of citizens (Whiteley, 2005).

2.6.1 Theoretical Framework

Cognitive engagement results from an individual's media consumption and how he or she uses the information consumed to make decisions about politics. Historically, cognitively engaged citizens are the good citizens who have interest in politics and know how democracy works. They are critical citizens who are propelled to participate in politics if they are not satisfied with government policies (Pattie, Seyd & Whiteley, 2003).

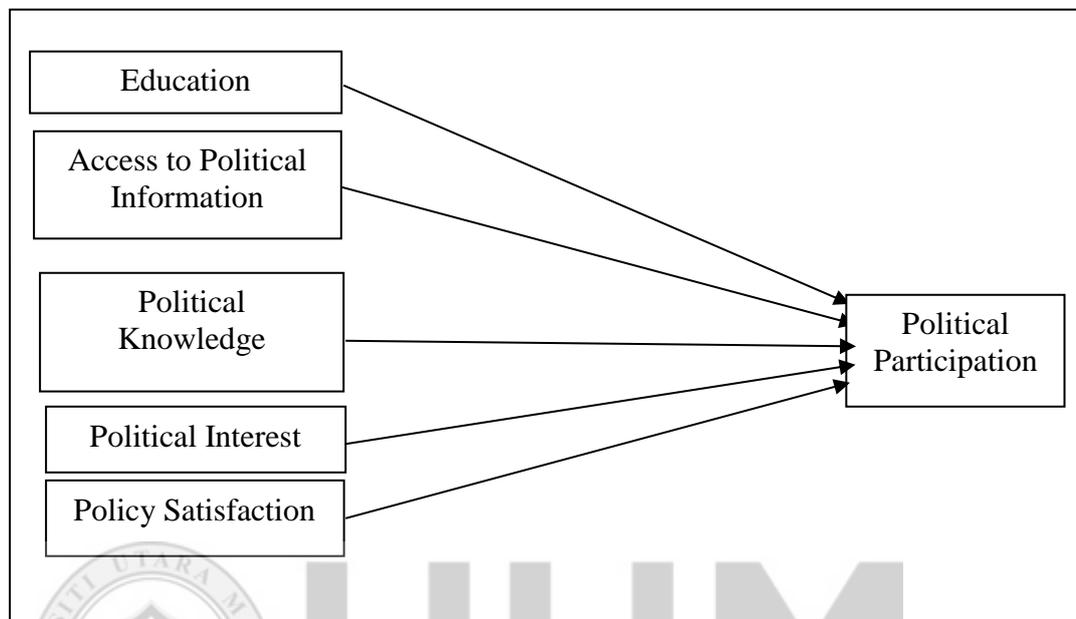


Figure 2.1. Theoretical Framework (Developed from the ideas of Inglehart, 1977; Dalton, 2008; and Whiteley, 2005)

Hence, the more educated citizens a society has, the better informed they will be and in the long-run, the more they will participate in politics to show their satisfaction with government policies. Also, the lesser the cost of access to information, the more citizens consume information from the media and the higher the level of political knowledge and interest among citizens, which further leads to increase in political participation (Charles, 2010). Hence, access to information is a personal resource (Dalton, 2006), and a key factor in this theory (Pattie, Seyd & Whiteley, 2004).

Apparently, the CET is rooted in choice conceptions of participation (Whiteley, 2005). Choice conceptions mean that individuals make conscious choices about political participation. As such, citizens can choose whether to participate or not, depending on whether or not they are satisfied with the activities of their government (Pattie, Seyd & Whiteley, 2004).

Consequently, the CET is relevant to this study for a number of reasons. First, despite the fact that it was propounded in 1977, Dalton (2006) noted that there is renewed interest in the CET. Part of the reason for this renewed interest is due to the reduction in cost of accessing political information as a result of proliferation of new media. Today, social media reduces cost of access to information, hence validating the use of this theory for this study.

Secondly, as a comparative study, the features of the CET can be applied to both Nigeria and Malaysia. Moreover, the origin of the CET itself was a comparative analysis of some European countries conducted by Inglehart.

Thirdly, Inglehart (1977) highlighted the significance of unconventional forms of political participation of which online political participation is a part of today. In fact, Alimos and Penalva (2012) affirmed that in the CET, conventional forms of political participation have been relegated to the background as unconventional forms have

taken over due to post-materialistic values. Hence, since this study is on online political participation which is an unconventional form of participation, this theory is ideal.

Fourthly, the CET itself highlights the role of youth in mobilizing their peers through persuasion and arguments to participate in politics. This essentially also takes place in online political participation of youth via social media. Besides, in 1984, Dalton who worked closely with Inglehart, stressed that youth should be incorporated in the political process because of their tertiary level of education which translates to more access to political information through their exposure to media.

Fifth, in a related study, Charles (2010) found that political participation is linked to citizens' access to information, political interest and political knowledge, while Vincente and Novo (2014) indicated that there are links between political participation and citizens' policy satisfaction. Also, Smith and Raine (2008) discovered that during the 2008 elections in the US, 40% of all social media users used it to find out their friends' political interest, 29% to see their friends' political affiliations and 22% for political information (especially information about candidates). Hence, based on these finding of previous researchers on the relationships between the features of the CET and political participation, the theory is ideal for this study.

Generally, from the perspective of online political participation on social media, this theory embodies two separate trends. First, is the decrease in the cost of acquiring information; and second, is the increase in ability of youth to process political information. This provides better opportunity for youth to handle political issues and understand how democracy works in their society. Obviously, online political participation via social media makes involvement in politics far less expensive, and by extension, an extra boost to cognitive engagement, thus further supporting the use of this theory in this study.

However, like every theory, the CET also has its criticisms. According to Pattie, Seyd and Whiteley (2004), a major criticism of the theory is that as a choice-based theory that involves information processing, it does not take cognizance of the fact that citizens might decide not to act on political information once they have acquired it, especially in the absence of incentives. Furthermore, it is still unclear why educated people should automatically participate in politics based on information they consume from the media. Although the more educated citizens are, the better their cognitive ability, yet this cannot be directly translated into an automatic interest in politics. Thus, even if individuals are well educated and politically interested, they may still need some other reasons for participation.

2.6.2 Education as a Feature of the Cognitive Engagement Theory

Education as a feature of the CET is not included in this study. The reason for this is that of all the features of the CET, education has generated a lot of doubts concerning the role it plays in political participation. As a result, a lot of criticism has surrounded its inclusion as the most important factor that enhances political participation in the CET. Even the author of the theory (Inglehart) noted that education, as a variable, might not be particularly useful in some cases (Inglehart, 1990). Accordingly, Whiteley (2005) proposed that with proper control of other variables, such as political interest, there may be no need to include education as a variable of the CET in some research.

Further, although Dalton (2008) claimed increase in political participation is driven by growth in civic education. Pempek, Yermolayeva and Calvert (2009) argued that access to information can also play this role as it provides an important backdrop for cognitive development of youth. Moreover, Whiteley (2005) stressed that the aim of civic education in democratic engagement is more towards civic engagement than political participation; thus, civic education does not ultimately lead to political knowledge which propels individuals to political participation and political knowledge that cannot propel citizens to participate in politics is not useful based on the terms of the CET.

Besides, the knowledge gained through civic education is not the kind of knowledge this study is interested in; rather, it is current knowledge gained via frequent exposure to social media as stressed by Dimitrova et al. (2014). This current knowledge acquired through media is an important motivation for political participation. Therefore, citizens' participation depends on their access to information on social media, and this information is what eventually leads to knowledge that is useful to make informed political choices.

Furthermore, Croke, Grossman, Larreguy and Marshall (2014) affirmed that a significant number of studies have indicated that education increases political participation, but admitted that this argument may not hold outside advanced democratic countries. For example, in their study, they found that education decreases citizens' political participation in Zimbabwe. Equally, in advanced industrialized nations, scholars have reported that despite the rise in levels of civic education, there was still a decline in political participation. This indicates that improvement in standards of education does not necessarily improve political participation.

Moreover, Whiteley (2005) reported that some studies have found that students of higher education are already knowledgeable about politics in the beginning, indicating that civic education makes no difference. Apparently, the link between civic education and political knowledge is either non-existent or weak, signifying that political knowledge is usually acquired outside the school. Although Larreguy and

Marshall (2015), in a longitudinal study in Nigeria, found that education increases basic civic and political engagement, this was among primary and secondary school students. Nevertheless, since the samples of the present study are all of the same educational level, there is no need to test different levels of education against their political participation.

Therefore, even though education may appear to be an essential feature in understanding political information, other factors also play an equally important role. Perhaps, this explains why Tolbert and McNeal (2003) noted that the biggest variable in political participation used to be education and income; however, communication technology has become just as important. In the same vein, although the CET has a normative rule that good citizens must be educated, interested in politics and media-conscious, it still places emphasis on the important role of media use in building political knowledge and interest which will increase political participation.

2.6.3 Cognitive Engagement Theory and Political Participation

The variables of the CET (access to information, political knowledge, political interest and policy satisfaction) and their relationship with political participation are discussed in this section. This is to show the link between individual features of the theory and the phenomenon being studied.

2.6.3.1 Access to Political Information

The primary role of media in a democratic society is to inform citizens (Dimitrova et al., 2014) because citizens who are well informed are those who participate in politics. Political information mainly comprises news; however, it could also include political adverts, as political adverts have been found to reduce knowledge gaps in society (Valentino, Hutchings & William, 2004). Consequently, for countries like Nigeria and Malaysia that intend to consolidate their democracy, access to political information is important. Hamid and Mustaffa (2007) affirmed that today, the role of media in disseminating information is becoming more important, as it is now an important tool in Malaysia which enables the creation, distribution and exploitation of knowledge and information.

Accordingly, social media has a role to play in this scenario for various reasons. Most important is that it exposes citizens to political information, hence providing a tool for participation. Also, it offers a variety of options for political engagement and also makes it easier and cheaper for citizens' media consumption. Additionally, it provides opportunity for interactivity between political elites and citizens, albeit mediated, while at the same time, making the political system seem more accessible to ordinary citizens. Moreover, the importance of information for enlightened citizens gives democracy the edge over other forms of government. This importance accorded to information in the realm of political participation, explains the centrality of all types of media in politics and democracy. As a result, the attention of many scholars has

been drawn to the impact of new media on political participation (Mustapha & Wok, 2014).

Historically, before the emergence of new media, access to news on television led to political participation (Mushtaq & Baig, 2015). This relationship remained with the coming of the Internet as Bakker and De Vresse (2011) discovered that using the Internet to access political information in the form of news also leads to political participation. Although past studies have indicated that there is a positive relationship between news and political participation, there is a difference between consuming news via traditional media and consuming news via new media. This is because new media has made it possible for individuals to access more political information, both in terms of quantity and multiplicity of content. Also, unlike traditional media, information on new media is not expensive (Bimber, 2000), hence increasing options for finding political information for citizens.

Supporting this view, Norris (2001a, 2001b) stated that the Internet provides for freedom to access vast amounts of information, hence providing those (e.g., youth and minority political groups) sidelined by traditional media a source of political information. This makes the Internet a new public sphere for expression and exchange of information by citizens. A case in point is that online media in Malaysia has moved into mainstream media, hence challenging the hegemony of traditional media in the PRU13 in Malaysia (Lumsden, 2013; Sani, 2014). As such, new media poses a

challenge for traditional media in Malaysia. Apart from cheaper and easier access to online media, new media gained popularity in Malaysia because of the need for free flow of information not provided by mainstream media (Salman, Ibrahim, Abdullah, Mustaffa & Mahbob, 2011). Hence, there was an increased use of social media, especially Facebook, as alternative sources to political news by Malaysians during the 2008 elections. Since the ruling party controls the press in Malaysia, social media served as an alternative for the opposition to reach the youth during elections. Through them, youth obtained political information to take the necessary political action. Bloggers in Malaysia, such as Jeff Ooi, Tony Pua, Nik Nazmi and Elizabeth Wong, used this platform to encourage political participation by campaigning and generating money for opposition parties (Teng, 2012).

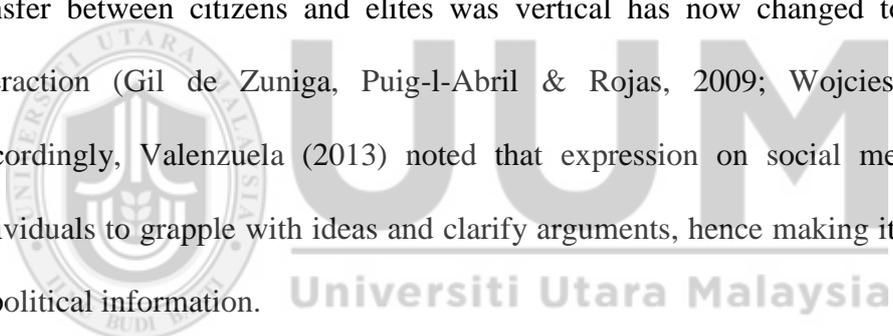
Evidently, this phenomenon could be attributed to the fact that today, the way citizens access information in terms of news has changed. For example, in 2010, more Americans indicated that they get their news online than from other sources as searching for and viewing news online on various types of new media is more engaging cognitively than traditional media use (Bachmann & Gil de Zuniga, 2013). Consequently, social media is a forum for political expression and discussion as well as an outlet for political information (Kaye, 2010) and a means of gathering information (Dimitrova et al., 2014; Gil de Zuniga et al., 2013 & Towner, 2014). Also, in a content analysis of 350 new media sites in Nigeria, political issues accounted for

69% (Mustapha & Wok, 2014). This confirms the assertion of Gil de Zuniga et al. (2009) that political information is the most common form of information online.

Accordingly, a major attribute of social media is the choice which it offers individuals to access political information they like by bypassing the gatekeeper's role of traditional media (Policy and Legal Advocacy Center, 2011). Supporting this, Bae (2014) noted that given the high level of penetration of political information on social media and the limited control over the flow of information on it, youth can encounter politically engaging information while carrying out various apolitical activities on social media.

Evidently, social media is a significant part of online services where individuals interact. It embodies features, such as a centralized newsfeed, where youth share and access news about so many issues, including politics. This has provided users access to unlimited information, therefore making every information consumer a potential information producer. Consequently, due to blurred lines between political and apolitical content on social media, conversations on both flow hand-in-hand. Political information on social media is so widespread that it now serves as the window through which youth view the world. Thus, the consequences of facilitating political discussions on social media have been viewed positively by various scholars (Bae, 2014).

Hence, the freedom of expression that social media allows has made participation in the democratic process easier. Likewise, access to political information on social media makes it possible for citizens to vigorously discuss politics by challenging government actions or inactions virtually. This electronic empowerment enables horizontal communication and mobilization (Ifukor, 2010), such that a significant number of youth are now accessing political information and discussing politics with the help of social media (Sutanto & Suwana, 2014). Seemingly, there is a change in how communication dynamics occurs between citizenship and participation. Social media is part of that change, as old forms of political participation where information transfer between citizens and elites was vertical has now changed to horizontal interaction (Gil de Zuniga, Puig-I-Abril & Rojas, 2009; Wojcieszak, 2012). Accordingly, Valenzuela (2013) noted that expression on social media enables individuals to grapple with ideas and clarify arguments, hence making it a rich form of political information.



In a quantitative survey of 500 college students aged between 18-24 years, the majority of them preferred online news to traditional news (Freeman, 2013). Also, Grönlund and Wakabi (2015) noted that the most common activity engaged online by Ugandans is looking for political information. Likewise Weiss (2012) noted that in Malaysia, the relationship between politics and social media could be classified in three parts: media for information, identity and mobilization. However, the first of these categories is

perhaps the most obvious as social media has broken the information blockade, making access to information, which was hitherto not possible, easier.

Similarly, social media provides more opportunity for connecting elites and citizens, as they offer a higher level of interactivity, especially in terms of the degree of user involvement on the site. For instance, following a politician on social media can lead to various cognitive and behavioral effects (Strandberg, 2009). Apparently, social media provides a kind of mass communication of self, where youth acquire a new creative autonomy, its unique characteristics of sharing, openness and participation make this possible.

Furthermore, Enjolral, Steen-Johnson and Wollebaek (2013), in their study, indicated that youth find Facebook and Twitter to be important as they make access and dissemination of news and political information easier. In recent years, much more politically relevant information has become available on social media. This increase, especially on Facebook, could be traced to the fact that it supplied electoral candidates the opportunity to have contact with the public in an effective and cheap way without limitations, making campaign information easily accessible especially to youth (Raouf, Zaman, Ahmad & Al-Qaraghuli, 2013). Thus, Ross and Burger (2014) noted that Facebook and Twitter have positively affected the ways politicians communicate with the public. Hence, the limitations of gatekeeping which the traditional media has

been well known for, are now broken. Elites can now transmit their political messages to anyone paying attention.

In furtherance of the discussions above, the public can also follow politicians on Twitter or join their Facebook fan page, comment on their tweets or posts and also send direct messages. This indicates Twitter is a source of political information (Tumasjan et al., 2010). Gil de Zuniga et al. (2010) concluded that there is a positive relationship between political talk and political participation, particularly the fact that the kind of talk that occurs face-to-face is not different from its online version in terms of participatory influence and effectiveness.

Additionally, the role of Facebook in providing political news to the populace cannot be overemphasized. For instance, a study conducted by the Pew Internet and American Life Project, found 36% of social media users in the US indicating Facebook is very important for keeping them informed about political news. This may not be unconnected to the fact that quite a number of news organizations work in collaboration with Facebook. Hence it allows users to connect directly to their news articles on their individual page and also share it with their network (Ternes, Mittelstadt & Towers, 2014). Also, Casteltrione (2014) discovered that Facebook is a source of obtaining political information in Italy and the UK.

On a similar note, Boulianne (2015), in a systematic review of 36 studies, noted that some researchers have found that about half of Facebook users access their political news through Facebook. In fact, of all the studies Boulianne examined based on getting online news or political information on social media, 74% recorded positive coefficients and 29% of the coefficients were significant at the .05 level. These findings demonstrate the importance of Facebook as a political information source.

Regrettably, despite the fact that citizens rely on the net for political information, the lack of professional monitoring system to authenticate the content of information online has made it difficult to trust the validity of such information. This is despite the fact that Kim and Johnson (2009) argued that online information is credible. Nevertheless, this issue is particularly challenging in the social media environment, where multiple sources are involved in the communication process. Such multiple sources of information on the net are harmful as their level for credibility cannot be ascertained.

Thus, in a study on the degree to which citizens trust political information on social media, Johnson and Kaye (2014) found that social media was ranked the least credible among nine other sources of political news examined. Perhaps, due to the ease and convenience of posting political information and news on social media, it is often not filtered through professional gatekeepers. This puts the burden of determining credibility more on the users. Clearly, a number of credibility research has been

centered on political information in the form of news, and the credibility of online information has been found to be questionable (Johnson & Kaye, 2010). This is quite worrisome because it is believed that the more users trust the sources and motives of political information, the more likely they would be to engage in politics (Bae, 2014).

2.6.3.2 Political Interest

Political interest provides the motivation to participate in politics (O'Neil, 2006). It is not a measure of political participation (Shepperd, 2012) but a necessary condition of participation as it measures an individual's cognitive engagement. Accordingly, Kruikemeier, Noort, Vliegenthart and De Vresse (2014) and Oser, Hooghe and Marien (2012) maintained that political interest is often a strong predictor of different political participations because it tells whether an individual will be politically active or passive.

2.6.3.3 Policy Satisfaction

Policies embody a wide variety of issues ranging from economic, political or social. Consequently, policy in a democracy borders on the government's role on issues, like press freedom, protection of minority groups or accessibility to the judicial system (Shore, 2014). As such, policy satisfaction is a fundamental democratic value. Therefore, in a democracy, the main policies a government should pursue are ones which will transform the lives of its citizens positively. Yet, for this to happen, the voices of the 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 the government (Johnson & Kaye, 2014), such that they are now used to engaging in political activities that affect policy (Valenzuela, Kim & Gil de Zuniga, 2012).

The core tenet of democracy is public debate. Hence, the media must be an enlightened purveyor of policy knowledge by providing credible knowledge-based reportage so that citizens can have the necessary tools to ensure the government has provided positive policy delivery (Eyo, 2013). Hence, social media empowers the masses that were previously ignored by policy-makers (Battaglini, 2015). Evidently, media plays a role in transferring information about policy processes and outcomes to citizens (Whiteley, Clarke, Sanders & Steward, 2013) because information flow is important in the concept of policy-making, especially in terms of feedback. This shows that social media has a significant role to play in policy satisfaction.

Consequently, policies are not made unilaterally in a society but rather after wide consultations with stakeholders (Boubacar, 2005). Thus, participation of citizens in policy-making is imperative in a democracy. It is through this participation that they communicate information regarding policy preferences and concerns to policy-makers (Potgieter, 2013; Verba et al., 1995). With this, power is expressed through political participation as citizens put pressure on leaders to make policies that will benefit them (Sani, 2014).

Accordingly, in Nigeria, there is a Twitter account used to communicate policies between political elites and citizens, known as @policyNG. The Twitter account was created for basically four purposes. First, is to make the government aware of Nigerians' feelings about major policies before implementation; second, is to serve as a channel for feedback from Nigerians after the government has implemented policies; third, is to provide a diverse source of data for researchers interested in Nigerian public policy and democracy; and lastly, to make it possible for Nigerians to have a discourse on different government policies and governance. Likewise in Malaysia, Pandian (2014a) noted that citizens are now more expressive about the actions of the government and opposition through social media. This active participation has led to the identification of unpopular government policies by citizens. Thus, since citizens no longer trust information from traditional media, online explanations offered by the government about policies are no longer believed by them (Razali, 2013). Thus, social media plays a role in this respect.

2.6.3.4 Political Knowledge

Political knowledge can be referred to as a group of actual political information stored in the long-term memory of an individual. It can be gained through interpersonal discussion about politics (Wells & Dudash, 2007), from traditional news media consumption and Internet (Kenski & Stroud, 2006) or contact with political information on social media (Rahmawati, 2014). Thus, even though knowledge about

politics comes largely from the media, it can also be obtained through one's social network, family or interpersonal interaction (Wells & Dudash, 2007).

However, political knowledge referred to in this study is the one acquired through the media and not via formal education. This is because typical measures of political knowledge which comprise years of formal education have been rejected by some scholars. Moreover, in this digital age, individuals can acquire political information through friends and acquaintances within their social networks. Also, Fraile (2011) discovered that the relationship between education and political knowledge is weak among individuals more exposed to the media for political information. As such, Kaufhold, Sebastian and Gil de Zuniga (2010) noted that over time, it has been discovered that the more citizens consume news, the higher their level of political knowledge and vice versa.

Thus, media plays a large role in how citizens acquire political knowledge which eventually leads to participation (Banducci et al., 2009; Pasek, Kenski, Romer & Jamieson, 2006; Teng, 2012 Valenzuela, 2013). This explains why political knowledge is related to access to political information (Shaker, 2009).

2.7 Conceptual Framework and Formulation of Research Hypotheses

Against the backdrop of the discussions above, the hypotheses for this study are formulated based on literature generated from past studies. Subsequently, the conceptual framework of the study is illustrated.

2.7.1 Access to Political Information on Facebook and Twitter and Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter

New media (Nwoye & Okafor, 2014), like social media (Rahmawati, 2014), has redefined communication and made information more accessible to citizens. This accessibility has in turn increased participation (Gil De Zuniga, Molyneux & Zheng, 2014; Moy et al., 2005; Odunlami, 2014; Olabamiji, 2014) since democracy depends on citizens' participation, and the way through which citizens can participate is to consume political news (Jordan, Pope, Wallis & Eyer, 2014). Hence, following political news online increases online political participation (Calenda & Meijer, 2009; Tolbert & McNeal, 2003). This makes political participation a function of access to information online (Agboola, 2014). Gustafsson (2012) found that informational use of media increases political discussion among citizens and in the long-run, increases political participation.

Therefore, the more exposed citizens are to political information, the more they will participate in politics (Bae, 2014; Bah, 2004; Engesser & Franzetti, 2011; Potgieter, 2013; Teng, 2012; Verba et al. 1995, Wojcieszak, 2012). Similarly, Salawu (2013) and Mustapha and Wok (2014) found that Nigerians who have better access to political

information online participate in politics more, like in the US (Bachmann & Gil de Zuniga, 2013).

Apparently, social media reduces the perceived cost of access to information, hence increasing political participation (Grönlund & Wakabi 2015). Individuals want to minimize costs of becoming informed; hence, a source of information which is inexpensive will promote political participation. Therefore, the more informed individuals are, the more they participate in politics. Similarly, decreased cost of access to political information provided by online media increases information about political issues, thus leading to participation (Wang, 2007). Bae (2014) admitted that social media's open nature has been attributed to motivating and increasing involvement of youth in political discourse online. Rahmawati (2014) asserted that studies have shown political information is central to determining an individual's political attitude.

On the other hand, are scholars who believe otherwise, this group of scholars are is of the opinion that online information does not increase the likelihood of political participation (Christensen, 2011). Thus, the relationship between access to information and political participation could be the other way around when individuals are disappointed with the information they get. For instance, it is possible that large amounts of political information available on social media may not even propel individuals to participate in politics actively. Specifically, Olabamiji (2014) noted that abundant amounts of political information on social media may even make citizens

apathetic to politics. However, Rahmawati (2014) argued that there is lack of empirical evidence to back this negative relationship.

Against the backdrop of these ensuing arguments, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H₁ Access to political information on Facebook and Twitter is positively related to online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria and Malaysia.

H_{1a} Access to political information on Facebook and Twitter is positively related to online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria.

H_{1b} Access to political information on Facebook and Twitter is positively related to online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Malaysia.

2.7.2 Political Interest and Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter

Over time, scholars have found that political interest has a positive effect on political participation (Bae, 2014; Carlisle & Patton, 2013; Sheppard, 2012; Verba, Scholzman & Brady, 1995). This is evident in a study by Chun (2012) where he found that decline in political interest among South Korean youth is attributed to decline in political participation and increased political apathy. Hence, citizens who are motivated to

participate in politics are willing to pay more attention to political content in media and thus, more likely to participate in politics and vice versa (Bae, 2014; Boulianne, 2011; Hur & Kwon, 2014; O'Neil, 2006; Strombak & Shehata, 2010).

However, not all relationships between political interest and political participation are positive. For instance, Baumgartner and Morris (2010), in a survey of 3500 youth, found that use of social media does not increase their political interest nor participation among 18 to 24 year olds in Iowa; rather, it empowers youth to avoid content they are not interested in, hence calling to question the democratic potential of social media.

Thus, the aforementioned debate leads to the following hypotheses:

H₂ Political interest is positively related to online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria and Malaysia.

H_{2a} Political interest is positively related to online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria.

H_{2b} Political interest is positively related to online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Malaysia.

2.7.3 Policy Satisfaction and Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter

Policy satisfaction embodies policy-making processes and outcomes (Whiteley et al., 2013). As a result, the more citizens participate in policy-making, especially with the help of technology, like social media, the fairer the process becomes and the more citizens are satisfied with the outcomes. This supports the assertion of Whiteley, Clarke, Sanders and Steward (2013) that access to information plays a role in transferring information about policy processes and outcomes to citizens.

Consequently, scholars have asked if participation of individuals in a society can affect policy outcomes, do policy outcomes also affect political participation. Campbell (2003) answered this in the affirmative. He stated that the influence of policies on political participation could either be negative or positive in so many ways, one of which is to increase the political interest of individuals. Additionally, there are also a number of other cognitive effects it can have on citizens by making them aware of their rights in the community or whether or not their voice is being heard by the government. This, in turn, could either foster participation or non-participation.

Therefore, the hypothesized relationships between policy satisfaction and online political participation are as follows:

H₃ Policy satisfaction is positively related to online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria and Malaysia.

H_{3a} Policy satisfaction is positively related to online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria.

H_{3b} Policy satisfaction is positively related to online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Malaysia.

2.7.4 Political Knowledge and Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter

Citizens' political knowledge and participation in politics are very important to the democratic process (Charles, 2010; Rahmawati, 2014; Vreese & Boomgarden, 2006), such that reduction in levels of political knowledge of citizens in a society ultimately leads to a reduction in political participation (O'Neil, 2006).

Social media increases citizens' political knowledge (Johnson & Kaye, 2014; Raof, Zaman, Ahmad & Al-Qaraghuli, 2013). Consequently, findings from researchers about the potential of access to information and political knowledge are multifaceted (Fraile, 2011). First, is the idea that low quality of information provided by media decreases citizens' political knowledge and interest which eventually affects participation. This is known as the media malaise thesis. Second, is the idea that media exposure increases political knowledge (Norris, 2000), which is known as the virtuous circle thesis. Third, is the effects thesis which indicates that some media have positive effect while others have negative effect on political knowledge.

Notwithstanding, most knowledgeable citizens are most likely to participate in politics. Knowledge of political parties, for example, enables individuals to assess them, form opinions on issues and subsequently vote effectively (O'Neil, 2006). This shows there is a positive relationship between knowledge and political participation activities (Vreese & Boomgarden, 2006).

Additionally, Rahmawati (2014) averred that the more knowledgeable youth are, the more likely they will be to be interested in politics. This is because it will enable them to acquire greater political knowledge and interest, and as a result, increase their participation (Kushin & Yamamoto, 2010; Gil de Zuniga et al., 2012). Hence, using social media to access political information is positively related to political knowledge and participation (Dimitrova et al., 2014; Fraile, 2011). For instance, access to media enhanced respondents' knowledge of South African politics as 176 out of 232 of them believed so (Ojebuyi, 2015). Hence, people with more access to political information in the form of news on new media will participate more in politics because it increases their combined knowledge since they use the Internet as a means of educating themselves about politics (Tolbert & McNeal, 2003). Also, Pattie, Seyd and Whiteley (2003) noted that access to political information provides citizens with knowledge on how the system works and also policy information which could ultimately lead to citizens' policy satisfaction.

The discussion proves that political knowledge is linked to access to information, political interest and policy satisfaction. Hence, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H₄ There is significant difference between Nigerian and Malaysian youth who have political knowledge and those who do not have political knowledge in terms of the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.

H_{4a} There is significant difference between Nigerian youth who have political knowledge and those who do not have political knowledge in terms of the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.

H_{4b} There is significant difference between Malaysian youth who have political knowledge and those who do not have political knowledge in terms of the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.

H₅ There is significant difference between Nigerian and Malaysian youth who have political knowledge and those who do not have political knowledge in terms of the relationship between political interest and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.

- H_{5a}** There is significant difference between Nigerian youth who have political knowledge and those who do not have political knowledge in terms of the relationship between political interest and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.
- H_{5b}** There is significant difference between Malaysian youth who have political knowledge and those who do not have political knowledge in terms of the relationship between political interest and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.
- H₆** There is significant difference between Nigerian and Malaysian youth who have political knowledge and those who do not have political knowledge in terms of the relationship between policy satisfaction and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.
- H_{6a}** There is significant difference between Nigerian youth who have political knowledge and those who do not have political knowledge in terms of the relationship between policy satisfaction and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.
- H_{6b}** There is significant difference between Malaysian youth who have political knowledge and those who do not have political knowledge in terms of the relationship between policy satisfaction and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.

2.7.5 Comparison between Nigeria and Malaysia in terms of the relationship between Cognitive Engagement and Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter

After all direct and moderating relationships of this study are hypothesized, it is necessary to hypothesize in comparative terms the direct relationships between both countries due to the comparative nature of this study. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

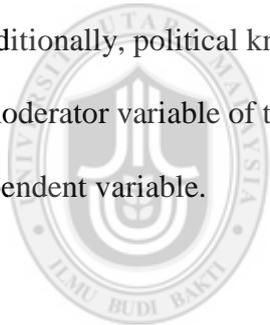
- H₇** There is significant difference between youth in Nigeria and youth in Malaysia in terms of the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.
- H₈** There is significant difference between youth in Nigeria and youth in Malaysia in terms of the relationship between political interest and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.
- H₉** There is significant difference between youth in Nigeria and youth in Malaysia in terms of the relationship between policy satisfaction and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.

As evidenced from the above discussions, the major concepts used in this study are derived from the CET. Therefore, based on the variables of the theory, this research

developed a conceptual framework (see Figure 2.2) to investigate the relationship between cognitive engagement and online political participation among youth in Nigeria and Malaysia. However, since the theory was propounded in the context of conventional mass media and conventional political participation, variables derived from the theory were structured to suit the social media and online political participation context of this study.

Consequently, access to political information on Facebook and Twitter, political interest and policy satisfaction constitute the independent variables, while online political participation on Facebook and Twitter is the dependent variable of this study.

Additionally, political knowledge which is also a variable of the CET is introduced as a moderator variable of the relationship between all the independent variables and the dependent variable.



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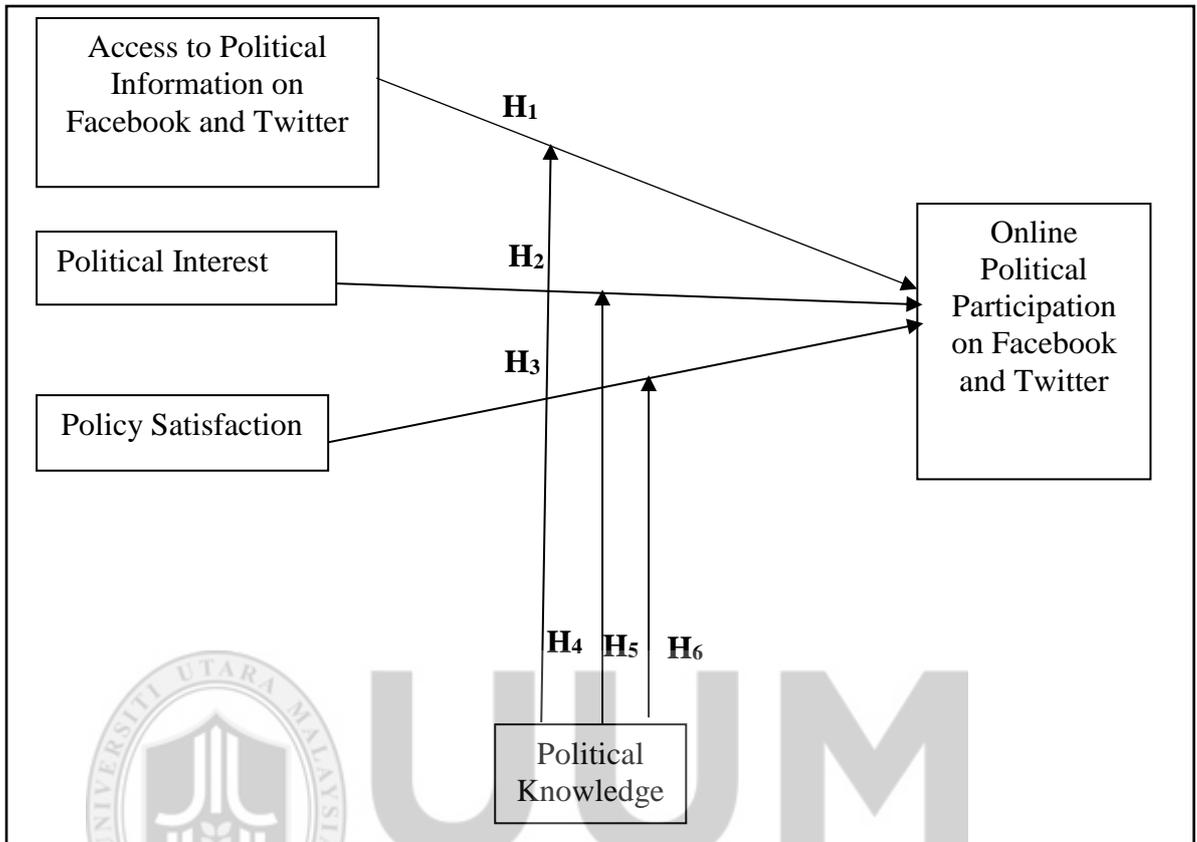


Figure 2.2. Conceptual Framework

2.8 Summary of Research Objectives and Hypothesis

This section is a summary of the objectives of this study and their related hypothesis:

Objective 1. To determine the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria and Malaysia combined and each country individually.

H₁ Access to political information on Facebook and Twitter is positively related to online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria and Malaysia.

H_{1a} Access to political information on Facebook and Twitter is positively related to online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria.

H_{1b} Access to political information on Facebook and Twitter is positively related to online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Malaysia.

Objective 2. To assess the relationship between political interest and online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria and Malaysia combined and each country individually.

H₂ Political interest is positively related to online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria and Malaysia.

H_{2a} Political interest is positively related to online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria.

H_{2b} Political interest is positively related to online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Malaysia.

Objective 3. To examine the relationship between policy satisfaction and online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria and Malaysia combined and each country individually.

H₃ Policy satisfaction is positively related to online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria and Malaysia.

H_{3a} Policy satisfaction is positively related to online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria.

H_{3b} Policy satisfaction is positively related to online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Malaysia.

Objective 4. To analyze the moderating effect of political knowledge on the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter, political interest, policy satisfaction and online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria and Malaysia combined and each country individually.

H₄ There is significant difference between Nigerian and Malaysian youth who have political knowledge and those who do not have political knowledge in terms of the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.

- H4a** There is significant difference between Nigerian youth who have political knowledge and those who do not have political knowledge in terms of the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.
- H4b** There is significant difference between Malaysian youth who have political knowledge and those who do not have political knowledge in terms of the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.
- H5** There is significant difference between Nigerian and Malaysian youth who have political knowledge and those who do not have political knowledge in terms of the relationship between political interest and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.
- H5a** There is significant difference between Nigerian youth who have political knowledge and those who do not have political knowledge in terms of the relationship between political interest and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.
- H5b** There is significant difference between Malaysian youth who have political knowledge and those who do not have political knowledge in terms of the relationship between political interest and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.

H₆ There is significant difference between Nigerian and Malaysian youth who have political knowledge and those who do not have political knowledge in terms of the relationship between policy satisfaction and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.

H_{6a} There is significant difference between Nigerian youth who have political knowledge and those who do not have political knowledge in terms of the relationship between policy satisfaction and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.

H_{6b} There is significant difference between Malaysian youth who have political knowledge and those who do not have political knowledge in terms of the relationship between policy satisfaction and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.

Objective 5. To investigate the differences between Nigerian and Malaysian youth in terms of the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter, political interest and policy satisfaction and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.

H₇ There is significant difference between youth in Nigeria and youth in Malaysia in terms of the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.

- H₈** There is significant difference between youth in Nigeria and youth in Malaysia in terms of the relationship between political interest and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.
- H₉** There is significant difference between youth in Nigeria and youth in Malaysia in terms of the relationship between policy satisfaction and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.

2.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter reviews relevant literature in relation to cognitive engagement and online political participation in Nigeria and Malaysia. Specifically, the concept of online political participation is explained by presenting arguments relating to the role of the Internet and social media in political participation. This is followed by clarifications of arguments on the conceptualization of online political participation. This leads to the identification of gaps in literature, followed by detailed explanation of online political participation on social media with particular focus on Facebook and Twitter. Also, online political participation of youth in Nigeria and Malaysia is discussed in detail, after which the theoretical framework of the study is examined. Accordingly, each variable in the theory is explained in relation to online political participation on social media. Subsequently, this explanation of the theory leads to the generation of the research hypotheses after which a summary of the research objectives in relation to their respective study hypotheses is provided.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology of this study. Specifically, the research philosophy, research design, instrument of data collection, operationalization and measurement of variables, study location, population, sample size and sampling technique are explained. Also, pretest and pilot study, data collection method, data analysis method and ethical considerations are discussed.

3.2 Research Philosophy

This research belongs to the positivist paradigm, which is the most widely followed research paradigm in social science research (Neuman, 2011). The purpose of this study is to test a hypothesized model which theorizes that cognitive engagement is positively related to online political participation and that Political Knowledge (PK) can moderate the relationship between the features of cognitive engagement [Access to Political Information on Facebook and Twitter (APIFT), Political Interest (PI) and Policy Satisfaction (PS)] and Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter (OPPFT). Hence, centered on the primary objective of this study, five research questions are put forward and 21 relationships are hypothesized.

Consequently, based on the research model developed, this study focuses on explaining the dependent variable in the hypothesized model based on a set of

predictors using the positivist paradigm based on objectivism as the underlying ontological and epistemological positions. Therefore, this study presents a comparative research on online political participation among youth in Nigeria and Malaysia, based on deductive reasoning using the CET as the framework. This makes positivist epistemologies and quantitative methodologies ideal in this form of research (Wojcieszak, 2012). In line with this, an empirical approach to data collection and analysis are used.

3.3 Research Design

A quantitative approach to research is taken for this study. The structural relationships among the study constructs were assessed and PLS-SEM analysis and SmartPLS were used to test the hypotheses based on the CET (Inglehart, 1977). This is in accordance with the recommendation of Keyton (2015) who noted that communication scholars can test hypotheses developed from theory.

Also, a cross-sectional research design was adopted, indicating that data were collected once during the whole study (Berger, 2011; Keyton, 2015). As a result, the analysis and interpretation of data were done statistically, after which conclusions and inferences about the population of study were made. Although it is a cross-national comparative study, the unit of analysis for this study is the individual.

Accordingly, the survey method was used for data collection through a self-administered structured questionnaire. Survey is the ideal method to collect data for this study because it is the research method widely used in the social sciences (Babbie, 2001). Besides, this method has been recommended by scholars (Carl, 2012; Chan, 2012; Okoro & Nwafor, 2013; Presley, 2008) who have conducted similar studies. Also, Hair et al. (2014) noted that social science researchers mostly rely on primary data from a structured questionnaire for PLS-SEM analysis. Furthermore, Hantrais (1995) recommended that descriptive or survey method is usually the first stage in a comparative research; thus, as this is a comparative study, the survey approach is considered as the right approach to collect data.

3.4 Instrument of Data Collection

The instrument for data collection is questionnaire (See Appendix A and B). Items in the questionnaire were adapted from previous studies. The questionnaire was administered to undergraduates of ABU and UUM who use Facebook and Twitter for online political participation.

Bernard (1994) advised that the questionnaire is ideal in three situations: first, the respondents are literate; second, there is confidence in getting huge response; and third, the nature of the questions does not require face-to-face contact with respondents. Firstly, since the respondents of this study are undergraduates, so they are literate. Secondly, the researcher intended to encourage respondents to fill the

questionnaire on the spot and return immediately and for those who do not return, rigorous follow up procedures to get the questionnaire not returned could be followed. Lastly, since this is a quantitative study, the questionnaire is a sufficient instrument to collect data, as there is no need to interview respondents face-to-face. Consequently, these justifications indicate this study meets the three criteria recommended by Bernard (1994), thus providing justification to use this instrument.

Additionally, the questionnaire was self-administered to respondents to reduce incidences of bias, low response rate and non-return. Also, incentives were not used because of the mixed results it might generate (Babbie, 1998) which the researcher wanted to avoid.

Also, this study has a combination of multiple and single items in the questionnaire. However, more of multiple items were used for this study because Sarstedt and Wilczynski (2009) found that to a large degree, multi-item measures outperform single-item measures. Also, multiple items were adopted to reduce the measurement error in this study. Furthermore, the questionnaire contained only closed-ended questions (except where some respondents were asked to specify their ethnicity and religion) which could gauge the opinion of respondents on the issue under study. The closed-ended questions enabled respondents to select answers within those provided by the researcher to allow for a higher level of consistency, hence simplifying the process of statistical analysis (Keyton, 2015). Also, the closed-ended questions

allowed the researcher predetermined closed-ended responses to get useful information to support the theory and concepts in the literature used as a basis of the study (Creswell, 2012).

Specifically, the questionnaire comprised 68 questions separated in six sections. The first five sections (A-E) contained questions on the study variables (access to political information on Facebook and Twitter, political knowledge, political interest, policy satisfaction and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter), while the last section (F) contained basic questions to obtain the demographic profile of the respondents (Keyton, 2015). Furthermore, the 7-point semantic differential scale was used for this study because it enabled respondents' evaluations to be properly captured (Keyton, 2015) and it also made it possible for the researcher to take a list of possible scaling items for a construct and find the subset that measured the various dimensions (Berger, 2011).

Also, respondents were not asked their country of origin as done in other comparative studies because a separate questionnaire was developed for respondents from each country, the reason for this being that in some sections of the questionnaire (i.e., religion, ethnicity, political knowledge and policy satisfaction), the same set of questions were not applicable to respondents from both countries. However, an effort was made by the researcher to ensure the items were as similar as possible due to the comparative nature of this study.

Additionally, items in the questionnaire were in English. There was no need to translate to Bahasa Melayu for Malaysian respondents because they were undergraduates who understand English. However, the English contents of the questionnaire were made simple to make it easy for all respondents to understand.

3.5 Operationalization and Measurement of Variables

A number of validated scales from preceding studies were employed to measure variables in this study. Thus, the features of the CET (access to political information on Facebook and Twitter, political interest and policy satisfaction) served as exogenous variables, whereas online political participation on Facebook and Twitter was the endogenous variable, while political knowledge was the moderating variable. A detailed outline of the scales can be seen below:

3.5.1 Access to Political Information on Facebook and Twitter

Access to information is the media consumption of respondents. Media is useful in communicative and participative affairs of individuals (Charles, 2010). Therefore, access to information in this study refers to the consumption of political information by youth on Facebook and Twitter. Accordingly, this study used attention, exposure and reliance measures to measure Nigerian and 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.

3.4.1.1 Attention

Attention to Facebook and Twitter for political information was measured on a 7-point semantic differential scale, with “1” for “No Attention” and “7” for “Lots of Attention” as anchors. Respondents were asked two questions on how much attention they pay to political information on Facebook and Twitter. This measurement was adapted from Yamamoto et al. (2013) and Yamamoto and Kushin (2014).

3.4.1.2 Exposure

For exposure to political information on Facebook and Twitter, the measurement of Bekafigo and McBride (2013) and Whiteley (2005) was adapted. Respondents were asked two questions on how often they use Facebook and Twitter to access political information on Facebook and Twitter using seven response categories, ranging from “1” for “Never” to “7” for “All the time”.

3.4.1.3 Reliance

The scale for level of reliance on social media for political information was adapted from the measurements of Johnson and Kaye (2003, 2009 and 2014) and Moy et al. (2005). Hence, respondents were asked two questions on how much they rely on Facebook and Twitter for political information. The 7-point scale comprised “1” for “Never Rely” and “7” for “Heavily Rely” as anchors.

3.5.2 Political Interest

Political interest is the motivation that propels youth in Nigeria and Malaysia to carry out online political participation activities on Facebook and Twitter. The measures for political interest were adapted from Whiteley (2005) to suit the social media angle of this study. Eight items were asked 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”.

3.5.3 Policy Satisfaction

Policy includes a wide range of activities; as a result, capturing the idea or policy satisfaction is quite ambiguous (Shore, 2014). Therefore, for the sake of parsimony, questions were not asked on different government policies; rather, respondents were only asked general questions on policy satisfaction. Therefore, a multi-dimensional measure for policy process and outcome was used for this study.

For policy process, the measurement of Whiteley (2005) was adapted. As a result, six items were asked on a 7-point semantic differential scale 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: “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”. All these questions were asked in the context of Facebook and Twitter.

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 their country.

3.5.4 Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter

Online political participation on Facebook and Twitter was measured as a dimensional construct with two sets of questions for Facebook and two sets of questions for Twitter as used by Vitak et al. (2011) for Facebook. Hence, the first two sets of questions were 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.

3.5.4.1 Online Political Participation on Facebook

The scale for online political participation on Facebook was adopted from a study by Vitak et al. (2011). They put forward a guide to serve as a measure of items 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 respondents 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 respondents’ online political participation on Facebook in this study.

Consequently, after modifying some items, 10 out of the 14 items originally used by Vitak et al. (2011) were adopted for this study. The reasons for picking 10 items is that the other four (take a quiz about politics, add an application about politics, delete an application that deals with politics and discuss political information using Facebook instant messaging system) are no longer available on Facebook. As a consequence, only 10 of the 14 items were used to measure 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 nine 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 semantic differential scale ranging from “1” as “Never” to “7” as “Very Often” as anchors.

The nine 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 politicians fan page”. These nine items were measured on a 7-point scale ranging from “1” as “Never” to “7” as “Very Often”.

3.5.4.2 Online Political Participation on Twitter

For online political participation on Twitter, seven items used in previous studies (Tumasjan et al., 2010; Yamamoto & Kushin, 2013; Yamamoto et al., 2014) were adopted. The seven items were used for both political activities performed on Twitter and political activities observed 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”.

3.5.5 Political Knowledge

Political knowledge encompasses current information about politics which youth in Nigeria and Malaysia learn from Facebook and Twitter. Knowledge about politics

includes learning about election campaigns, foreign policy events and domestic real world events and developments.

To test for respondents' political knowledge, the scale of Dimitrova et al. (2014) was adapted. Dimitrova's scale is similar to that of Bachmann and Gil de Zuniga (2013), Kenski and Stroud (2006), Pasek et al (2006), Whiteley (2005), Larreguy and Marshall (2015), Mondak (2001), Moy et al. (2005) and Mushtaq and Baig (2015). However, they all did not maintain the same number of questions. However, all their questions ranged from current political happenings to current political personalities in their respective location of research. Current political information was used to ensure that political information is based on information available on social media around the time of distributing the questionnaire. Also, compared to general political knowledge acquired through education, social media is more likely to be a major source of knowledge for current political information (Dimitrova et al., 2014).

Consequently, respondents for this study were asked 10 political knowledge questions each (10 questions for Nigeria and 10 questions for Malaysia). These items bordered on current political issues in news reports or burning issues that are or were frequently discussed within a year in Nigeria and Malaysia. The 10 questions were split into information on elections, political parties (ruling parties, opposition leaders), general knowledge, administration, domestic real world events and foreign policy events.

Therefore, five response categories were provided, including “Don’t Know”. The “Don’t Know” option was provided to discourage respondents from guessing correct answers (Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Dimitrova et al., 2014). The 10 items were summed up to form an index ranging from “0” for incorrect answers to “10” for all questions answered correctly. Correct answers were coded as “1” and incorrect answers and “Don’t know” were coded as “0”.

3.5.6 Ethnicity

For ethnicity in Nigeria, the measurement of Ahmad (2011) was adopted. He provided options for the three major ethnic groups, namely Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo, while an additional option of “Others” was provided for minor ethnic groups. For Malaysia, the measures of Fei (2010), Teng (2012) and Wilson et al. (2011) were adopted. Hence, 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.

3.5.7 Religion

For religion in Nigeria, respondents were asked based on the two major religions (Islam and Christianity) as done by Dagona, Karick and Abubakar (2013), and a third option of “Traditionalist” as used by Ahmad (2011) was included. For Malaysia, the measurement of Rahmawati (2014) was adopted. Hence, Islam, Christianity,

Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Others served as options for religion in Malaysia.

3.5.8 Age

The age range of respondents was limited to the age bracket 15-40 years based on the definition of youth for Nigeria and Malaysia. Youth in Nigeria are those between the ages of 18 to 35 years while youth in Malaysia are those within the age range of 15-40 years. Thus, youth in the context of the present study are Nigerian and Malaysian undergraduates of ABU and UUM, respectively within the ages of 15 to 40 years. Therefore, the options for age comprised: 16-20 years, 21-24 years, 25-29 years, 30-35 years and 36-40 years.

3.5.9 Gender

Gender was dummy coded as “0” for male and “1” for female as used by Mann (2011).

Table 3.1 contains a summary of the scales for the measurement of major constructs in the study.

Table 3.1

Summary of Scales

Variables	Number of Items	Source(s) of Adoption/Adaptation
Access to Political Information on Facebook and Twitter	6 Items	Bekafigo & McBride (2013), Johnson & Kaye (2003, 2009, 2014), Moy et al. (2005), Whiteley (2005). Yamamoto et al. (2013), Yamamoto & Kushin (2014)
Political Interest	8 Items	Whiteley (2005)
Policy Satisfaction	7 Items	Shore (2014), Whiteley et al. (2013)
Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter.	33 Items	Vitak et al. (2011), Tumasjan et al. (2010), Yamamoto & Kushin (2013), Yamamoto et al. (2014)
Political Knowledge	10 Items	Carpini and Keeter (1996), Dimitrova et al. (2014), Kenski & Stroud (2006), Larreguy & Marshall (2015), Mondak (2001), Moy et al. (2005), Mushtaq & Baig (2015), Pasek et al. (2006), Whiteley (2005)

3.6 Location of Research

The research areas for this study were two federal universities in the northern parts of Nigeria (Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria) and Malaysia (Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), Sintok). These universities were chosen because they are federal universities, and the nature of institutional configurations in federal university education provides for admission of students from diverse backgrounds (Odunlami,

2014). This diversity means that there is a representation of youth from both countries in both universities.

Specifically, ABU is the largest university in Nigeria and the second largest in Africa. It is located in Zaria, Kaduna state. The university was founded in October 1962 as the University of Northern Nigeria before it was renamed ABU after the first Premier of the Northern Region, Sir Ahmadu Bello. It is a government-funded university. Likewise, UUM was established in 1984 and is located in Sintok, Kedah, in the North of Peninsula Malaysia. It is translated in English as the Northern University of Malaysia. It is one of the largest public universities in Malaysia and also a government-funded university.

3.7 Population of the Study

Undergraduates of ABU (30,284) (Management Information System, 2015) and UUM (14,370) (Academic Affairs Department, 2015) constituted the population for this study. This population formed the sampling frame of the study. The justification for undergraduates as population of this research is because they constitute a key segment of youth in any society (Odunlami, 2014). Also, they are early adopters and heavy users of technology (Iyengar & Jackman, 2004; Yamamoto & Kushin, 2013) like new media (Salman & Saad, 2015), especially social media (Quintelier & Vissers, 2008), like Facebook and Twitter (Uzochukwu, Patricia & Ukueze, 2014).

Additionally, Jaspersen and Yun (2007) noted that by virtue of examining youth enrolled in universities, we are naturally measuring a population that has access to online information resources; hence it is an ideal setting for investigating the effect of social media as a political information channel. On a similar note, Sarstedt and Wilczynski (2009) also recommended using students for research because they have above average educational background which means higher cognitive capability which enables them to respond to questions properly.

Also, Titus-Fannie, Akpan and Tarnongo (2013) stated that students of tertiary institutions use social media over nine times more than other demographics in the population. Additionally, a number of related studies (Khan, Khan, Khan, Jan, Ahmad & Rauf, 2015; Ekwonchi & Udenze, 2014; Ojebuyi & Salawu, 2015; Vitak et al., 2011; Titus-Fannie, Akpan & Tarnongo, 2013; Yamamoto & Kushin, 2013) have indicated that undergraduates are the ideal population for a study of this nature.

In furtherance of the above, Dalton (1984) established that the CET emphasizes that those with better education, especially higher education, are more likely to be able to understand political information and make informed choices on political participation. Therefore, undergraduates have the skills to better access political information on Facebook and Twitter, which in turn, increases their knowledge and interest in politics, subsequently leading to political participation. Hence, since this study is based on

youth and their social media use, it is logical to use this segment of the society as its population.

3.8 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

To determine the required minimum sample size for this study, a *priori* power analysis was carried out using G*Power 3.1.7 software (Cohen, 1988; Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner & Lang, 2009). This method of sample size determination is used because Hair et al. (2014) asserted that the *a priori* power analysis is the best method to determine the minimum sample size for a PLS study.

Accordingly, with the following parameters: power ($1-\beta$ err prob; 0.95), an alfa significance level (α err prob; 0.05), medium effect size f^2 (0.15) and three main predictor variables (access to political information on Facebook and Twitter, political interest, policy satisfaction), a minimum sample of 119 would be required to test a regression-based model (Faul et al., 2007; 2009) (See Figure 3.1).

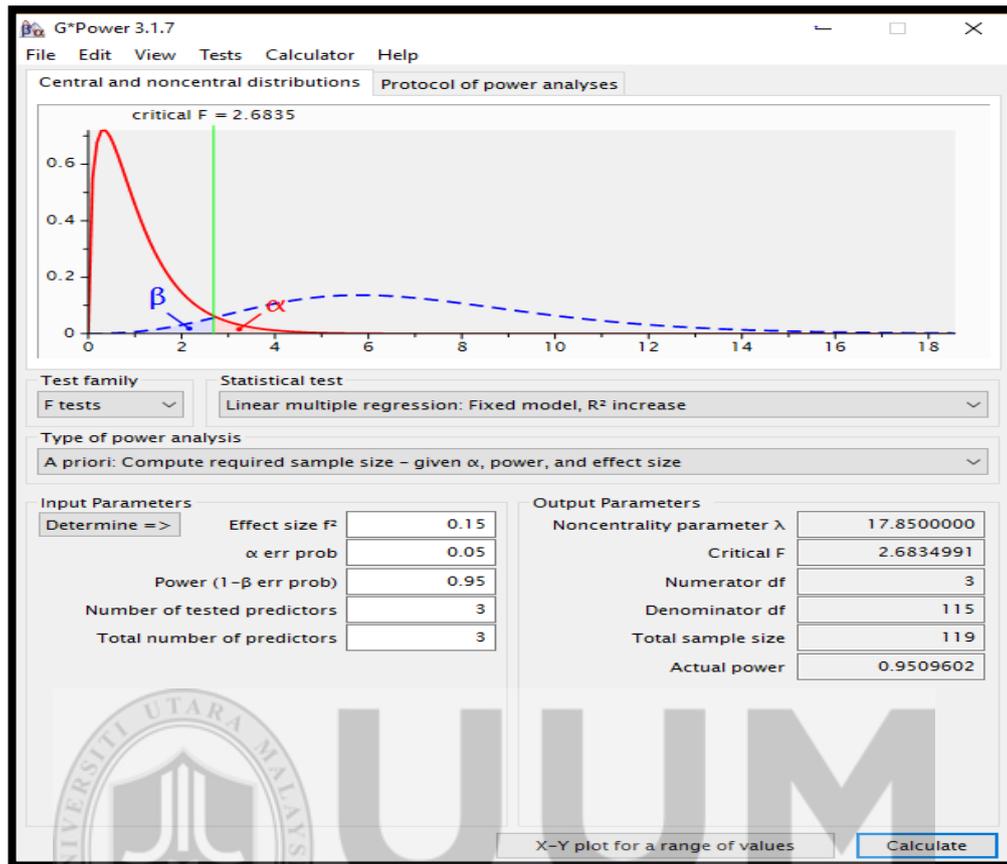


Figure 3.1. Output of a *Priori* Power Analysis

Although the result of the *a priori* power analysis in Figure 3.1 indicates a minimum of 119 respondents would be needed for this study, to avoid the issue of low response rate, it became necessary to contemplate other means to determine a larger sample size. Moreover, Wong (2013) advised that the goal of a researcher in selecting the appropriate sample size should not be just to fulfil the minimum sample size requirement; the required sample size must be increased to meet certain research objectives.

In agreement, Kotrlik and Higgins (2001) stated that sample size determination procedures indicate the minimum sample size requirement for a study. As a result, since the response rates in most studies are typically below 100% due to reasons, such as lost questionnaires or uncooperative participants, scholars (Fink, 1995; Salkind, 1997 and Keyton, 2015) have recommended that researchers should over-sample because by increasing the sample size, the response rate might also increase (Keyton, 2015).

Consequently, Kotrlik and Higgins (2001) contended that if a researcher chooses to over-sample, one of the recommended methods is taking the sample in two steps: first determining the minimum sample size, and then using the results of the first step to decide how many additional responses may be needed for the second step. Consequently, based on this approach, the minimum sample size of 119 from the a *priori* power analysis of this study was doubled as recommended by Gregg (2008). Hence, based on the 100% increase, another 119 ($119 \times 100 \div 100 = 119$) was added to the already existing 119 to make up a sample size of 238 ($119 + 119 = 238$) for this study. This increase was necessitated by the rule of thumb which states that researchers should select as large a sample as possible from the population (Creswell, 2012) to reduce sampling error, especially in terms of probability sampling (Keyton, 2015). Likewise, Hamid and Zaman (2010) also advised that it is better to use larger samples when conducting SEM, just as Boulianne (2015) noted that larger sample surveys are more likely to produce positively significant results compared to smaller sample sizes.

Thus, as this is a comparative study, the sample size of 238 was further doubled and each country was disproportionately allocated the sample size of 238. Therefore, 238 respondents were allocated to Nigeria and another 238 to Malaysia, making the total sample size for this study, 476. Each country was allocated equal sample size to facilitate the notion of equivalence in cross-national comparative study (Casteltrione, 2015). The notion of equivalence has to do with similarity of test scores obtained in different cultures. More so, researchers of similar comparative studies (Casteltrione, 2014; Valeriani & Vaccari, 2015) have also allocated equal sample sizes to each country for their study, and for other comparative studies (Sheppard, 2012; Whiteley, 2005; Xenos, Vromen & Loader, 2014) that did not use equal number of samples, the margin between samples for each country were close.

Subsequently, the multistage sampling technique was used to select the sample size from the population. First, the stratified purposive sampling was used to select Nigeria and Malaysia as countries for this comparative study based on the criteria that they are both developing countries (i.e., countries in the second wave of democratization) who need political participation to strengthen their democracy. Additionally, realistic considerations have to be made while designing a cross-national study of this nature (Hader & Gabler, 2003). Thus, similarities and convenience are other reasons why this study concentrated on Nigeria and Malaysia. This is in addition to the fact that Nigeria and Malaysia are the most familiar to the researcher and the researcher's practical knowledge is a merit both practically and methodologically. Also, this can facilitate

equivalence in the cross-national comparison (Casteltrione, 2014; Landman, 2008) because equivalence is a major issue in comparative analysis (Van de Vijver, 2003), especially in relation to this present study where a survey is used as the research method (Warnick & Osherson, 1973).

Second, stratified purposive sampling method was also used to select the universities for this study (ABU and UUM) from each country based on the criteria of their location and ownership. Accordingly, an attempt was made to select two universities with the most similar features from both countries to further aid equivalence in this research. Hence, both universities for this study are located in the Northern part of their respective countries, while at the same time, are public universities.

Third, the disproportionate allocation stratified sampling technique was used to select ethnic groups from each university to enable generalizability of results from this study while at the same time, giving members of different strata an equal chance of being selected (Creswell, 2012; Mathers, Fox & Hunn, 2009). Therefore, as can be seen in Table 3.2, first, a homogeneous sub-group of undergraduates in ABU and UUM was created, and then, each sub-group was stratified along ethnic lines, from which each ethnic sub-group was sampled disproportionately to the population of each stratum (Keyton, 2015).

Lastly, purposive sampling method was used to select respondents from each strata who use Facebook and Twitter for online political participation (Creswell, 2012; Hair

et al., 2010; Keyton, 2015). A breakdown of the sampling by country (University) and ethnicity is shown Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

Disproportionate Allocation Stratified Sampling

University	Ethnicity	Population		Disproportionate stratified sampling	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
ABU (Nigeria)	Hausa/Fulani	20895	67%	95	40%
	Yoruba	5451	18%	48	20%
	Igbo	2119	7%	36	15%
	Others	1819	6%	59	25%
	Total	30284	100%	238	100%
UUM (Malaysia)	Malay	10164	71%	130	55%
	Chinese	3253	23%	48	20%
	Indian	680	5%	36	15%
	Others	273	2%	24	10%
	Total	14370	100%	238	100%

3.9 Pretesting and Pilot Study

An initial draft of the questionnaire was pretested before conducting the pilot study. The questionnaire was given to four experts to validate its items to determine if it possesses face and content validity (Creswell, 2012). The four experts are academicians in media studies from both Nigeria and Malaysia. The experts checked for ambiguities which may present a problem for respondents. Consequently, corrections were made on the questionnaire based on their observations before administering it for the pilot study.

Subsequently, a pilot study was conducted to establish other forms of validity and reliability of measures (Creswell, 2012). The pilot study was necessitated by the fact that the original scale adopted or adapted for this study had been developed in other countries, like the US (Bekafigo & McBride, 2013; Johnson & Kaye, 2003, 2009, 2013; Moy et al., 2005; Yamamoto et al., 2013), the UK (Whiteley, 2005), Indonesia (Rahmawati, 2014), Sweden (Dimitrova et al., 2014) and Germany (Tumasjan et al., 2014). Also, some of the measures adopted were originally used for traditional mass media (Moy et al., 2005), Internet (Johnson & Kaye, 2003, 2009) or traditional political participation (Yamamoto & Kushin, 2013). These measures were adapted to suit this study which is on social media and online political participation.

In view of this, a total of 100 questionnaires were pilot tested on Nigerian and Malaysian undergraduate students of UUM because they possess characteristics of the population of the study (Keyton, 2015). Of the 100 questionnaires distributed, 80 of them were returned and subsequently used for the reliability and validity analysis. This gave a response rate of 80%. It is noteworthy that the 80 respondents used for the pilot study were not considered in the actual study.

Consequently, a PLS-SEM analysis (Wold, 1985) using Smart PLS 3.0 software (Ringle, Wende & Will, 2005) was used to determine the internal consistency, reliability and discriminant validity of the constructs used. Specifically, PLS algorithm (Geladi & Kowalski, 1986) was used to ascertain the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and the composite reliability coefficients. Accordingly, Hair et al.

(2011) recommended that composite reliability coefficient should be at least 0.70 or more and Fornell and Larcker (1981) noted that AVE should be 0.50 or more. Additionally, they both stated that to achieve discriminant validity, the square root of the AVE should be greater than the correlations among latent constructs. Table 3.3 shows the AVE and composite reliability coefficients of the four latent constructs for this study.

Table 3.3

Reliability and Validity of Constructs (n=80)

Constructs	No of Indicators	AVE	Composite Reliability
APIFT	6	0.557	0.882
OPPFT	33	0.556	0.976
PS	7	0.657	0.846
PI	8	0.565	0.795

As seen in Table 3.3, the composite reliability coefficient of each latent construct ranges from 0.79 to 0.97 each, exceeding the minimum acceptable requirement of 0.70. This indicates that the internal consistency reliability of the measures used in this study is sufficient (Hair et al., 2011). Furthermore, the AVE ranges from 0.55 to 0.65, falling within the acceptable level of above 0.50 as recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981). In terms of discriminant validity, Table 3.4 compares the correlations among the latent constructs with the square root of AVE.

Table 3.4

Latent Variable Correlation

Latent Variables	APIFT	OPPFT	PS	PI
APIFT	0.746			
OPPFT	0.649	0.746		
PS	0.253	0.317	0.810	
PI	0.291	0.471	0.369	0.752

Note: Diagonals (in bold) represent the square root of the average variance extracted while the other entries represent the correlations.

Results in Table 3.4 point out that the correlations among the latent constructs are compared with the square root of the AVE (values in bold face) and the square root of the AVE are all greater than the correlations among latent constructs, indicating sufficient discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Furthermore, after the pilot study, revisions were made to the questionnaire based on problem questions identified by the respondents before sending it out to the sample of the study (Creswell, 2012). Also, some questions were adjusted to avoid negative response which may eventually lead to reverse coding, while other questions which were not properly worded were noted and corrected. Similarly, some options which were not included in some political knowledge questions were adjusted. Additionally, of the 70 items used in the pilot study, two were eliminated as most respondents did not respond to them in the pilot study, perhaps due to their open-ended nature. Overall, issues, such as length and structure of the questionnaire which were raised by the

respondents in the pilot were subsequently taken care of by the researcher before carrying out the actual study.

3.10 Data Collection Method

The survey for this study was conducted between March and June 2015 by distributing self-administered questionnaires in the academic areas of ABU and UUM with the help of students. An official data collection letter was collected from Awang Had Salleh Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, UUM, introducing the researcher and the purpose of the study (See Appendix H). This was to enable the researcher to get the support of the institutions the respondents belong to. Also, to increase the willingness of respondents to answer the questionnaires, their anonymity and confidentiality were assured in the questionnaire. Furthermore, an appeal was made to respondents to fill the questionnaire on the spot so that they can be collected immediately. Also, respondents were monitored in order not to ask or search for the answers online.

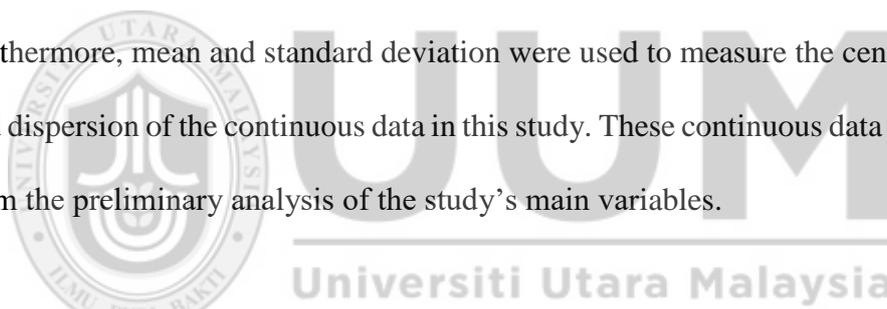
3.11 Data Analysis Method

The data analysis of this study entailed descriptive and inferential analysis. Consequently, in analyzing the data for this study, first the data collected was screened using SPSS to ensure its suitability for further PLS analysis. Explicitly, methods used in analyzing data in this study are discussed below:

3.11.1 Descriptive Statistics

Data which were categorical in nature were obtained from the nominal scales in the questionnaire of this study. They are basically in the form of the demographic characteristics of respondents and political knowledge which is the moderator in this study. Accordingly, respondents' country, age, gender, ethnicity and preliminary analysis of political knowledge formed the discrete data for this study. Thus, frequency and percentage were used to describe them. Also the response rate of the questionnaires and missing value analysis for this study are described using descriptive statistics.

Furthermore, mean and standard deviation were used to measure the central tendency and dispersion of the continuous data in this study. These continuous data were derived from the preliminary analysis of the study's main variables.



3.11.2 Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistics were used to analyze continuous data which were derived from items with ordinal or interval scale in the study questionnaire. Thus, inferential statistics was used for Exploratory Data Analysis (EDA) and testing of hypotheses formulated for this study.

3.11.2.1 Exploratory Data Analysis (EDA)

An EDA was carried out for this study to find out if the data collected was fit for advanced PLS analysis. Hence, after imputing the data into SPSS, data screening and

preliminary analysis were carried out. Accordingly, the following analyses were carried out for this study: non-response bias test, assessment of outliers, normality test and multicollinearity test.

3.11.2.2 Partial Least Squares –Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM)

PLS-SEM analysis was used to test the hypotheses of this study. PLS is a multivariate non-parametric analysis technique developed by Herman Wold in 1975 (Chin, Marcolin, & Newsted, 2003; Haenlein & Kaplan, 2004). Specifically, the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression-based method was used as estimation procedure in order to minimize error in the analysis. Consequently, to model the relationship between access to information, political interest, policy satisfaction and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter, the path model for this study was developed (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2014) based on the CET.

PLS is ideal for this study because it is a non-parametric (Henseler, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2012) regression-based test (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011) that mirrors traditional regression technique. Hence, it could be used to analyze structural and measurement models concurrently. Also, due to the combination of different scales of measurement in this research, this tool is ideal. Moreover, its path weighing scheme can be applied to hierarchical component models (Henseler, Ringle & Sarsledt, 2012) which are present in this study. Thus, it can be used to investigate models with a higher level of

abstraction (Lohmoller, 1989) for the multidimensional constructs in this study by forming a Hierarchical Construct Model (HCM).

Additionally, PLS is good for explanation and prediction of the variance to the target construct by different explanatory constructs (Hair, Sarstedt, Pieper & Ringle, 2012). Hence, since the aim of this study is to predict and explain the role of cognitive engagement in maximizing the likelihood of online political participation, PLS is appropriate for this study. Moreover, Wetzels, Odekerken-Schroder and Oppen, (2009) noted that PLS-SEM analysis is generally more suitable for studies in which the phenomenon under study is new or changing. In this case, the changing nature of the media and political participation on social media and online political participation, respectively make PLS suitable for this study.

Furthermore, PLS accommodates situations where some constructs have several indicators (Henseler, 2010), like the construct, online political participation on Facebook and Twitter which has 33 indicators. This is in addition to PLS path model's prerequisite of recursivity, in which it does not permit a further investigation of bidirectional effects (Henseler & Fassott, 2011) making it ideal for this research, as the CET does not provide for a non-recursive relationship between the independent and the dependent variables.

Accordingly, using SmartPLS software, the following analyses were carried out in this study:

3.11.2.2.1 Measurement Model

PLS was used to analyze the reflective measurement model. Thus, the measurement model was determined by calculating the internal consistency reliability, indicator reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2011). The recommended threshold values for these analyses can be seen in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5

Threshold Values for a Reflective Model

Tested Elements	Threshold Values
Internal Consistency Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha >0.70, Composite Reliability >0.70
Indicator Reliability	Outer Loadings >0.50
Convergent Validity	AVE >0.50
Discriminant Validity	Cross Loadings, AVE >0.50, HTMT >0.85 or >0.90

3.11.2.2.2 Structural Model

The structural model was assessed for collinearity issues, assessment of size and significance of path coefficients, assessment of coefficient of determination (R^2), assessment of effect size (f^2) and assessment of predictive relevance (Q^2 , q^2). The recommended threshold values for the structural model can be seen in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6

Threshold Values for Structural model

Tested Elements	Threshold Values
Coefficient of Determination (R^2)	0.19, 0.33, 0.67
Effect Size (f^2)	0.02, 0.15, 0.35
Predictive Relevance (Q^2)	>0
Predictive Relevance Effect Size (q^2)	0.02, 0.15, 0.35

3.11.2.2.3 Partial Least Squares –Multigroup Analysis (PLS-MGA)

PLS-MGA was conducted to test for differences among groups in this study. The non-parametric approach that is specifically designed for multiple group PLS analysis was used for this study (Henseler et al., 2009). Thus, the difference between path coefficients in the structural model was explored. Accordingly, values that were $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.50$ or $p > 0.95$ are significant and those that were not are not significant.

Consequently, two separate multigroup analyses were conducted in this study: one for the moderator (political knowledge), and the other for country differences. These PLS-MGA analyses are further discussed below:

3.11.2.2.3.1 Partial Least Squares –Multigroup Analysis (PLS-MGA) for Testing of Moderating Effect

PLS-MGA was used to test for moderating effect in this study because the moderator (political knowledge) is categorical (Henseler, 2012). This was done because Hair et al. (2014) noted that the use of binary coded data is a way of including categorical

variables or moderators in PLS-SEM models. As a result, the moderating variable was used to group the data for this study into sub-samples, to enable the comparability and also to know the significant differences between the sub-samples (Hair et al., 2014). Hence, the same model was used to compare respondents without political knowledge and those with political knowledge to find out if there is a significant difference between both groups.

3.11.2.2.3.2 Partial Least Squares –Multigroup Analysis (PLS-MGA) for Testing of Country Comparative

PLS-MGA was also used for country comparison because of differences in parameters for different sub-populations (Sarstedt, Henseler & Ringle, 2011). Hence, PLS-MGA was conducted using the second stage model of both countries to find out the group difference between Nigerian and Malaysian youth in terms of the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter, political interest, policy satisfaction and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

To maintain the integrity of this study, initial permission was obtained before data collection. Also, identities of respondents were anonymous and data provided by them was neither shared with other participants nor individuals outside this study. Those who chose not to participate were not forced to do so and participants were allowed to opt out at any point of the study.

Additionally, validity and reliability of the instrument was confirmed and bias was reduced as humanly possible to make the study trustworthy. Trustworthiness, as described by Khasawneh (2012), encompasses four different aspects, namely: credibility, dependability, transferability and conformability. All these were guaranteed in this study in addition to reporting results from the study analysis honestly.

3.13 Chapter Summary

This chapter encompasses a logical flow of the methodological aspects of this study. From the research design to data analysis method, explanations are provided on how the study methodology progressed. Accordingly, this study which belongs to the positivist paradigm, adopts a cross-sectional survey research design to collect data which were analyzed and interpreted statistically. The unit of analysis is individual undergraduate student of ABU and UUM. It is a predominantly an exploratory study; however elements of descriptive, inferential and explanatory research are evident. Following this, the instrument for data collection and measurement of variables are discussed in detail, as well as an explanation of the research location and population.

A multistage sampling approach was used to select the sample for the study. Precisely, the stratified purposive method was used to select the countries and universities for comparison, and then the disproportionate allocation stratified sampling method was used to select ethnic groups from each university, after which purposive sampling was

used to select respondents who use Facebook and Twitter for online political participation from each stratum.

The pretest and pilot test procedures are also described, after which data collection and data analysis method are examined in detail. Further, ethical considerations of the study are highlighted. For clarity, tables and a figure are provided.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

Results of data analyzed are presented in this chapter. First, the results of data screening and preliminary analysis are presented before the main results of the study. The main results of the study are divided into three sections. In the first section, the measurement model is evaluated to determine the internal consistency reliability, indicator reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity of the research model. In the second section, results of the structural model are assessed in the form of the significance of the path coefficients, level of the R-squared values, effect size and predictive relevance of the model. Finally, results of complementary PLS-MGA, which examined the moderating effects of political knowledge on the endogenous and exogenous variables and group differences based on country, are presented.

4.2 Survey Response

In this section, the response rate and non-response bias (for the two countries combined and each country individually) are discussed and the tables shown.

4.2.1 Response Rate

A total of 476 questionnaires were distributed to undergraduate students of ABU, Zaria and UUM, Sintok. Rigorous administration procedure was used to try to achieve as high a response rate as possible (Salant & Dillman, 1994). This high response rate

from participants was sought so that the researcher can have confidence in generalizing the result from the sample to the population under study (Creswell, 2012). This was partly achieved by having students distribute the questionnaires, a technique commonly practiced by communication researchers (Keyton, 2015). Students were given instructions on the type of participants to seek that suits the study purpose. This technique was particularly useful in this study because the respondents were also students.

Out of the 476 questionnaires distributed, 383 questionnaires were returned, indicating a response rate of 80%. This relatively high return rate can be attributed to several reminders sent to respondents through phone calls (Salim, Smith & Bammer, 2002) and text messages. As can be seen in Table 4.1, of the 383 questionnaires returned, 14 were unusable because a significant part of the questionnaires was not completed by respondents (Keyton, 2015). Precisely, the unusable questionnaires had 15% incomplete items in the overall questionnaire, or 5% incomplete items from a single construct (Hair et al., 2014). Hence, they were dropped from the study.

Consequently, 369 usable questionnaires were left. This accounted for a 77.5% valid response rate. Thus, based on the suggestion of Creswell (2012) that a response rate of 50% or above is adequate for surveys, this number of valid responses was used for further analysis. As shown in Table 4.2, of the 369 usable, 201 were for Nigeria and 168 for Malaysia.

Table 4.1

Response Rate of the Questionnaires

Response	Frequency/Rate
Number of distributed questionnaires	476
Returned questionnaires	383
Returned and usable questionnaires	369
Returned and excluded questionnaires	14
Questionnaires not returned	93
Response rate	80%
Valid response rate	77.5%

Table 4.2

Administered, Returned and Usable Questionnaires

Country	No. of Questionnaires Administered	No. of Questionnaires Returned and Usable
Nigeria	238	201
Malaysia	238	168

4.2.2 Non-Response Bias Test

As stated in the preceding chapter, the researcher tried to avoid the issue of non-response bias by adding to the sample size (Keyton, 2015), making the final number of 476 samples. However, despite this increase, the non-response bias test was carried out for the study.

Response bias is simply when the responses of participants do not accurately reflect the views of the sample and the population (Creswell, 2012); hence, non-response bias is the bias that happens when those who answer the questionnaire differ in meaningful ways from those who do not, which might affect the generalizability of the results to the population of the study. Thus, as recommended by Malhortra, Hall, Shaw and Oppenheim (2006), late respondents were used in place of non-respondents in order to estimate the non-response bias rate, because the late respondents to the questionnaires might not have responded if there had been no rigorous follow-up procedure by the researcher.

Therefore, questionnaires returned within 60 days were treated as early responses; while those returned after 60 days were regarded as late responses. Accordingly, for the combined data, 216 questionnaires were classified as early responses and 153 as late responses. This is because 216 (59%) respondents responded to the questions within 60 days while the remaining 153 (41%) responded after 60 days.

Specifically, an independent samples T-test was carried out to identify any possible non-response bias on the main study variables of access to political information on Facebook and Twitter, online political participation on Facebook and Twitter, political interest and policy satisfaction. Table 4.3 presents the results of the independent samples T-test obtained for the combined respondents. Subsequently, the same test was conducted for respondents of each country individually.

Table 4.3

Results for Independent-Samples T-test for Non-Response Bias (Nigeria and Malaysia)

Variables	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Levene's Test for Equality of Variance	
						F	Sig.
APIFT	Early Response	216	3.1382	1.41937	.09635	.152	.697
	Late Response	153	3.0263	1.41301	.11461		
PI	Early Response	216	3.4217	1.30028	.08827	.267	.604
	Late Response	153	3.3298	1.37786	.11176		
PS	Early Response	216	2.8539	1.22099	.08289	.003	.957
	Late Response	153	2.7923	1.27137	.10312		
OPPFT	Early Response	216	2.5598	1.34601	.09137	1.416	.235
	Late Response	153	2.5187	1.23560	.10022		

As shown in Table 4.3, the results of the independent samples T-test indicates that the equal variance significance values for each of the four main study variables is greater than the 0.05 significance level of Levene's test for equality of variance (Pallant, 2010). This means that the assumption of equal variance between early and late respondents is not violated. Hence, non-response bias is not an issue in the study.

Additionally, Table 4.4 and Table 4.5 which show the results of an independent samples T-test for Nigeria and Malaysia, respectively further affirm that non-response bias is not an issue in this study.

Table 4.4

Results for Independent-Samples T-test for Non-Response Bias (Nigeria)

Variables	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Levene's Test for Equality of Variance	
						F	Sig.
APIFT	Early Response	115	3.1130	1.56863	.14628	.203	.653
	Late Response	86	2.8771	1.55772	.16797		
PI	Early Response	115	3.4598	1.35457	.12631	.187	.666
	Late Response	86	3.3561	1.48281	.15990		
PS	Early Response	115	2.7925	1.30001	.12123	.450	.503
	Late Response	86	2.6329	1.35128	.14571		
OPPFT	Early Response	115	2.7982	1.41376	.13183	1.077	.301
	Late Response	86	2.7174	1.32598	.14298		

With no significance level below the 0.05 threshold, it is evident that the data collected from Nigerian respondents as shown in Table 4.4, do not violate the assumption of equal variance between early and late respondents.

Table 4.5

Results for Independent-Samples T-test for Non-Response Bias (Malaysia)

Variables	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Levene's Test for Equality of Variance	
						F	Sig.
APIFT	Early Response	101	3.1881	1.22373	.12177	.254	.615
	Late Response	67	3.1876	1.20405	.14710		
PI	Early Response	101	3.3762	1.24743	.12412	.005	.941
	Late Response	67	3.3004	1.22939	.15019		
PS	Early Response	101	2.9392	1.12129	.11157	.084	.772
	Late Response	67	2.9744	1.14635	.14005		
OPPFT	Early Response	101	2.3015	1.21852	.12125	.163	.687
	Late Response	67	2.2447	1.06092	.12961		

Similarly, just as in the case of the Nigerian respondents, non-response bias is also not an issue with the Malaysian respondents. As shown in Table 4.5, the significance level for the data collected from early and late respondents is met; hence, non-response bias is not an issue for this study.

4.3 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of respondents which include their country, age, gender, ethnicity and religion, are presented in the following section.

Table 4.6

Demographic Distribution of Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Country		
Nigeria	201	54.5
Malaysia	168	45.5
Age		
15-19	97	26.3
20-24	225	61.0
25-29	37	10.0
30-35	5	1.4
36-40	5	1.4
Gender		
Male	172	46.6
Female	197	53.4
Ethnicity		
Hausa/Fulani	87	23.6
Yoruba	43	11.7
Igbo	28	7.6
Others (Nigeria)	43	11.7
Malay	98	26.6
Chinese	35	9.5
Indian	24	6.5
Others (Malaysia)	11	3.0
Religion		
Islam (Nigeria)	101	27.4
Christianity (Nigeria)	98	26.6
Traditionalist	2	0.5
Islam (Malaysia)	104	28.2
Buddhism	31	8.4
Christianity (Malaysia)	12	3.3
Hinduism	20	5.4
Others (Malaysia)	1	0.3

Table 4.6 shows that in terms of nationality of respondents, 201 (54.5%) are Nigerians and 168 (45.5%) are Malaysians. Though equal sample size was allocated to both countries due to the comparative nature of this study, yet, the issue of unreturned and unusable questionnaires accounted for these differences in number of respondents between both countries.

In terms of age, the highest number of respondents are within the age range of 20-24 years, representing 225 (61%), followed by those in group 15-19 years with 97 (26.3%), and then 25-29 years with 37 respondents representing 10%, while age group 30-35 and 36-40 accounted for five respondents each, representing the least percentage with 1.4% each. This age distribution is expected as a sizeable number of undergraduate students in Nigeria begin their undergraduate studies at the age of 16 years while it is 19 to 20 years for Malaysia. This may explain why the age ranges of 15-19 and 20-24 have the highest number of respondents.

Regarding the gender of respondents, Table 4.6 indicates majority of respondents are female, accounting for 197 (53.4%), while the rest are male, accounting for 172 (46.6%). This gender distribution may be indicative of the fact that there are more female than male undergraduates.

Additionally, in terms of ethnicity, Table 4.6 shows Hausa/Fulani ethnic group in Nigeria represents 23.6% of respondents with 87 participants, while the Yorubas are 43 (11.7%) , the Igbos are 28 (7.6%) and 43 respondents from other minority ethnic

groups in Nigeria represent 11.7%. For Malaysian respondents, Malays account for 26.6% of respondents with 98 participants, while the Chinese are 35 (9.5%), Indians 24 (6.5%) and other ethnic groups in Malaysia, 24 respondents accounting for the least percentage of 3%. Specifically, respondents from “Others” ethnic minority groups in Nigeria comprise Kilba, Bura, Idoma, Taroh, Ebira, Tiv, Kataf, Birom, Bassange, Igede, Nupe, Fantwann, Ibibio, Tula, Bajju, Edo, Gbagyi, Etuno, Ikulu, Ibaji, Numana, Kagoma, Ham/Jabba, Kambari and Inzo; while respondents from “Others” ethnic group in Malaysia are Sabahans and Sarawakians like Dayak, Bidayu Iban, Dusun, Bajau, Jawa, Kadazan and Dusun. This result is indicative of the fact that there are more Hausa and Malay undergraduates in ABU and UUM, respectively.

In terms of religion, Table 4.6 indicates that for Nigerian respondents, 101 of them accounting for 27.4% are Muslims, 98 (26.6%) are Christians and just two (0.5%) respondents are Traditionalists. For Malaysia, 104 respondents representing 28.2% are Muslims, 31 (8.45%) are Buddhists, 12 (3.3%) are Christians, 20 (5.49%) are Hindus and one respondent accounting for 0.3% has no religion. The number of Muslim respondents for Malaysia is high because other than the Malays who are Muslims, a significant number of citizens from other minority ethnic groups (Sabah and Sarawak) are also Muslims. Likewise in Nigeria, where other than the Hausa/Fulani ethnic group that is predominantly Muslim, a significant number of citizens from other minority ethnic groups are also Muslims. Hence, this may explain why the religion of Islam has the highest number of respondents for both countries.

4.4 Descriptive Statistics of Research Constructs (Variables)

The descriptive statistics in the form of mean and standard deviation for latent variables in this study are presented below.

Table 4.7

Descriptive Statistics for Latent Variables

Latent Variables	Number of Items	Mean	Standard deviation
Political Interest	8	3.38	1.33
Access to Political Information on Facebook and Twitter	6	3.09	1.42
Policy Satisfaction	7	2.83	1.24
Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter	33	2.54	1.30

*1-7

Descriptive statistics was carried out to ensure that data are generally as expected in terms of mean and standard deviation and there are no entries beyond the expected range. Consequently, Table 4.7, shows that the combined mean for the latent variable ranges from 2.54 to 3.38. Specifically, the mean and standard deviation for access to political information on Facebook and Twitter are 3.09 and 1.42, respectively. Also, the mean and standard deviation for political interest are 3.38 and 1.33, respectively. Furthermore, a mean score and standard deviation of 2.83 and 1.24 are presented for policy satisfaction, while online political participation on Facebook and Twitter has a mean of 2.54 and standard deviation of 1.30.

Furthermore, due to the nominal nature of the moderator variable, political knowledge, it is not included among the descriptive statistics of latent construct in Table 4.7. Rather, descriptive statistics for political knowledge was carried out separately using frequency and percentage. Table 4.8 shows the descriptive statistics for respondents who do not have political knowledge and those who have political knowledge for the combined Nigerian and Malaysian respondents.

Table 4.8

Descriptive Statistics for Political Knowledge (Combined, Nigeria and Malaysia)

	Frequency	Percentage
Combined		
Without Knowledge	137	37.9
With Knowledge	232	62.1
Nigeria		
Without Knowledge	73	36.3
With Knowledge	128	63.7
Malaysia		
Without Knowledge	64	38.1
With Knowledge	104	61.9

Table 4.8 shows that there are more respondents with political knowledge than those without political knowledge for the combined Nigerian and Malaysian respondents. Respondents without political knowledge and those with political knowledge were determined by adding the total scores of the 10 political knowledge questions for each

respondent on Microsoft Excel, and then the total scores for each respondent was imputed to SPSS to determine the mean score for all respondents. The mean/median is 6; as a result, respondents who scored between 0 and 6 were categorized as those without sufficient political knowledge, while those who scored between 7 and 10 were considered as those with sufficient knowledge. Hence, using SPSS range statistics, the total scores of each respondent were recoded as 0 to 6 with “0” representing respondents without political knowledge, and 7 to 10 with “1” representing respondents with knowledge. The same process was also repeated for each country. It is noteworthy that the same mean/median value of 6 which was found for the combined data was also recorded for each country.

4.5 Data Screening

Prior to data screening, all the 369 returned and usable questionnaires were coded and entered into SPSS. As there were no negatively worded items in the questionnaire, there was no need for reverse coding. Accordingly, the following preliminary analyses were performed: missing value analysis, assessment of outliers, normality test and multicollinearity test (Hair et al., 2014).

4.5.1 Missing Value Analysis

The SPSS original data set for this study contained 25,092 data points, of which 88 were randomly missed, representing 0.35%. Specifically, Access to Political Information on Facebook and Twitter (APIFT) and Political Interest (PI) each had 6

missing values, while Policy Satisfaction (PS) and Political Knowledge (PK) had 7 and 8 missing values, respectively. However, Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter (OPPFT) had the highest number with 61 missing values. These can be seen in Table 4.9.

Hence, though there is no rule on the acceptable number of missing values in a data set for making a valid statistical inference, scholars have generally agreed that missing rate of 5% or less is non-significant (Tabachnick & Fidel, 2007). Thus, the 0.35% of missing value in this study is within the acceptable range.

Preceding the missing values treatment, the researcher ensured that there were less than 5% values missing per indicator for all the remaining questionnaires. First, questionnaires with more than 15% combined missing value for an observation were excluded from the analysis for this study. However, even some questionnaires that did not have up to 15% over missing value were excluded because respondents did not answer a high proportion of responses for a single construct; hence, such cases were removed (Hair et al., 2014).

Consequently, median of nearby points was used to replace missing data for the study (See Appendix C for SPSS outputs of missing value).

Table 4.9

Total and Percentage of Missing Values

Latent Variables	Number of Missing Values
Access to Political Information on Facebook and Twitter (APIFT)	6
Political Interest (PI)	6
Policy Satisfaction (PS)	7
Political Knowledge (PK)	8
Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter (OPPFT)	61
Total	88 out of 25,092 data points
Percentage	0.35%

Note: Percentage of missing value is obtained by dividing the total number of randomly missing values for the entire data set by total number of data points multiplied by 100

4.5.2 Assessment of Outliers

Outlier diagnostics was conducted for this study. To spot observations which appear to be outside the SPSS value labels due to wrong data entry, frequency tables were tabulated for all the variables in this study using the minimum and maximum statistics. From the analysis of frequency statistics, no value was found outside the expected range.

Furthermore, since this study utilized multivariate analysis method, Mahalanobis distance (D2) was used to detect multivariate outliers (Osborne & Overbay, 2004; Pallant, 2011). To know outliers, it is important to know the critical chi-square value using the number of individual variables as the degree of freedom (Pallant, 2011).

Hence, with the exclusion of demographic and moderating categorical variables, the degree of freedom for this study was 53 ($54-1=53$).

Consequently, based on the 54 observed items for this study, the recommended threshold of chi-square was 70.99 ($p=0.05$). Accordingly, after rearranging the Mahalanobis value on the SPSS in descending order, it was discovered that 53 Mahalanobis values exceeded this threshold. However, these outliers were not deleted from the study because scholars (Aguinis, Gottfredson, & Joo, 2013; Burke, 2001; Cortina, 2002; Osborne & Overbay, 2004) have recommended keeping outliers.

Moreover, as a rule of thumb, if more than 20% of data are identified as outliers, the quality of data collected could be questioned (Burke, 2001). However, since that is not the case in this study [the outlier values are only 14% ($53 \div 369 \times 100 = 14\%$)], the data was used for further analysis. Moreover, since this is a non-parametric analysis and the outliers do not affect the normality of data (See Figures 4.1 and 4.2), the outliers for this study were not deleted and the data set for the study remained 369.

4.5.3 Normality Test

This study utilized a graphical approach to determine the normality of the data collected (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The graphical method was chosen because Field (2009) suggested that a study sample larger than 200 should examine the shape of the distribution graphically rather than by looking at the value of skewness and kurtosis statistics. Also, Hair et al. (2004) noted the importance of examining the

skewness and kurtosis of a data distribution. As a result, with a sample size of 369, which is clearly above 200, using the graphical method to test for normality of data for this study was justified. Accordingly, a histogram and normal probability plot were used to confirm that the assumptions of normality were met in this study. Figure 4.1 shows that the data collected for this study follows a normal pattern since all the bars on the histogram are close to a normal curve. The bell-shaped curve in Figure 4.1 also indicates a normal distribution. Thus, even though PLS can work with non-normal data, this study does not violate normality assumptions.

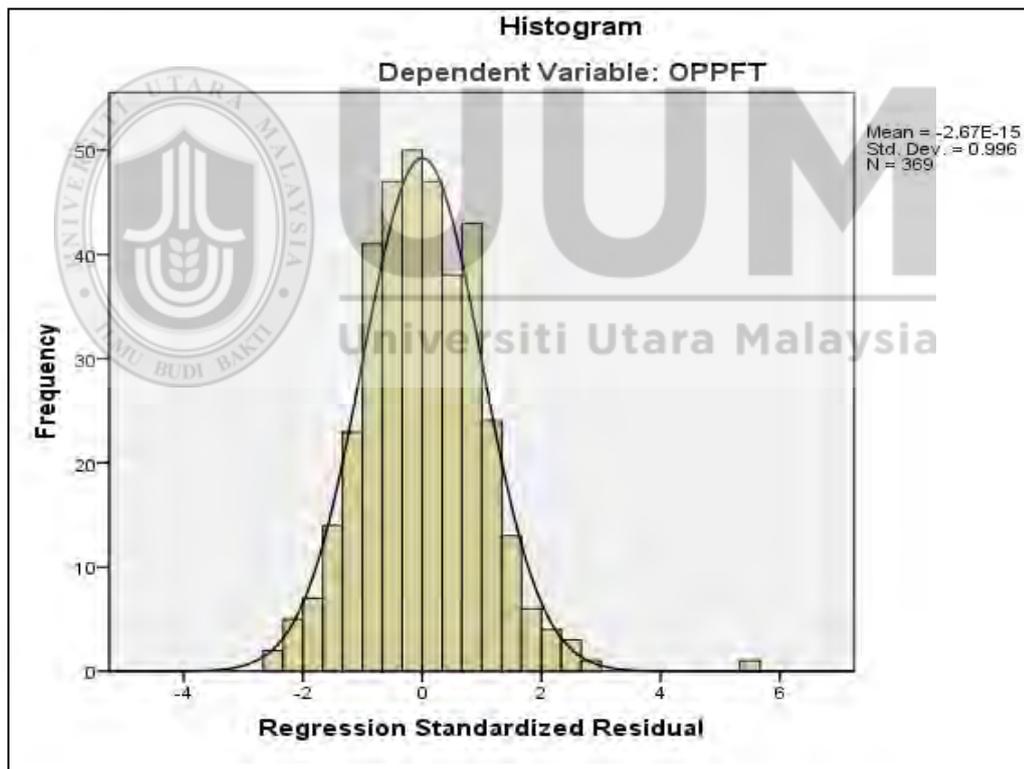


Figure 4.1. Histogram and Normal Probability Plot

Figure 4.1 shows scores appear to be normally distributed. This is also supported by the normal probability plots where the observed value for each score is plotted against the expected value from the normal distribution. The reasonably straight line seen in Figure 4.2 also indicates a normal distribution (Pallant, 2011).

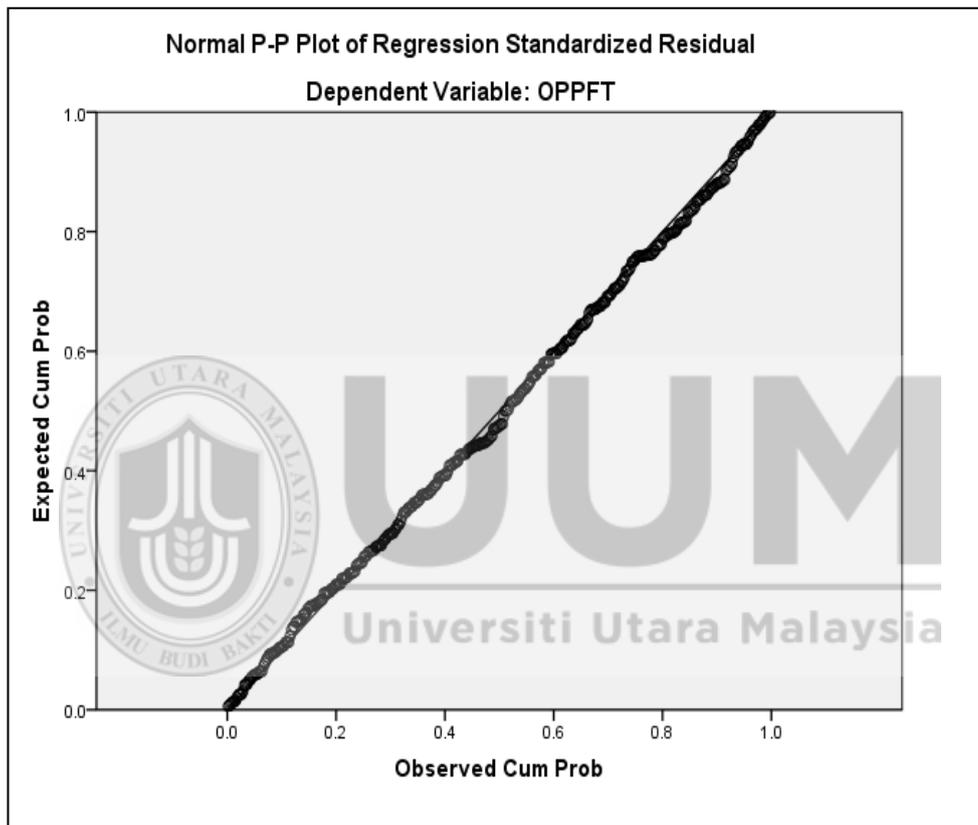


Figure 4.2. Q-Plot

4.5.4 Multicollinearity Test

The correlation matrix of exogenous latent constructs was used to detect multicollinearity. A correlation coefficient of 0.90 and above indicates

multicollinearity between exogenous latent constructs. Table 4.10 shows the correlation matrix of all the exogenous latent constructs.

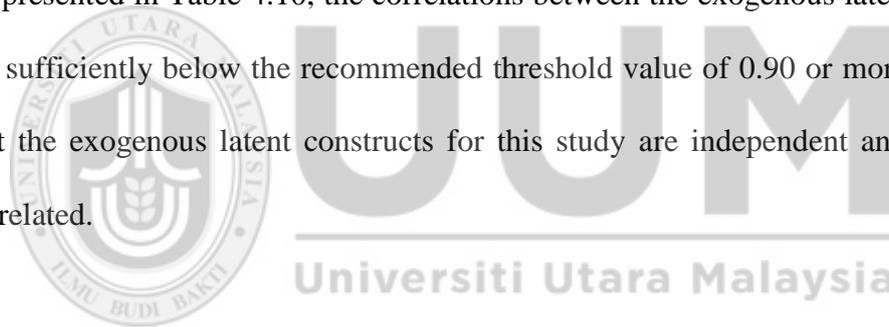
Table 4.10

Correlation Matrix of the Exogenous Latent Constructs

	APIFT	PI	PS	OPPFT
APIFT	1			
PI	.557**	1		
PS	.429**	.565**	1	
OPPFT	.598**	.650**	.591**	1

Note: **correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

As presented in Table 4.10, the correlations between the exogenous latent constructs are sufficiently below the recommended threshold value of 0.90 or more, indicating that the exogenous latent constructs for this study are independent and not highly correlated.



4.6 Assessment of PLS-SEM Path Model Results

The two-step process was used to evaluate and report the results of the PLS-SEM paths (Henseler, Ringle & Sinkovics, 2009) as follows: the assessment of a measurement model, and the assessment of a structural model (Hair et al., 2014). Accordingly, due to the comparative nature of this study, first the PLS-SEM path model results for the combined data (Nigeria and Malaysia) was assessed before the data was split for each country and an assessment was done for their individual PLS-SEM path model.

4.6.1 Assessment of a Measurement Model (Nigeria and Malaysia)

To assess the measurement model, the following activities were undertaken in this study: examining internal consistency reliability, ascertaining indicator reliability and determining convergent and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2014). These activities were undertaken in order to identify the relationship between the observed variables and the underlying latent constructs (Hamid, Ishak & Yusof, 2015).

Notably, some constructs in this study (access to political information on Facebook and Twitter, policy satisfaction and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter) were operationalized at higher level of abstraction, hence forming a Higher-Order Model (HOM) (Lohmoller, 1989). Higher-Order Models (HOMs) or Hierarchical Component Models (HCMs) entail testing second-order structures that contain two layers of constructs (Lohmoller, 1989). Hierarchical constructs are multidimensional constructs or constructs involving more than one dimension (Netemeyer et al., 2003). PLS-SEM analysis allows for the conceptualization of a hierarchical model through the recurrent use of manifest variables (Lohmoller, 1989). Specifically, higher-order latent variable can thus be created by specifying a latent variable that represents all the manifest variables of the original lower-order latent variables.

The HCM approach was adopted for this study to reduce the complexity of the research model, while at the same time, lead to more theoretical parsimony

(Netemeyer et al., 2003). Thus, of the three major reasons for using HCM as stated by Hair et al. (2014), the first two were particularly significant for this study. First, HCM was used to make the model easier to grasp by reducing the number of relationships in the structural model as the number of items for some constructs (OPPFT) were particularly large in number. Secondly, HCM was used in this study to avoid collinearity issues which may affect the discriminant validity of some items in the study.

Precisely, as can be seen in Figure 4.3, the top-down HCM approach, where the general construct consists of several sub-dimensions, was used in this study. Hence, as the general construct forms part of the structural model, detailed information is available on the sub-dimensions using second-order model (Hair et al., 2014). Hence, the HCM of the study contains the HOC, which is the main construct and two Lower-Order Components (LOCs) which are the sub-dimensions of the main construct. Accordingly the reflective-reflective type of HCM which indicates a reflective relationship between the HOC and LOCs, was also used. As a result, each construct was measured by reflective indicators (Wetzels et al., 2009).

Furthermore, the repeated indicators approach (also known as hierarchical component approach) where all indicators form the LOCs, was also assigned to the HOC utilized for this study (Lohmoller, 1989; Wold, 1982). Therefore, a second-order factor was directly measured by the observed variable for all the first-order factors. Hence, the

number of manifest variables used was repeated and estimated with the standard PLS algorithm and at the same time, the manifest indicators were repeated to also represent the HOC. This approach was used for this study because a stronger relationship emerges between HOCs and LOCs since they share a large number of indicators in the HCM. Besides, Henseler (2007), Wilson and Henseler (2007) and Zhang, Li and Sun (2006) all noted that it is the most popular approach to estimating HOC with PLS.

4.6.1.1 Assessment of First Stage Hierarchical Construct Model (Nigeria and Malaysia)

Since this is an HCM study, the first stage hierarchical construct model was first assessed as seen in Tables 4.11, 4.12, 4.13 and Figure 4.3.



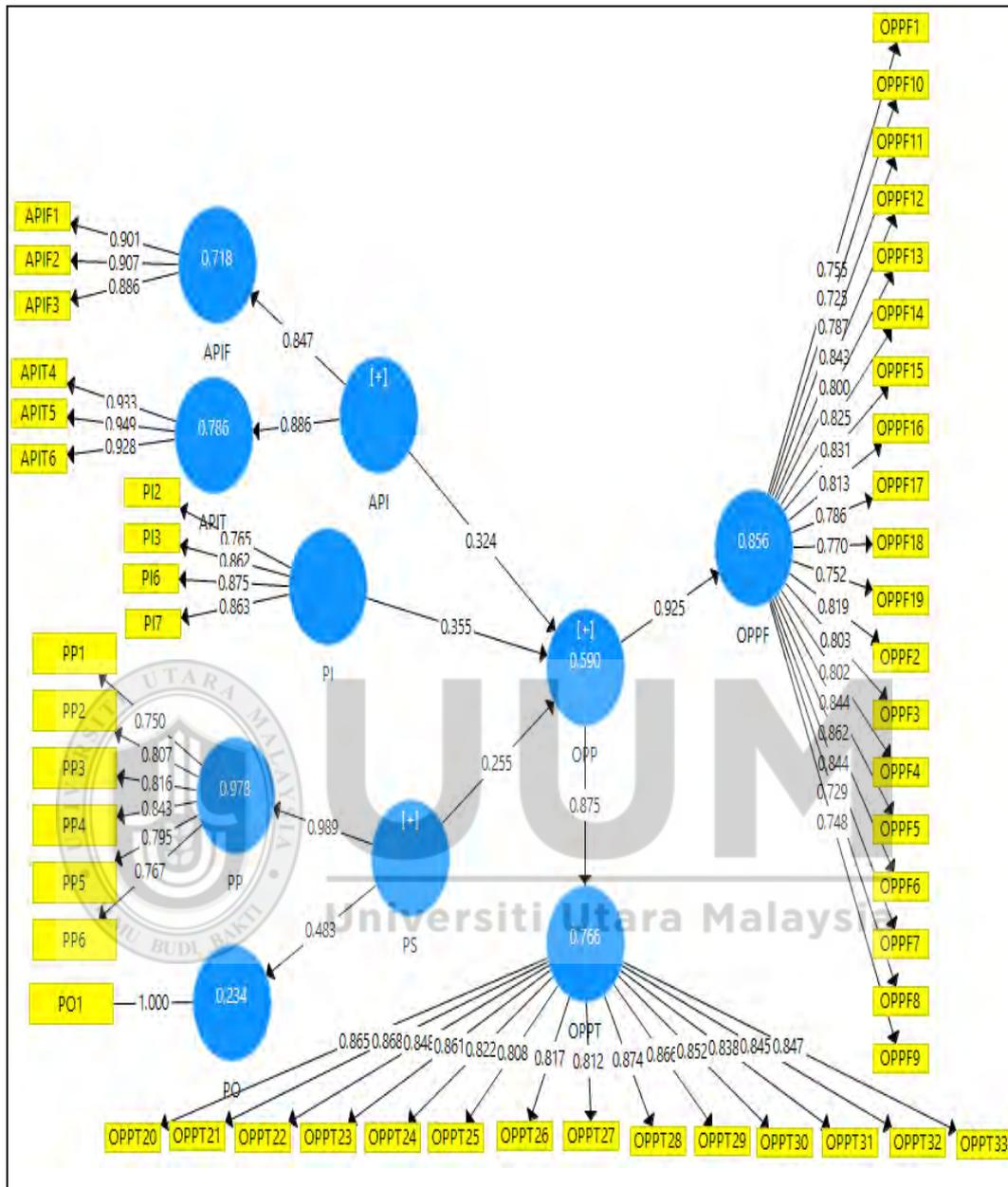


Figure 4.3. First Stage Hierarchical Construct Model (Nigeria and Malaysia)

4.6.1.1.1 Internal Consistency Reliability

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient and composite reliability coefficient were used to measure the internal consistency reliability for this study. Using composite reliability

coefficient to interpret internal consistency reliability is based on the rule of thumb that composite reliability coefficient should be at least 0.70 (Hair et al., 2010). Thus, as can be seen in Table 4.11, the Cronbach's Alpha values are between .880 and .969, while values of composite reliability are between .899 and .972. Thus, internal consistency reliability is not an issue for this study.

4.6.1.1.2 Indicator Reliability

The indicator reliability was assessed by examining the outer loadings of each constructs' measure (Hair et al., 2012). To ensure unidimensionality of a measurement model, items should be 0.50 or higher (Afthanorhan, 2013). Since most of the items in Figure 4.3 have relatively good loadings, 0.70 was taken as the minimum for the first stage model of this study; hence, four items (PI1, PI4, PI5, PI8) which had loadings below 0.70 were deleted from the model. Hereafter, 50 indicators with factor loadings greater than 0.70 were retained in the model (See Table 4.11, Figure 4.3 and Appendix D).

4.6.1.1.3 Convergent Validity

Reliability is a necessary condition for validity. Since reliability has been established, the next step was to ascertain the validity of the study measures. Convergent validity is the extent to which items truly represent the intended latent construct and correlate with other measures of the same latent construct (Hair et al., 2006). The convergent validity of this study was examined by the AVE of each latent construct, as suggested

by Fornell and Larcker (1981). The AVE of each latent construct should be at least 0.50 (Chin, 1998). The AVEs for this study as shown in Table 4.11 are all above 0.50, suggesting adequate convergent validity.

Table 4.11

Loadings, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Reliabilities for First Stage Hierarchical Construct Model (Nigeria and Malaysia)

Code	Loadings	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
APIF1	.901	.807	.880	.926
APIF2	.907			
APIF3	.886			
APIT4	.933	.877	.930	.955
APIT5	.949			
APIT6	.928			
OPPF1	.755	.636	.968	.971
OPPF10	.725			
OPPF11	.787			
OPPF12	.843			
OPPF13	.800			
OPPF14	.825			
OPPF15	.831			
OPPF16	.813			
OPPF17	.786			
OPPF18	.770			
OPPF19	.752			
OPPF2	.819			
OPPF3	.803			
OPPF4	.802			
OPPF5	.844			
OPPF6	.862			
OPPF7	.844			
OPPF8	.729			
OPPF9	.748			
OPPT20	.865	.714	.969	.972

Table 4.11 Contd

OPPT21	.868			
OPPT22	.848			
OPPT23	.861			
OPPT24	.822			
OPPT25	.808			
OPPT26	.817			
OPPT27	.812			
OPPT28	.874			
OPPT29	.866			
OPPT30	.852			
OPPT31	.838			
OPPT32	.845			
OPPT33	.847			
PI2	.765	.710	.863	.907
PI3	.862			
PI6	.875			
PI7	.863			
PP1	.750	.635	.866	.899
PP2	.807			
PP3	.816			
PP4	.843			
PP5	.795			
PP6	.767			
PO1	Single Item	Single Item	Single Item	Single Item

4.6.1.1.4 Discriminant Validity

Similar to convergent validity, AVE was also used to determine the discriminant validity of this study (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Accordingly, based on Fornell and Larcker's (1981) suggestion, discriminant validity was evaluated with the use of the AVE with a score of 0.50 or more. Also the square root of the AVE should be greater than correlations among latent constructs.

Thus, as seen in Table 4.11, the values of AVE for this study are between .635 and .877, indicating acceptable values. In Table 4.12, the correlations among the latent constructs are compared with the square root of AVE (in bold face). The AVEs are all greater than the correlations among latent constructs, indicating sufficient discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 4.12

Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion) for First Stage Hierarchical Construct Model (Nigeria and Malaysia)

Variables	APIF	APIT	OPPF	OPPT	PI	PO	PP
APIF	.898						
APIT	.505	.937					
OPPF	.534	.464	.798				
OPPT	.298	.618	.626	.845			
PI	.485	.422	.666	.523	.842		
PO	.152	.181	.233	.209	.307	Single Item	
PP	.380	.358	.584	.471	.552	.347	.797

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

Additionally, based on Chin's (1998) suggestion of ascertaining discriminant validity by comparing the indicator loadings with cross-loadings of other reflective indicators, all indicators as seen in Figure 4.13 are higher than the cross-loadings, indicating adequate discriminant validity.

Table 4.13

Cross-Loadings for First Stage Hierarchical Construct Model (Nigeria and Malaysia)

ITEM	APIF	APIT	OPPF	OPPT	PI	PP	PO
APIF1	.901	.430	.506	.273	.430	.336	.139
APIF2	.907	.470	.454	.276	.441	.348	.152
APIF3	.886	.461	.481	.253	.437	.341	.119
APIT4	.500	.933	.445	.582	.422	.331	.210
APIT5	.461	.949	.430	.589	.371	.332	.132
APIT6	.459	.928	.429	.566	.392	.343	.167
OPPF1	.453	.404	.755	.522	.611	.554	.276
OPPF10	.404	.282	.725	.439	.522	.448	.145
OPPF11	.482	.342	.787	.452	.517	.416	.187
OPPF12	.477	.405	.843	.500	.539	.438	.171
OPPF13	.416	.360	.800	.467	.493	.404	.149
OPPF14	.434	.369	.825	.491	.497	.393	.203
OPPF15	.420	.326	.831	.474	.509	.436	.150
OPPF16	.438	.346	.813	.491	.469	.407	.126
OPPF17	.447	.365	.786	.455	.477	.389	.150
OPPF18	.420	.376	.770	.473	.434	.393	.183
OPPF19	.410	.301	.752	.429	.463	.387	.128
OPPF2	.457	.378	.819	.520	.595	.507	.214
OPPF3	.424	.351	.803	.493	.576	.537	.191
OPPF4	.423	.424	.802	.595	.557	.555	.254
OPPF5	.423	.427	.844	.576	.594	.536	.174
OPPF6	.396	.378	.862	.544	.595	.529	.233
OPPF7	.422	.385	.844	.523	.593	.559	.184
OPPF8	.364	.383	.729	.458	.535	.438	.224
OPPF9	.392	.420	.748	.557	.494	.494	.183
OPPT20	.271	.554	.544	.865	.514	.430	.165
OPPT21	.297	.605	.578	.868	.527	.440	.191
OPPT22	.242	.535	.570	.848	.489	.485	.181
OPPT23	.244	.546	.594	.861	.481	.403	.164
OPPT24	.245	.481	.524	.822	.417	.341	.143
OPPT25	.232	.456	.531	.808	.439	.380	.245
OPPT26	.233	.447	.552	.817	.456	.371	.149
OPPT27	.255	.560	.469	.812	.438	.370	.158

Table 4.13 Contd

OPPT28	.257	.571	.518	.874	.457	.400	.189
OPPT29	.248	.531	.508	.866	.425	.426	.177
OPPT30	.239	.528	.515	.852	.430	.397	.180
OPPT31	.256	.531	.468	.838	.340	.356	.189
OPPT32	.237	.465	.484	.845	.343	.395	.186
OPPT33	.264	.496	.531	.847	.410	.363	.161
PI2	.373	.255	.466	.345	.765	.445	.235
PI3	.405	.353	.599	.445	.862	.463	.266
PI6	.400	.368	.578	.436	.875	.486	.247
PI7	.454	.427	.586	.518	.863	.469	.283
PP1	.332	.297	.489	.374	.437	.750	.308
PP2	.284	.231	.454	.274	.450	.807	.247
PP3	.296	.266	.402	.357	.389	.816	.251
PP4	.253	.286	.387	.348	.413	.843	.298
PP5	.322	.331	.573	.508	.512	.795	.261
PP6	.337	.302	.494	.393	.444	.767	.299
PO1	.152	.181	.233	.209	.307	.347	Single Item

4.6.1.2 Assessment of Second Stage Hierarchical Construct Model (Nigeria and Malaysia)

The latent variable scores in the first stage model were recomputed to construct a simpler second stage model. As a result, the dimensions of the constructs in the first stage model in Figure 4.3 serve as items for the constructs in the second stage model in Figure 4.4 (Wilson & Henseler, 2007).

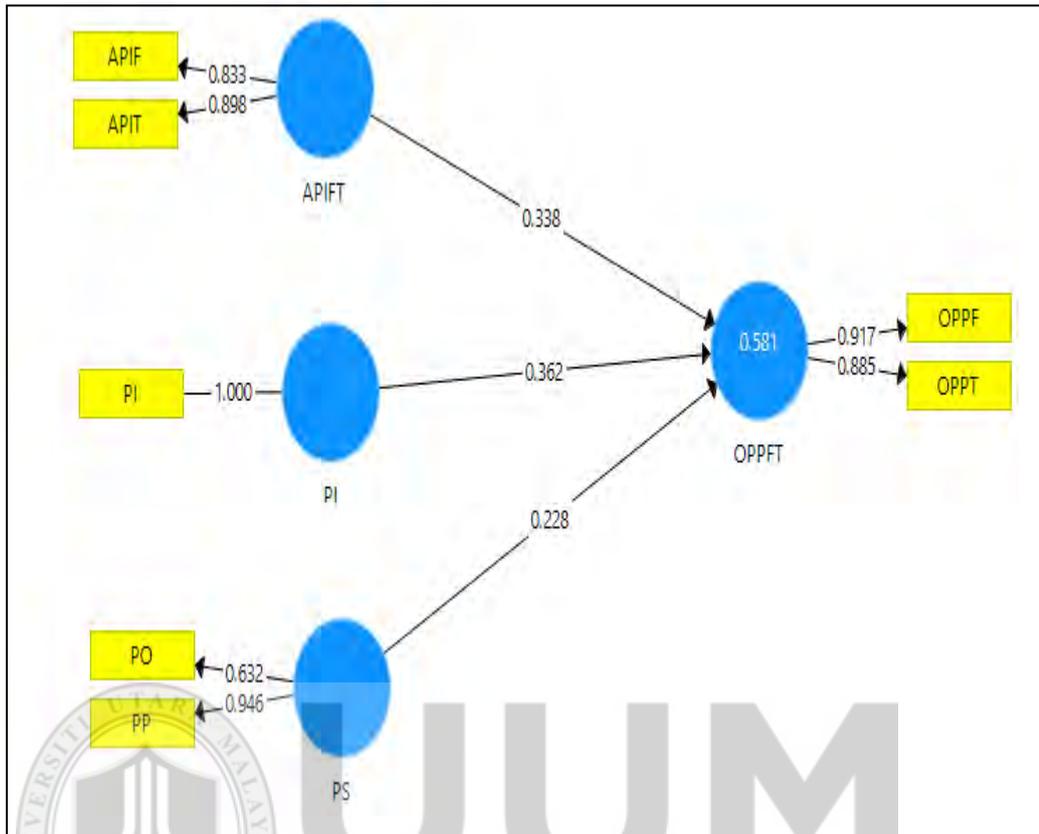


Figure 4.4. Second Stage Hierarchical Construct Model (Nigeria and Malaysia)

The second stage model results in Table 4.14 and Table 4.15, both indicating that the model is fit as the composite reliability and AVE are all above the expected threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2011) and 0.50 (Chin, 1998), respectively. Furthermore, the item loadings and cross-loadings are within acceptable limit as all are above 0.50 (Afthanorhan, 2013).

Table 4.14

Loadings, Cross-loadings, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Reliabilities for Second Stage Model (Nigeria and Malaysia)

	APIFT	OPPFT	PI	PS	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted
APIF	.833				.857	
APIT	.898					.750
OPPF		.917			.896	
OPPT		.885				.812
PI			1.000		Not Applicable	Not Applicable
PO				.632	.779	
PP				.946		.647

Since reliability of the second stage model is ascertained, the validity of constructs were also examined as is evident in Table 4.15. Discriminant validity is also not an issue in this study as the AVEs are all greater than the correlations among latent constructs, indicating sufficient discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 4.15

Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion) for Second Stage Constructs (Nigeria and Malaysia)

Variables	APIFT	OPPFT	PI	PS
APIFT	0.866			
OPPFT	0.620	0.901		
PI	0.518	0.665	1.000	
PS	0.416	0.572	0.562	0.805

Furthermore, Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) of correlations was used to determine the discriminant validity of this study (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015). The recommended threshold of HTMT to ascertain adequate discriminant validity is 0.85 or 0.90. Thus, based on the result from the PLS-SEM analysis of this study, the HTMT is 0.851; hence, since the value is below 0.90, it suggests this study possesses adequate discriminant validity.

4.6.2 Assessment of Structural Model (Nigeria and Malaysia)

Since reliability and validity were achieved, the structural model was assessed. It is important to assess structural model because it is proof that a study's theory or model is supported by empirical data. In assessing the structural model, the following were done: assessing the significance of path coefficients, evaluating the level of R-Squared values, determining the effect size and ascertaining the predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2014).

Accordingly, this study applied the standard bootstrapping procedure of 5,000 bootstrap samples and 369 cases to examine significance of the path coefficients (Hair et al., 2014). The estimates of the structural model are shown in Table 4.16 and Figure 4.5.

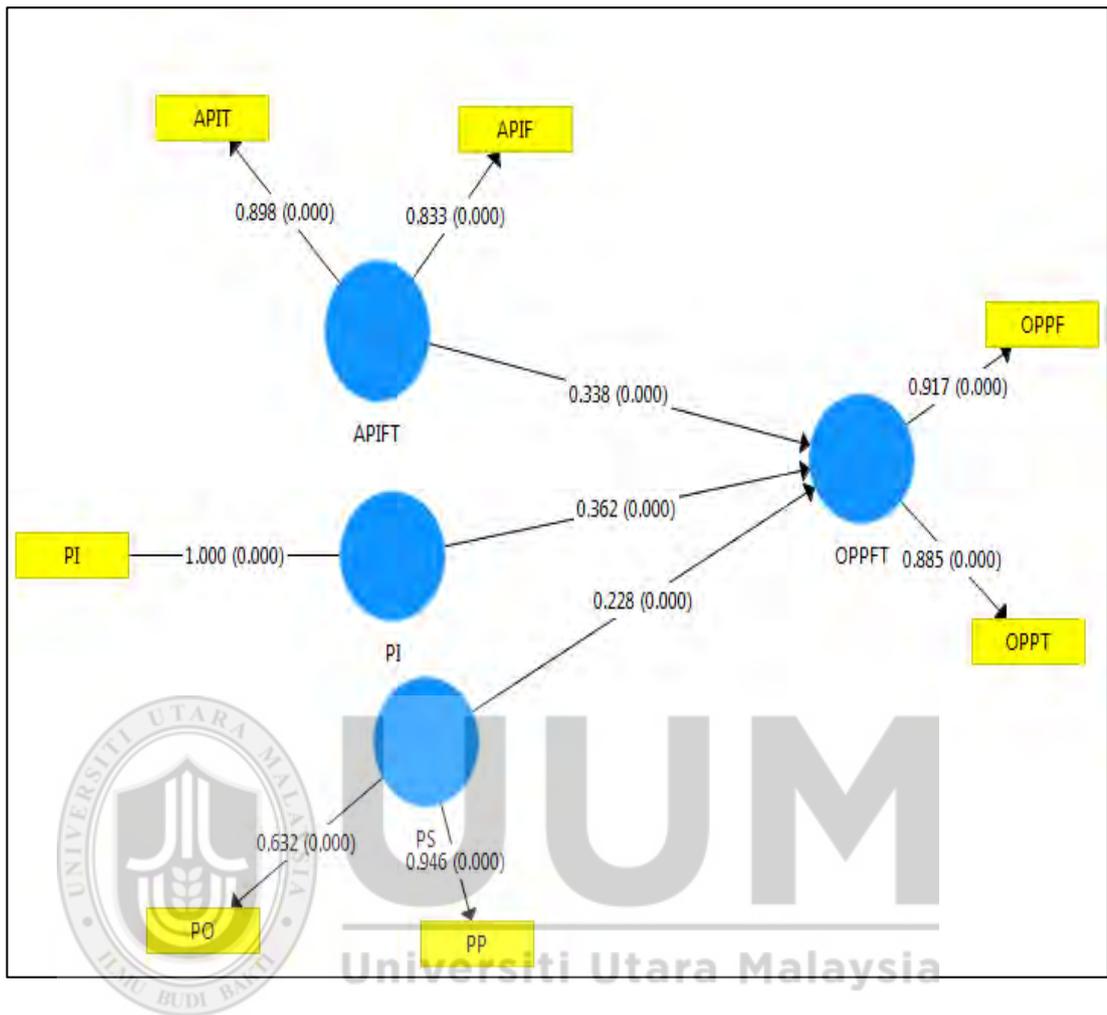


Figure 4.5. Structural Model (Nigeria and Malaysia)

Table 4.16

Structural Model Assessment (Nigeria and Malaysia)

	Relationship	Beta value	Std. Error	T value	p-Values	Findings
H₁	Access to Political Information on Facebook and Twitter -> Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter	.338	.047	7.174	.000	Supported
H₂	Political Interest -> Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter	.362	.051	7.097	.000	Supported
H₃	Policy Satisfaction -> Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter	.228	.047	4.800	.000	Supported

Table 4.16 shows the result of the first set of hypotheses testing for this study. Hypothesis 1 predicted that access to political information on Facebook and Twitter is positively related to online political participation on Facebook and Twitter. Results in Table 4.16 and Figure 4.4 show a significant relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter ($\beta = .388$, $T = 7.174$, $p < 0.001$), supporting Hypothesis 1. Similarly, Hypothesis 2 which predicted that political interest is positively related to online

political participation on Facebook and Twitter, is supported with the following values ($\beta = .362$, $T = 7.097$, $p < 0.001$). Likewise, Hypothesis 3 is also supported with the following values ($\beta = .228$, $T = 4.800$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates policy satisfaction is positively related to online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.

These positive results are expected since path coefficients close to +1 indicate a strong positive relationship and the closer the estimated coefficients are to 0, the weaker the relationships. Hence, as a rule of thumb, path coefficients with standardized values above 0.20 are usually significant (Hair et al., 2014).

4.6.2.1 Assessment of Variance Explained in the Endogenous Latent Variables

Coefficient of determination (R-Squared value) was also used to assess the structural model of this study (Henseler et al., 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 et al., 2006). Although the threshold of R-Squared value depends on the type of research (Hair et al, 2010), Chin (1998) advised 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. Therefore, the R-Squared value of the endogenous latent variable in this study is 58% (See Figure 4.4), which is close to substantial.

This means that the research model explains 58% of the total variance of online political participation on Facebook and Twitter. This suggests that three sets of exogenous latent variables (i.e., access to political information on Facebook and

Twitter, political interest and policy satisfaction) collectively explain 58% of the variance of the endogenous variable, online political participation on Facebook and Twitter. Hence, based on Chin's (1998) suggestion, the endogenous latent variable of this study shows acceptable levels of R-Squared Value.

4.6.2.2 Assessment of Effect Size (f^2)

Effect size is the relative effect of a particular exogenous latent variable on endogenous latent variable by means of changes in the R-Squared value. It is calculated as the increase in R-Squared value of the latent variable to which the path is connected, relative to the latent variable's proportion of unexplained variance (Chin, 1988). According to Cohen (1988), effect size could be expressed using the following formula

$$\text{Effect Size: } f^2 = \frac{R^2 \text{ Included} - R^2 \text{ Excluded}}{1 - R^2 \text{ Included}}$$

Cohen described f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35 as weak, moderate and strong effects, respectively. Table 4.17 shows the respective effect sizes of the latent variables of the structural model.

Table 4.17

Effect Sizes of the Latent Variables based on the Recommendation of Cohen (1988)

Exogenous Variables	f-Squared (f^2)	Effect Size
APIFT	0.193	Medium
PI	0.183	Medium
PS	0.082	Small

Results in Table 4.17 show the effect sizes of 0.193, 0.183 and 0.082 for this study. This indicates medium, medium and small effect sizes for access to political information on Facebook and Twitter, political interest and policy satisfaction, respectively.

4.6.2.3 Assessment of Predictive Relevance

This study used Stone-Geisser test to find out the predictive relevance of the research model using blindfolding procedures (Geisser, 1976; Stone, 1974). Blindfolding procedure is only applied to dependent variables that have a reflective measurement model operationalization (Sattler, Volckner, Riediger & Ringle, 2010). Reflective measurement model, like the model of this study, specifies that a latent concept causes variation in a set of observable indicators. Thus, since the endogenous latent variable in this study is reflective, a blindfolding procedure was applied mainly to online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.

Therefore, a cross-validated redundancy measure (Q^2) was used to assess the predictive relevance of the research model (Hair et al., 2013). The cross-validated redundancy approach was used because it contains the key elements of the path model and the structural model to predict eliminated data points. The Q^2 is a criterion to measure how well a model predicts the data of omitted cases (Chin, 1998). Henseler et al. (2009) noted that a research model with Q^2 statistics greater than zero is considered to have predictive relevance. Furthermore, a research model with higher positive Q^2 values suggest more predictive relevance. The results of cross-validated redundancy are shown in Table 4.18.

Table 4.18
Construct Cross-Validated Redundancy

Endogenous Variable	SSO	SSE	1- SSE/SSO
OPPFT	738	400.757	.457

The results of the cross-validated redundancy measure Q^2 for the endogenous latent variable shown in Table 4.18 is above zero suggesting predictive relevance of the model (Chin, 1988).

In addition to testing for predicting relevance, the relative impact of predictive relevance in this study was assessed by measuring the q^2 effect size (Hair et al., 2014). The q^2 effect size was calculated thus:

$$q^2 \text{ effect size} = \frac{Q^2 \text{ included} - Q^2 \text{ Excluded}}{1 - Q^2 \text{ Included}}$$

As a relative measure of predictive relevance, 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35, means that the exogenous construct has a small, medium or large predictive relevance for a certain endogenous construct. Results of the q^2 effect size of this study are presented in Table 4.19.

Table 4.19

q^2 Effect Sizes of Exogenous Latent Variable

Exogenous Variables	q-Squared (q^2)	Effect Size
APIFT	0.118	Small
PI	0.098	Small
PS	0.046	Small

Based on the threshold values recommended by Hair et al. (2014), results in Table 4.19 reveal that the effect size for the all the exogenous variables of the study in terms of predictive relevance is small.

4.6.3 Assessment of Measurement Model (Nigeria)

Due to the comparative nature of this study, after evaluating data for the combined respondents as seen in the preceding sections, it was necessary to investigate data for each country individually to enable comparison. Hence, based on data collected from Nigerian respondents alone, a separate measurement model for Nigeria was assessed. Accordingly, the HCM approach used in the combined model was also utilized for the

individual country models. As a result, the first and second stage models for Nigeria were assessed as can be seen in Figure 4.6 and Figure 4.7, respectively.

4.6.3.1 Assessment of First Stage Hierarchical Construct Model (Nigeria)

In assessing the first stage model for Nigeria, reliability and validity were investigated as can be seen in Figure 4.6, Table 4.20 and Table 4.21.



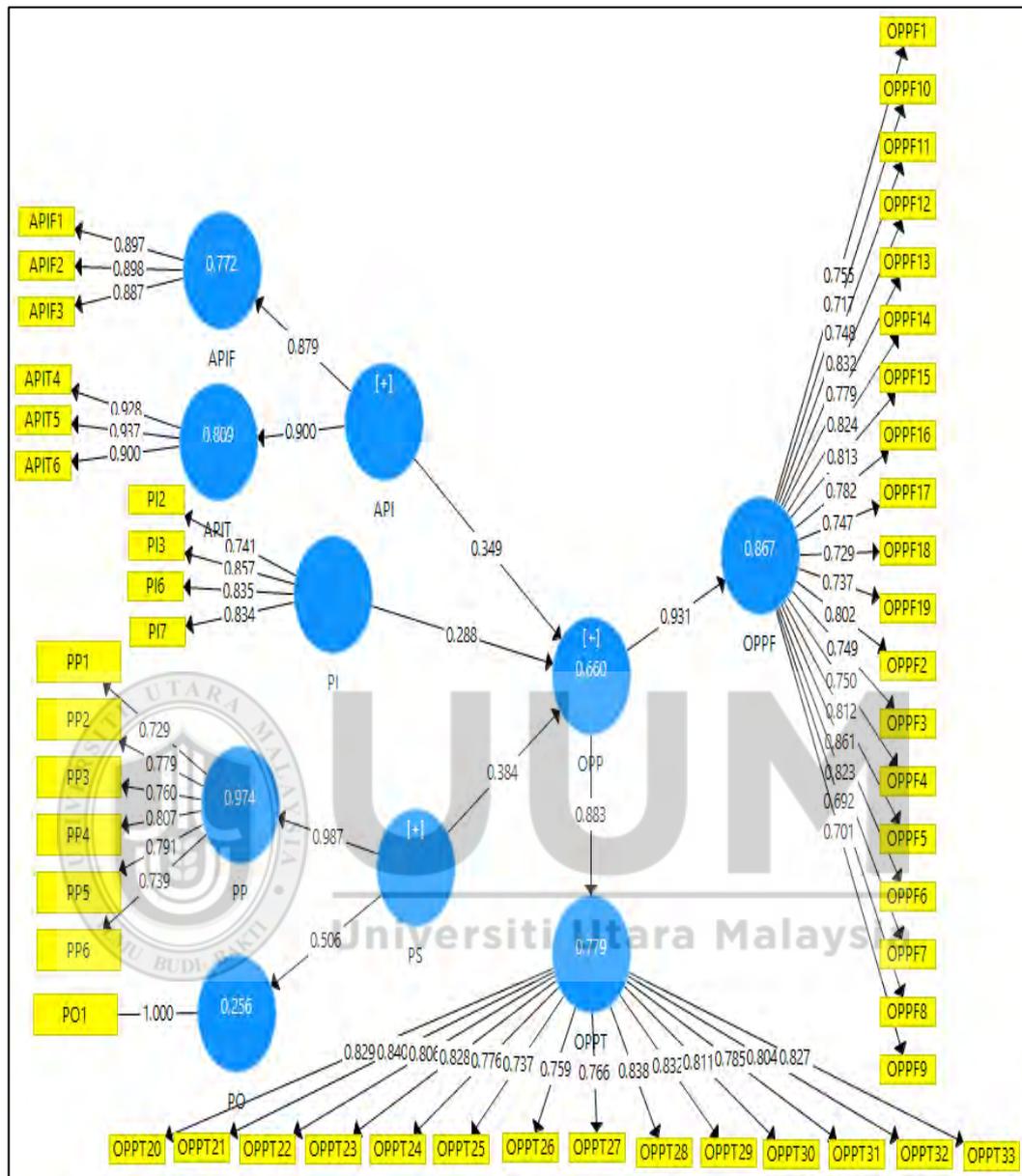


Figure 4.6. First Stage Hierarchical Construct Model (Nigeria)

4.6.3.1.1 Internal Consistency Reliability (Nigeria)

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient and composite reliability coefficient were used to examine the internal consistency reliability for this study. Composite reliability

coefficient should be at least 0.70. Table 4.20 shows the composite reliability coefficients of the latent constructs range from .890 to .972, with each exceeding the minimum acceptable level of 0.70. This indicates sufficient internal consistency reliability. The same can also be said for the Cronbach's alpha result with values ranging from .834 to .970.

4.6.3.1.2 Indicator Reliability (Nigeria)

The indicator reliability was assessed by examining the outer loadings of each construct's measure which should be 0.70 or higher (Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle & Mena, 2012). Hence four items (PI1, PI4, PI5, PI8) which presented loadings below 0.70 were deleted from the model. Hereafter, 50 indicators with factor loadings greater than 0.70 were retained in the model (See Figure 4.6).

4.6.3.1.3 Convergent Validity (Nigeria)

The convergent validity of this study was examined by the AVE of each latent construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The AVE of each latent construct should be at least 0.50 (Chin, 1998). The AVEs for this study as shown in Table 4.20 are all above 0.50, suggesting adequate convergent validity.

Table 4.20

AVE, Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (Nigeria)

Constructs	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
APIFT	0.652	0.893	0.918
PI	0.669	0.834	0.890
PS	0.529	0.847	0.885
OPPFT	0.511	0.970	0.972

4.6.3.1.4 Discriminant Validity (Nigeria)

Based on Fornell and Larcker's (1981) suggestion, discriminant validity was evaluated with the use of the AVE with a score of 0.50 or more. Also the square root of the AVE should be greater than correlations among latent constructs. Thus, as seen in Table 4.20, the values of AVE for Nigerian respondents are between .511 and .669, indicating acceptable values. In Table 4.21, the correlations among the latent constructs are compared to the square root of AVE (in bold face). The AVEs are all greater than the correlations among latent constructs, indicating sufficient discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 4.21

Discriminant Validity (Fornell Larcker Criterion) for First Stage Constructs (Nigeria)

Variables	APIF	APIT	OPPF	OPPT	PI	PO	PP
APIF	.894						
APIT	.582	.922					
OPPF	.549	.478	.773				
OPPT	.384	.612	.651	.803			
PI	.441	.412	.625	.549	.818		
PO	.146	.159	.297	.206	.346	Single Item	
PP	.294	.354	.615	.575	.485	.361	.768

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

Furthermore, discriminant validity was also determined by comparing the indicator loadings with other reflective indicators in the cross-loading table (Chin, 1998). Based on Chin's suggestion, all indicators (in bold) as seen in Table 4.22 are higher than the cross-loadings of other reflective indicators. This further indicates adequate discriminant validity. Table 4.22 shows the result of cross-loadings for the first-stage model for Nigerian data.

Table 4.22

Cross-Loadings for First Stage Items (Nigeria)

ITEM	APIF	APIT	OPPF	OPPT	PI	PO	PP
APIF1	.897	.503	.540	.371	.400	.142	.280
APIF2	.898	.514	.414	.301	.360	.135	.233
APIF3	.887	.544	.519	.359	.423	.116	.274
APIT4	.572	.928	.455	.553	.415	.201	.311
APIT5	.520	.937	.439	.599	.345	.102	.323
APIT6	.517	.900	.429	.540	.378	.134	.346
OPPF1	.466	.368	.755	.512	.558	.311	.539
OPPF10	.380	.257	.717	.391	.417	.215	.427
OPPF11	.506	.356	.748	.434	.481	.229	.410
OPPF12	.488	.443	.832	.534	.552	.236	.476
OPPF13	.399	.346	.779	.471	.485	.180	.419
OPPF14	.448	.395	.824	.495	.511	.252	.417
OPPF15	.434	.377	.813	.496	.497	.182	.449
OPPF16	.477	.355	.782	.485	.435	.151	.421
OPPF17	.519	.390	.747	.426	.431	.203	.414
OPPF18	.451	.412	.729	.474	.380	.236	.440
OPPF19	.403	.283	.737	.383	.423	.188	.413
OPPF2	.455	.396	.802	.552	.552	.237	.507
OPPF3	.356	.298	.749	.508	.486	.219	.518
OPPF4	.359	.428	.750	.672	.483	.308	.565
OPPF5	.387	.394	.812	.573	.525	.185	.532
OPPF6	.370	.346	.861	.552	.545	.273	.534
OPPF7	.411	.351	.823	.527	.541	.243	.589
OPPF8	.371	.367	.692	.423	.438	.275	.414
OPPF9	.401	.438	.701	.581	.399	.227	.504
OPPT20	.304	.517	.530	.829	.529	.149	.511
OPPT21	.364	.618	.580	.840	.539	.203	.514
OPPT22	.284	.504	.557	.806	.485	.190	.577
OPPT23	.292	.534	.593	.828	.474	.161	.474
OPPT24	.322	.466	.502	.776	.405	.146	.404
OPPT25	.294	.409	.502	.737	.413	.272	.436
OPPT26	.269	.360	.542	.759	.450	.146	.426
OPPT27	.298	.546	.444	.766	.431	.108	.401
OPPT28	.334	.555	.521	.838	.477	.170	.452

Table 4.22 Contd

OPPT29	.297	.496	.504	.832	.409	.139	.492
OPPT30	.294	.491	.536	.811	.451	.152	.464
OPPT31	.345	.521	.449	.785	.319	.166	.391
OPPT32	.300	.388	.485	.804	.333	.178	.481
OPPT33	.325	.463	.553	.827	.429	.139	.426
PI2	.263	.198	.428	.384	.741	.204	.387
PI3	.411	.347	.574	.454	.857	.303	.392
PI6	.319	.354	.512	.431	.835	.264	.415
PI7	.431	.424	.520	.515	.834	.347	.398
PO1	.146	.159	.297	.206	.346	Single Item	.361
PP1	.338	.381	.605	.508	.467	.317	.729
PP2	.204	.241	.471	.356	.405	.237	.779
PP3	.209	.236	.406	.427	.320	.242	.760
PP4	.129	.254	.367	.409	.324	.312	.807
PP5	.236	.264	.551	.526	.390	.257	.791
PP6	.243	.258	.439	.423	.332	.298	.739

4.6.3.2 Assessment of Second Stage Hierarchical Construct Model (Nigeria)

After the assessment of the first stage model for Nigeria, the second stage model was also assessed as shown in Figure 4.7 and Tables 4.23 and 4.24.

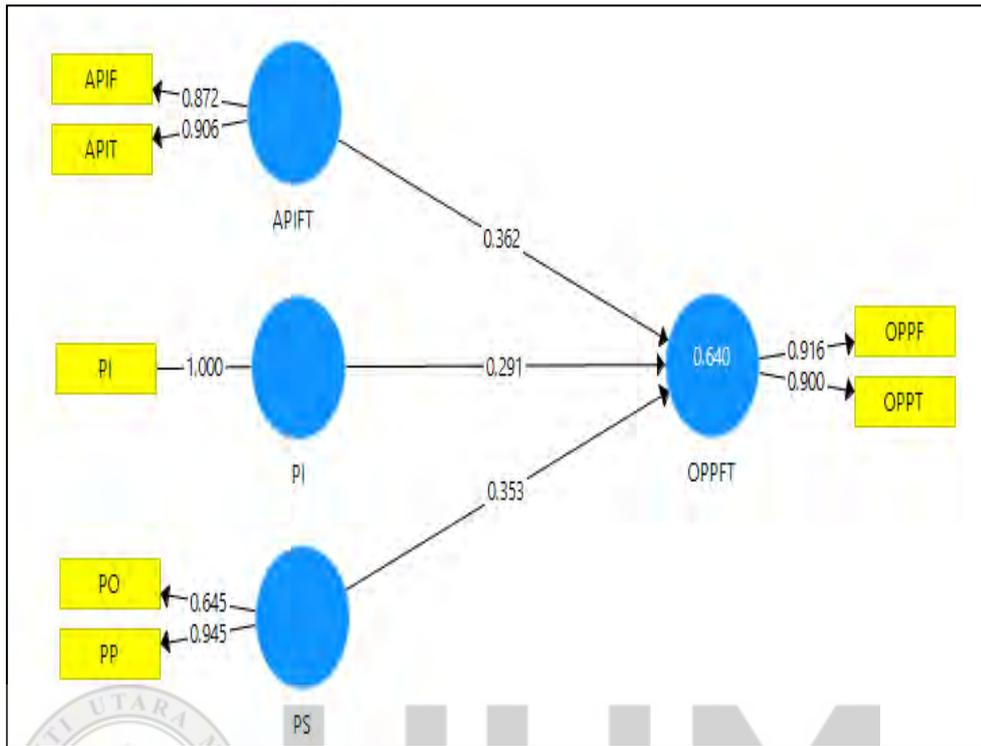


Figure 4.7. Second Stage Hierarchical Construct Model (Nigeria)

The second-stage model in Figure 4.7 shows the item loadings are within acceptable level as all are above 0.70, indicating sufficient indicator reliability. Furthermore, to determine the discriminant validity of the second-stage model, the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross-loadings of items were used as presented in Tables 4.23 and 4.24.

Table 4.23

Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion) for Second Stage Constructs (Nigeria)

	APIFT	OPPFT	PI	PS
APIFT	0.889			
OPPFT	0.628	0.908		
PI	0.479	0.647	1	
PS	0.36	0.634	0.518	0.809

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 4.24

Cross-loadings for Second Stage Items (Nigeria)

	APIFT	OPPFT	PI	PS
APIF	0.872	0.516	0.441	0.291
APIT	0.906	0.597	0.414	0.345
OPPF	0.574	0.916	0.625	0.607
OPPT	0.568	0.900	0.548	0.542
PI	0.479	0.647	1	0.518
PO	0.172	0.279	0.346	0.645
PP	0.365	0.655	0.484	0.945

4.6.3.3 Assessment of Structural Model (Nigeria)

The structural model for Nigeria was also assessed and the estimates are presented in

Table 4.25

Table 4.25

Structural Model Assessment (Nigeria)

	Relationship	Beta value	Std. Error	T value	p-Values	Findings
	Access to Political Information on Facebook and Twitter -> Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter	.362	.061	5.914	.000	Supported
H_{1a}						
	Political Interest -> Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter	.291	.066	4.430	.000	Supported
H_{2a}						
	Policy Satisfaction -> Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter	.353	.059	5.969	.000	Supported
H_{3a}						

Table 4.25 shows the result of the hypotheses testing for Nigerian respondents. Specifically, Hypothesis 1 predicted that access to political information on Facebook and Twitter is positively related to online political participation on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria. Results in Table 4.25 and Figure, 4.7 show a significant relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter ($\beta = .362$, $T = 5.914$, $p < 0.001$)

supporting Hypothesis 1. Similarly, Hypothesis 2 which predicted that political interest is positively related to online political participation on Facebook and Twitter is supported with the following values ($\beta = .291$, $T = 4.430$, $p < 0.001$). Likewise, Hypothesis 3 is also supported with the following values ($\beta = .353$, $T = 5.969$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that policy satisfaction is positively related to online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.

Furthermore, in assessing the structural model, coefficient of determination (R-Squared value) was used to assess the variance explained of the endogenous latent variable (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011; Henseler, 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-Squared value depends on the research context (Hair et al, 2010), Chin (1998) advised 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 0.640 (64%) (See Figure 4.7).

This suggests that three sets of exogenous latent variables (i.e., access to political information on Facebook and Twitter, political interest and policy satisfaction) collectively explain 64% of the variance of the endogenous variable, online political participation on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria. Hence, based on Chin's (1998)

suggestion, the endogenous latent variable of this study shows acceptable levels of R-Squared Value.

4.6.4 Assessment of Measurement Model (Malaysia)

The Malaysian first and second stage hierarchical construct models were also assessed to determine their fitness in terms of reliability and validity.

4.6.4.1 Assessment of First Stage Hierarchical Construct Model (Malaysia)

The first stage HCM was assessed for Malaysia as shown in Figure 4.8 and Tables 4.26 and 4.27.



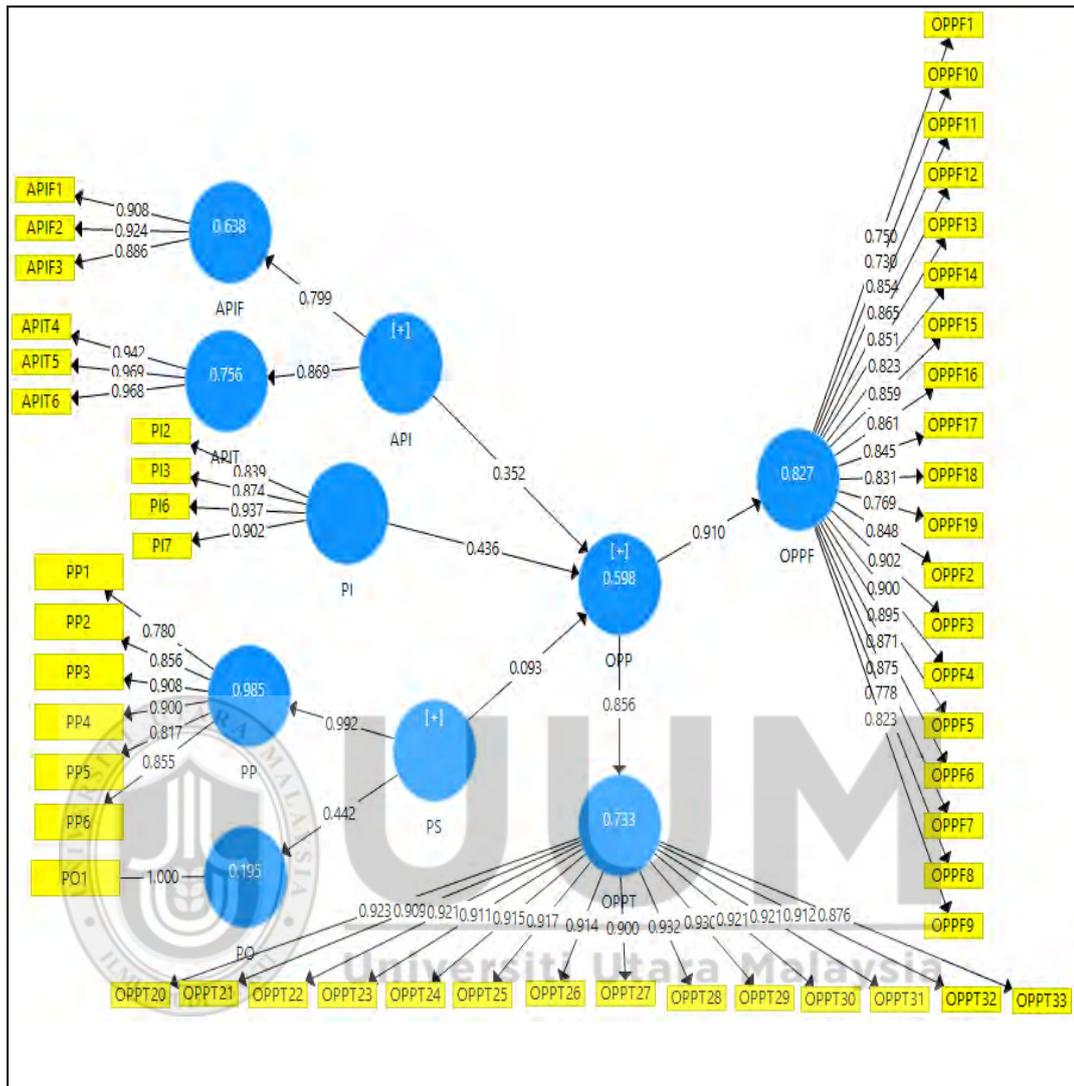


Figure 4.8. First Stage Hierarchical Construct Model (Malaysia)

4.6.4.1.1 Internal Consistency Reliability (Malaysia)

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's constructs (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010). Table 4.26 shows the composite reliability coefficients of the latent constructs for the Malaysian study ranges from .903 to .924, with each exceeding the minimum

acceptable level of 0.70. Also, the Cronbach's alpha is between 0.871 and 0.979, indicating sufficient internal consistency reliability (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011).

4.6.4.1.2 Indicator Reliability (Malaysia)

Additionally, indicator reliability was assessed by examining the outer loadings of each construct's 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, four items which were below the threshold of 0.708 were deleted while 50 items left were retained for this study (See Figure 4.8).

4.6.4.1.3 Convergent Validity (Malaysia)

Convergent validity was carried out by examining the AVE of each latent construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Since the AVE of each latent construct should be at least 0.50 (Chin, 1998), Table 4.26 shows the values of AVE for this study is between .595 and 7.90, indicating acceptable levels and suggesting adequate convergent validity.

Table 4.26

AVE, Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (Malaysia)

Constructs	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
APIFT	0.610	0.871	0.903
PI	0.790	0.911	0.938
PS	0.643	0.899	0.924
OPPFT	0.595	0.979	0.980

4.6.4.1.4 Discriminant Validity (Malaysia)

Furthermore, AVE was used to examine the discriminant validity of the study's 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 4.27, the correlations among the latent constructs are compared to the square root of AVE (in bold face). The AVE values are all greater than the correlations among latent constructs, indicating sufficient discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 4.27

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

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

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

Additionally, discriminant validity was determined by comparing the indicator loadings with other reflective indicators in the cross-loadings table to ensure that they are higher than other reflective loadings in the table (Chin, 1998). As can be seen in Table 4.28, indicator loadings (in bold) are higher than the cross-loadings, indicating adequate discriminant validity.

Table 4.28

Cross Loadings for First Stage Items (Malaysia)

ITEMS	APIF	APIT	OPPF	OPPT	PI	PO	PP
APIF1	.908	.321	.494	.166	.500	.131	.425
APIF2	.924	.407	.576	.295	.604	.189	.550
APIF3	.886	.349	.520	.195	.510	.122	.443
APIT4	.389	.942	.432	.648	.431	.231	.377
APIT5	.376	.969	.432	.613	.408	.191	.348
APIT6	.380	.968	.429	.624	.409	.238	.354
OPPF1	.508	.478	.750	.509	.722	.209	.656
OPPF10	.507	.321	.730	.491	.689	.013	.522
OPPF11	.477	.320	.854	.475	.574	.106	.451
OPPF12	.495	.345	.865	.442	.516	.040	.404
OPPF13	.473	.385	.851	.473	.507	.083	.396
OPPF14	.470	.329	.823	.458	.476	.104	.397
OPPF15	.442	.247	.859	.420	.528	.092	.451
OPPF16	.425	.333	.861	.475	.528	.082	.429
OPPF17	.365	.327	.845	.480	.556	.044	.389
OPPF18	.418	.318	.831	.444	.524	.076	.357
OPPF19	.472	.329	.769	.488	.530	.007	.377
OPPF2	.553	.359	.848	.422	.688	.180	.586
OPPF3	.588	.436	.902	.473	.722	.136	.593
OPPF4	.587	.418	.900	.470	.680	.142	.568
OPPF5	.553	.483	.895	.564	.708	.159	.591
OPPF6	.584	.456	.871	.476	.717	.171	.637
OPPF7	.523	.444	.875	.483	.684	.075	.573
OPPF8	.426	.412	.778	.478	.701	.132	.539
OPPF9	.469	.401	.823	.472	.668	.101	.562
OPPT20	.290	.638	.544	.923	.495	.220	.358
OPPT21	.246	.596	.553	.909	.510	.186	.382
OPPT22	.232	.610	.573	.921	.500	.179	.390
OPPT23	.242	.588	.573	.911	.501	.193	.363
OPPT24	.245	.581	.542	.915	.481	.183	.376
OPPT25	.209	.563	.556	.917	.495	.217	.375
OPPT26	.256	.631	.543	.914	.480	.182	.360
OPPT27	.225	.601	.496	.900	.456	.288	.368
OPPT28	.172	.604	.492	.932	.425	.242	.364

Table 4.28 Contd

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

Accordingly, results in Table 4.27 and Table 4.28 indicate validity is not an issue for the data collected from Malaysian respondents.

4.6.4.2 Assessment of Second Stage Hierarchical Construct Model (Malaysia)

The second stage model for Malaysia was also assessed as can be seen in Figure 4.9, Table 4.29 and 4.30. The results further indicate that reliability and validity are not an issue for the Malaysian part of this study.

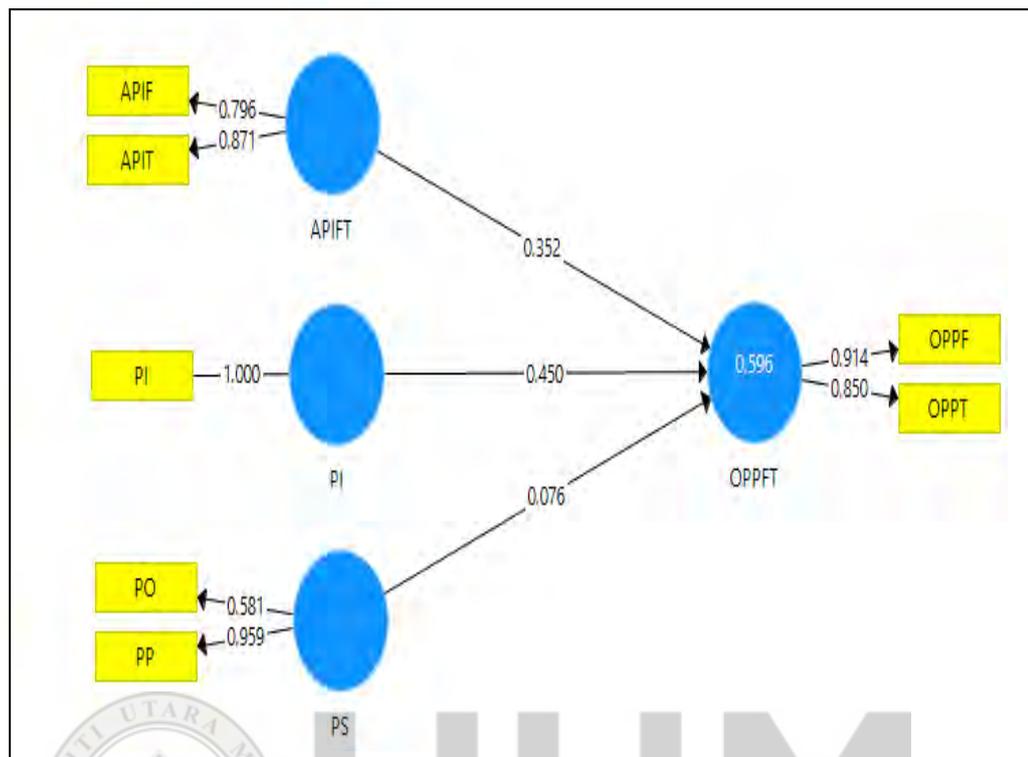


Figure 4.9. Second Stage Hierarchical Construct Model (Malaysia)

Item loadings in the second stage model in Figure 4.9 are all above the 0.70 threshold, indicating sufficient indicator reliability (Afthanorhan, 2013).

Table 4.29

Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion) for Second Stage Constructs (Malaysia)

Variable	APIFT	OPPFT	PI	PS
APIFT	0.834			
OPPFT	0.663	0.882		
PI	0.602	0.712	1	
PS	0.523	0.554	0.651	0.793

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.

Also, results of the Fornell-Larker criterion in Table 4.29 and cross-loadings in Table 4.30 indicate adequate discriminant validity. Thus, the conditions of reliability and validity are also met for the second stage model.

Table 4.30

Cross Loadings for Second Stage Construct (Malaysia)

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

4.6.4.3 Assessment of Structural Model (Malaysia)

The structural model for the Malaysian data was also assessed and estimated and a summary of results of the hypotheses testing is presented in Table 4.31.

Table 4.31

Structural Model Assessment (Malaysia)

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

Table 4.31 shows the result of the hypotheses testing for the Malaysian data. Specifically, Hypothesis 1 predicted that access to political information on Facebook and Twitter is positively related to online political participation on Facebook and Twitter. Results in Table 4.31 and Figure, 4.9 show a significant relationship between them. Likewise Hypothesis 2 which predicted that political interest is positively related to online political participation on Facebook and Twitter is supported. However, Hypothesis 3 is not supported because the low estimates of the path

coefficients indicate that policy satisfaction is not positively related to online political participation on Facebook and Twitter among Malaysian youth.

Furthermore, in assessing the structural model, coefficient of determination (R-Squared value) was used to explain the variance of the endogenous latent variable (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-Squared value depends on the research context (Hair et al, 2010), Chin (1998) advised 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 4.9), indicating 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 in Malaysia. Thus, based on Chin's recommendation, this indicates that the R-Squared value for this study is within acceptable levels.

4.7 Partial Least Squares Multi-Group Analysis (PLS-MGA)

Adopting the Henseler (2007) approach, SmartPLS 3 software was used to conduct a PLS-MGA for this study to enable the researcher to know the differences between

respondents in Nigeria and Malaysia, in terms of moderating relationships, and comparison of direct relationships between both countries. This was to see whether different parameter estimates occur for each group by examining the PLS path model to determine if there was a significant difference in the study relationships. It is important to note that to ensure parsimony, only second stage models were used to carry out the PLS-MGA analysis in this study (Wilson & Henseler, 2007). As a result, the sub-samples compared were exposed to separate bootstrap analysis and the bootstrap outcomes were used for the hypotheses test of group differences.

4.7.1 PLS-MGA to Test for Moderating Effect of Political Knowledge (Nigeria and Malaysia)

This section shows the results of testing the moderating relationships for combined (Nigeria and Malaysia combined) and individual country data (Nigeria and Malaysia separately) in this study. As can be seen in Figures 4.10 and 4.11, the categorical moderator of political knowledge, which is known *a priori*, requires that two separate models are estimated for the moderator relationships.

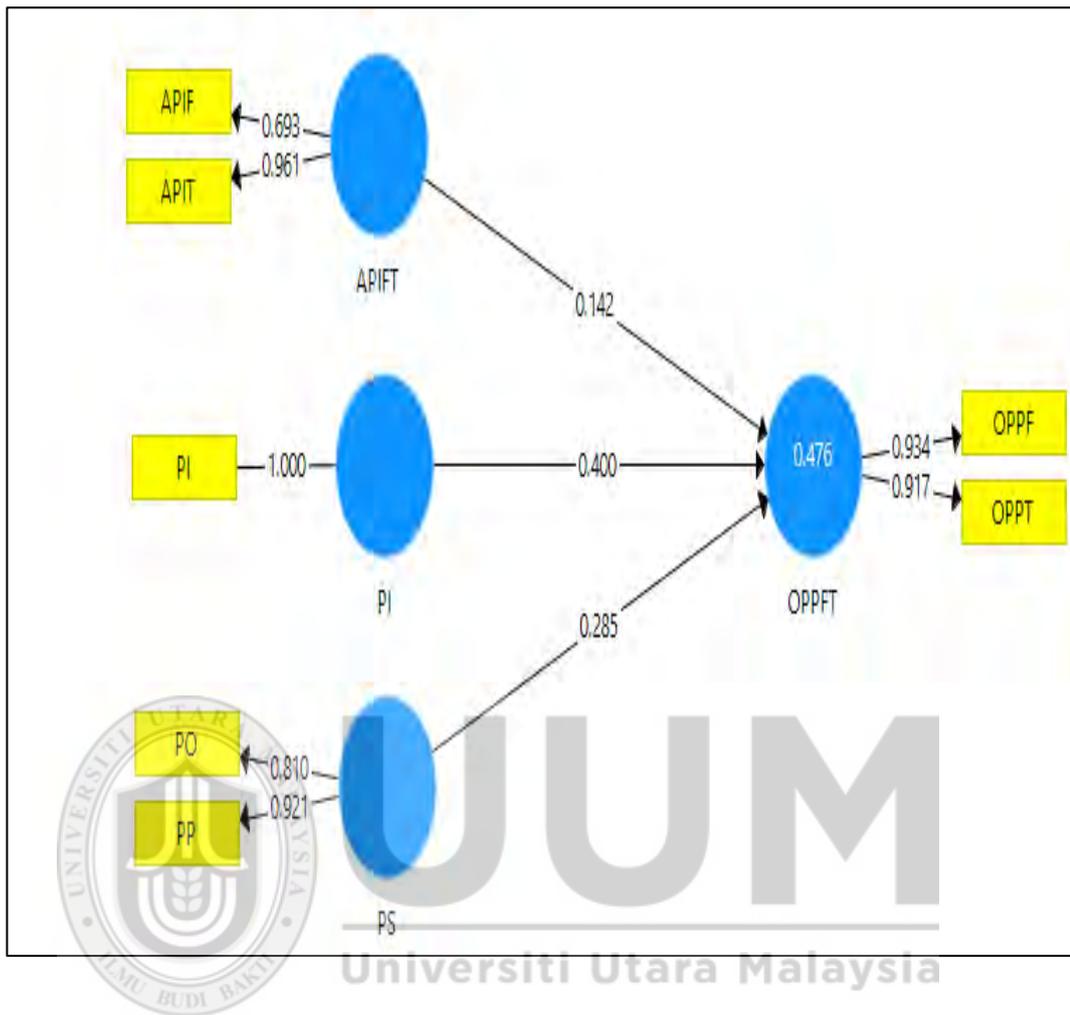


Figure 4.10. Second Stage Hierarchical Construct Model MGA for Respondents without Political Knowledge (Nigeria and Malaysia)

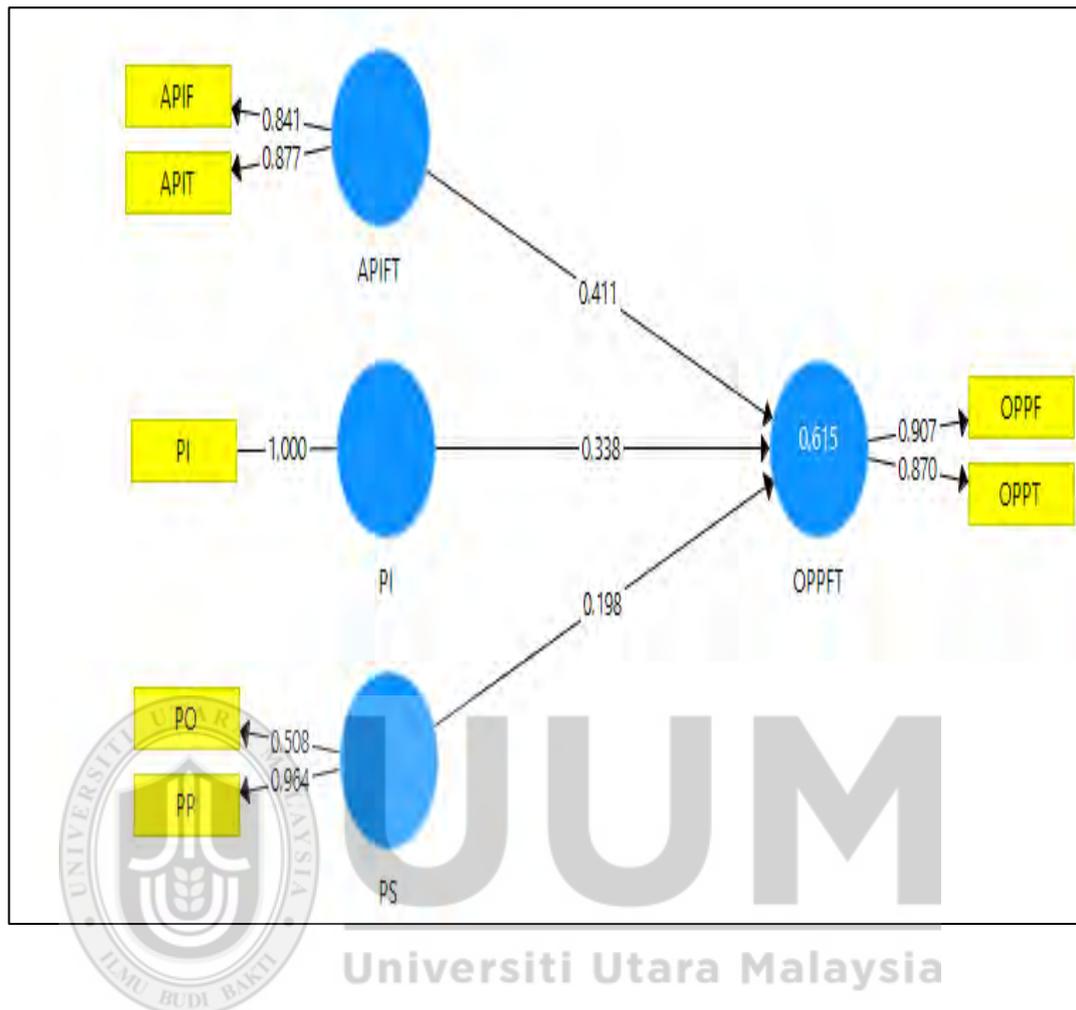


Figure 4.11. Second Stage Hierarchical Construct Model MGA for Respondents with Political Knowledge (Nigeria and Malaysia)

Results in Table 4.32 are based on comparison of bootstrap confidence intervals as a more conservative approach to PLS multigroup analysis (Henseler, 2012; Henseler, 2009; Rigdon, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2010). The sub-samples without political knowledge and those with political knowledge were first exposed to separate bootstrap analysis as can be seen in Figures 4.10 and 4.11, and then the bootstrap outcomes served as a basis for testing the potential group differences, the result of which can be seen in

Table 4.32. This comparison of group-specific effects was done because of the categorical moderator variable, political knowledge.

Table 4.32

PLS-MGA for Respondents Without or With Political Knowledge (Nigeria and Malaysia)

Relationship	Path Coefficients- diff (W/O PK Group1- W PK Group 2)	p-Value (W/O PK Group1- W PK Group 2)	Findings
APIFT -> OPPFT	.269	.996	Supported
PI -> OPPFT	.063	.294	Not supported
PS -> OPPFT	.087	.179	Not supported

*W/O PK- Without Political Knowledge
W PK- With Political Knowledge

The PLS-MGA result in Table 4.32 shows that there exist significance differences in respondents without political knowledge and those with political knowledge in terms of the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter ($\beta=.2.69, p> .95$). However, the same cannot be said for the relationship between political interest and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter ($\beta=.063, p>.01$) and policy satisfaction and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter ($\beta=.087, p > .01$). This is because there is no significant difference between those who do not have political knowledge and those who have political knowledge in terms of their relationship with these two exogenous variables.

This implies that for the general sample of this study (Nigeria and Malaysia), political knowledge adequately moderates the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter, but it does not moderate the relationship between political interest and policy satisfaction with online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.

4.7.2 PLS-MGA to Test for Moderating Effect of Political Knowledge (Nigeria)

PLS-MGA was conducted to evaluate for group differences between respondents without political knowledge and those with political knowledge in Nigeria as shown in Table 4.33. From the latent variable scores obtained from the second stage model for Nigeria, PLS-MGA was conducted to find out group differences in terms of the moderating effect between respondents who do not have political knowledge and those who have political knowledge in Nigeria (Wilson & Henseler, 2007).



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Table 4.33

PLS-MGA for Respondents Without or With Political Knowledge (Nigeria)

Relationship	Path Coefficients- diff	p-Value	Findings
	(W/O PK Group 1 – W PK Group 2)	(W/O PK Group 1 – W PK Group 2)	
APIFT -> OPPFT	.149	.906	Not Supported
PI -> OPPFT	.168	.849	Not Supported
PS -> OPPFT	.214	.037	Supported

*W/O PK- Without Political Knowledge

W PK- With Political Knowledge

Results in Table 4.33 indicate that for Nigerian respondents, the moderating effects of political knowledge for the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter ($\beta=.149$, $p>.01$) and political interest and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter ($\beta=.168$, $p>.01$) are not statistically significant. However, the moderating effect of political knowledge on the relationship between policy satisfaction and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter is statistically significant with the following parameters ($\beta=.214$, $p<.05$).

Hence, there is no significant difference between Nigerian respondents without political knowledge and those with political knowledge in terms of the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter. Likewise, there is no significant difference

between respondents without political knowledge and those with political knowledge in terms of the relationship between political interest and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter. However, there is significant difference between respondents without political knowledge and those with political knowledge in terms of the relationship between policy satisfaction and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.

4.7.3 PLS-MGA to Test for Moderating Effect of Political Knowledge (Malaysia)

PLS-MGA was carried out for Malaysian respondents to determine whether political knowledge moderates the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter, political interest and policy satisfaction with online political participation on Facebook and Twitter. Table 4.34 shows results of the group differences for respondents without political knowledge and those with political knowledge in terms of their moderating effect on the relationship between the exogenous variables and the endogenous variable.

Table 4.34

PLS-MGA for Respondents Without or With Political Knowledge (Malaysia)

Relationship	Path Coefficients- (W/O PK Group 1- W PK Group 2)	p-Value (W/O PK Group 1-W PK Group 2)	Findings
APIFT -> OPPFT	.373	.991	Supported
PI -> OPPFT	.344	.011	Supported
PS -> OPPFT	.039	.628	Not Supported

*W/O PK- Without Political Knowledge

W PK - With Political Knowledge

Table 4.34 specifies that the hypothesized relationship between the moderating relationship of political knowledge in terms of access to political information on Facebook and Twitter ($\beta=.991$, $p>.95$) and political interest ($\beta=.344$, $p<.10$) with online political participation on Facebook and Twitter, is significant. However, in the case of the moderating role of political knowledge on the relationship between policy satisfaction and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter, the path coefficient between the two sub-samples is not significant due the following parameters ($\beta=.039$, $p>.05$). This result suggests that the link between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and political interest with online political participation on Facebook and Twitter is moderated by political knowledge. However, the same cannot be said for the relationship between policy satisfaction and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.

4.7.4 PLS-MGA to Test for Comparative difference between Nigeria and Malaysia based on Exogenous and Endogenous Variables

As a result of differences in parameters for different sub-populations, in this study (Sarstedt, Henseler & Ringle, 2011), PLS-MGA was also conducted using the second stage model of both countries (see Figure 4.7 and 4.9) to find out the group differences between Nigeria and Malaysia in terms of the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter, political interest and policy satisfaction with online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.

Preceding this, the results of R-Squared (Nigeria 64% and Malaysia 59%) already show there is a difference between Nigeria and Malaysia in terms of cognitive engagement and online political participation. Additional differences from both countries were further revealed after conducting a PLS-MGA with data from both countries. Accordingly, following the Henseler's approach, the model in Figure 4.7 and Figure 4.9 was computed and the resulting path coefficient compared. Results of the PLS-MGA are presented in Table 4.35.

Table 4.35

PLS-MGA for Group Difference between Exogenous and Endogenous Variables between Nigeria and Malaysia

Relationship	Path Coefficients-		Findings
	Nigeria-	Malaysia	
		p-Value	
		Nigeria- Malaysia	
APIFT -> OPPFT	.010	.460	Not Supported
PI -> OPPFT	.159	.954	Supported
PS -> OPPFT	.277	.000	Supported

The association between political interest ($\beta=.159$, $p>.95$) and PS ($\beta=.277$, $p<.001$) with online political participation on Facebook and Twitter are significant for both countries but do not differ significantly for the association between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter ($\beta=.010$, $p>.01$). Evidently, there are significant differences across Nigeria and Malaysia in terms of the strength and direction of the relationship between political interest and policy satisfaction with online political participation on Facebook and Twitter but not between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.

4.8 Summary of Findings

Having presented all the results of the analysis of this study in the preceding sections, Table 4.36 summarizes the results of all hypotheses tested in this study. It shows that

14 of the formulated hypotheses for this study are supported while seven are not supported.

Table 4.36

Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Statement	Findings
H₁	Access to political information on Facebook and Twitter is positively related to online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria and Malaysia.	Supported
H_{1a}	Access to political information on Facebook and Twitter is positively related to online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria.	Supported
H_{1b}	Access to political information on Facebook and Twitter is positively related to online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Malaysia.	Supported
H₂	Political interest is positively related to online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria and Malaysia.	Supported
H_{2a}	Political interest is positively related to online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria.	Supported
H_{2b}	Political interest is positively related to online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Malaysia.	Supported
H₃	Policy satisfaction is positively related to online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria and Malaysia.	Supported
H_{3a}	Policy satisfaction is positively related to online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria.	Supported

H_{3b}	Policy satisfaction is positively related to online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Malaysia.	Not Supported
H₄	There is significant difference between Nigerian and Malaysian youth who have political knowledge and those who do not have political knowledge in terms of the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.	Supported
H_{4a}	There is significant difference between Nigerian youth who have political knowledge and those who do not have political knowledge in terms of the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.	Not Supported
H_{4b}	There is significant difference between Malaysian youth who have political knowledge and those who do not have political knowledge in terms of the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.	Supported
H₅	There is significant difference between Nigerian and Malaysian youth who have political knowledge and those who do not have political knowledge in terms of the relationship between political interest and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.	Not Supported
H_{5a}	There is significant difference between Nigerian youth who have political knowledge and those who do not have political knowledge in terms of the relationship between political interest and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.	Not Supported
H_{5b}	There is significant difference between Malaysian youth who have political knowledge and those who do not have political knowledge in terms of the relationship between political interest and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.	Supported

H₆	There is significant difference between Nigerian and Malaysian youth who have political knowledge and those who do not have political knowledge in terms of the relationship between policy satisfaction and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.	Not Supported
H_{6a}	There is significant difference between Nigerian youth who have political knowledge and those who do not have political knowledge in terms of the relationship between policy satisfaction and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.	Supported
H_{6b}	There is significant difference between Malaysian youth who have political knowledge and those who do not have political knowledge in terms of the relationship between policy satisfaction and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.	Not Supported
H₇	There is significant difference between youth in Nigeria and youth in Malaysia in terms of the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.	Not Supported
H₈	There is significant difference between youth in Nigeria and youth in Malaysia in terms of the relationship between political interest and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.	Supported
H₉	There is significant difference between youth in Nigeria and youth in Malaysia in terms of the relationship between policy satisfaction and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.	Supported

4.9 Post Hoc G*Power Analysis

To determine the effect size and prove the significance of the results of this study, a post-hoc analysis was carried out (See Figure 4.12). This was done by using G*Power

3.1.7 software with the following parameters: power ($1-\beta$ err prob; 0.95), an alpha significance level (α err prob; 0.05), medium effect size f^2 (0.15) and three main predictor variables (access to political information on Facebook and Twitter, political interest, policy satisfaction) and a sample of 369 (Faul et al., 2007; 2009).

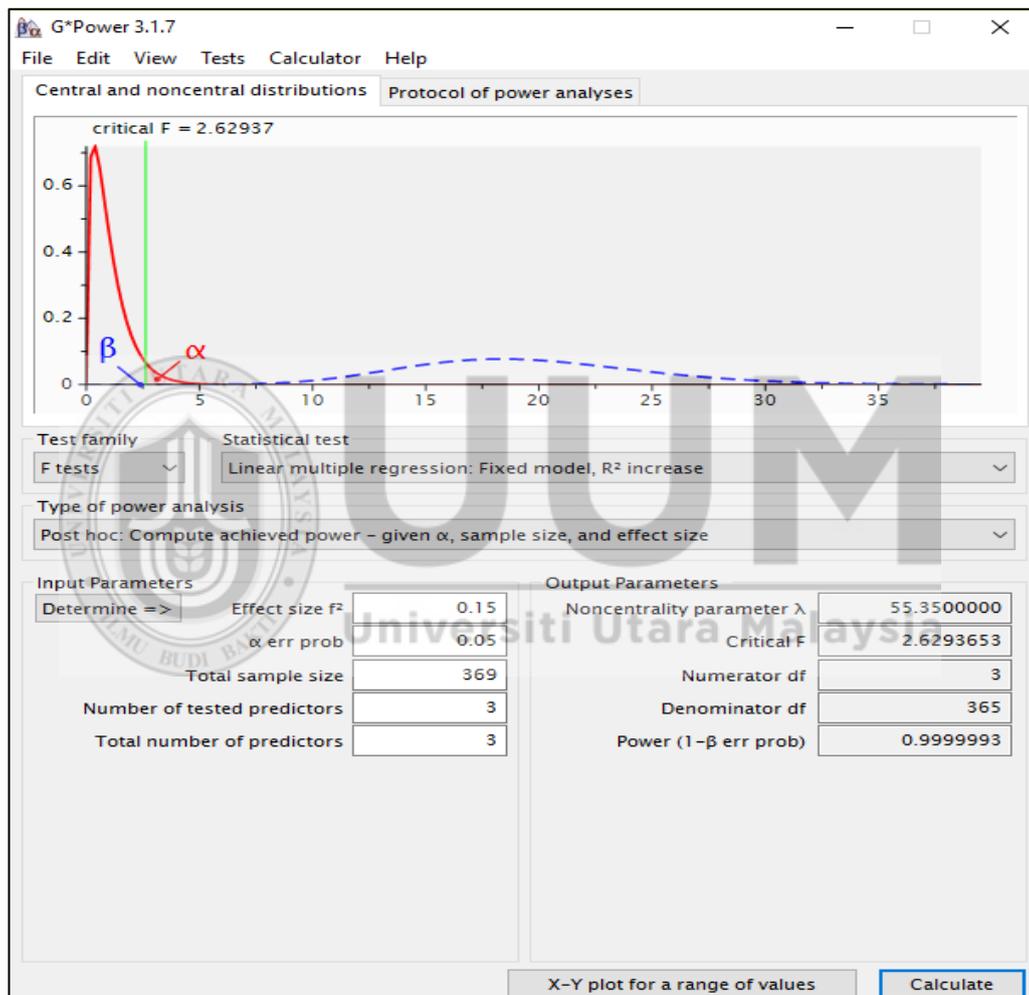


Figure 4.12. Output of Post-Hoc Power Analysis.

Since Faul et al. (2007, 2009) recommended that G*Power value of above 0.80 is sufficient, the results of the post-hoc power analysis indicated a statistical power of 0.99, which is above .80. This indicates the effect size of this study is adequate and the results of this study are significant.

4.10 Chapter Summary

An exploratory data analysis was first carried out through data screening and preliminary analysis to determine if the data collected was fit for further PLS analysis. Following this, an assessment of the significance of the path coefficients is presented. Specifically, the combined models and individual models for Nigeria and Malaysia were assessed. Also, results of various PLS-MGA analysis for the study's moderator and country differences are presented, after which a post hoc G*power analysis was conducted to determine the significance of the study's results. Generally, of the 21 hypothesis formulated for this study, 14 are significant and seven are not significant.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a detailed discussion of findings of this study by relating them to theoretical perspectives and previous studies on media and political participation. Specifically, a review of the findings of this study is outlined, while discussion about the findings in relation to the underpinning theory and related studies are examined. Additionally, theoretical, methodological and practical implications of the study are discussed, after which limitations of the study and recommendations for future studies are highlighted. Lastly, a conclusion for the study is drawn.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The main objective of this study is to investigate and compare the relationship between cognitive engagement and online political participation among youth in Nigeria and Malaysia. Additionally, the moderating effect of Political Knowledge (PK) on the relationship between features of cognitive engagement [Access to Political Information on Facebook and Twitter (APIF), Political Interest (PI), Policy Satisfaction (PS)] and Online Political Participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter (OPPFT) in Nigeria and Malaysia are examined.

Consequently, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent does access to political information on Facebook and Twitter influence online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria and Malaysia combined and each country individually?
2. To what extent does political interest influence online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria and Malaysia combined and each country individually?
3. To what extent does policy satisfaction influence online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria and Malaysia combined and each country individually?
4. Does political knowledge moderate the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter, political interest, policy satisfaction and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter among youth in Nigeria and Malaysia combined and each country individually?
5. Is there a significant difference between Nigerian and Malaysian youth in terms of the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter, political interest and policy satisfaction with online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter?

In view of these research questions, in terms of the direct relationship between the exogenous and endogenous variables, the findings of this study indicate that eight of the nine formulated hypothesis are supported. Precisely, the results of the PLS-SEM analysis show that access to political information on Facebook and Twitter is positively and significantly related to online political participation on Facebook and

Twitter both in the case of the combined respondents and also the Nigerian and Malaysian respondents separately. Similarly, political interest is also found to be positively related to online political participation on Facebook and Twitter in terms of combined respondents and Nigerian and Malaysian respondents separately. However, policy satisfaction is positively related to online political participation on Facebook and Twitter only in the case of the combined respondents and Nigerian respondents, but not for Malaysian respondents.

Furthermore, in testing for moderating relationships in this study, results of the PLS-MGA indicate varying results both in terms of significant and non-significant relationships. In some cases, the hypotheses formulated for this study are supported while others are not. Specifically, with regards to political knowledge as a moderator on the relationship between the exogenous and endogenous variables, results provide empirical support for four of the nine hypotheses.

Explicitly, political knowledge is found to moderate the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter for the combined respondents and the Malaysian respondents as there is a significant difference between those who do not have political knowledge and those who have political knowledge. But it is not found to moderate the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter for Nigerian respondents,

because there is no significant difference between those who do not have political knowledge and those who have political knowledge.

Additionally, the results of this study also reveal that political knowledge does not moderate the relationship between political interest and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter for the combined respondents and the Nigerian respondents, as there are no significant differences between those who do not have political knowledge and those who have political knowledge. However, it moderates the relationship between political interest and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter for the Malaysian population since it is evident that there is significant difference between those who do not have political knowledge and those who have political knowledge in Malaysia.

Also, political knowledge is not found to moderate the relationship between policy satisfaction and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter for the combined respondents and the Malaysian respondents because there are no significant differences between those who do not have political knowledge and those who do, but it moderates the relationship between policy satisfaction and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter for the Nigerian respondents because there is a significant difference between those who do not have political knowledge and those who do.

Results further show that in terms of comparing the direct relationship of the two countries, there is no significant difference between Nigerian and Malaysian respondents regarding the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter. However, there is significant difference in the relationship between political interest, policy satisfaction with online political participation on Facebook and Twitter between Nigerian and Malaysian respondents.

5.3 Discussion

This section presents a detailed discussion on the findings of this study in relation to the theoretical framework and previous studies. The sub-headings of the discussion in this section are structured according to the research questions and objectives of this study.

5.3.1 The Influence of Access to Political Information on Facebook and Twitter on Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter

The first research question is on how access to political information on Facebook and Twitter influences online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria and Malaysia combined and each country individually. In line with this question, the first objective of this study is to determine the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria and Malaysia combined, and each country individually.

5.3.1.1 Access to Political Information on Facebook and Twitter and Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter

According to scholars (Calenda & Meijer, 2009; Dimitrova et al., 2014; Fraile, 2011 Grönlund & Wakabi 2015; Tolbert & McNeal, 2003), access to political information leads to political participation. Thus, this study hypothesized that access to political information on Facebook and Twitter is positively related to online political participation on Facebook and Twitter among youth in Nigeria and Malaysia. Therefore, research Hypothesis 1, 1_a and 1_b were formulated and tested using the PLS-SEM analysis.

In line with Hypotheses 1, 1_a and 1_b results show a significantly positive relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter. This indicates that when youth have access to political information on Facebook and Twitter, they are more likely to participate in various political participation activities on Facebook and Twitter. These findings are in line with the CET (Inglehart, 1997) which states that the more individuals consume media content, the more they participate in politics.

Furthermore, the positive relationship between access to information and political participation in Hypotheses 1, 1_a and 1_b is consistent with the findings of previous studies (Bah, 2004; Engesser & Franzetti, 2011; Gil De Zuniga, Molyneux & Zheng, 2014; Moy et al., 2005; Odunlami, 2014; Olabamiji, 2014; Potgieter, 2013; Teng, 2012; Verba et al., 1995; Wojcieszak, 2012). Their studies have shown over time 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 youth in politics.

Furthermore, findings of this study are in line with Salawu (2013) who noted that due to greater access to information in Nigeria, there is increased political participation. Similarly, in a survey of 312 Nigerian students in Malaysia, Mustapha and Wok (2014) found that there is a positive relationship between online news source and political participation.

Equally, the above findings are congruent with that of Vacari et al. (2015) who discovered that the more Italians consume political information and express themselves politically on social media, the more they engage in more demanding online political participation activities. Bachmann and Gil de Zuniga (2013) also found a positive relationship between online media and political participation in the US. Likewise, in a study of Belgian youth by Quintelier and Vissers (2008), they reported access to information is positively related to political participation among this demographic group. Also, in Germany, Tumasjan et al. (2010) discovered that the association between social media access and political participation of youth is positive. Furthermore, social media played a large role in the Egyptian uprising as youth

effectively used it as a political mobilization tool (Groshek, 2012; Ogunlesi, 2013; Porter & Hellsten, 2014; Titus-Fannie, Akpan & Tarnongo 2013).

Consequently, results of this study which indicate that the more Nigerian and Malaysian youth have access to information on social media, the more they participate in politics, are in line with findings of previous studies in different countries.

5.3.2 The Influence of Political Interest on Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter

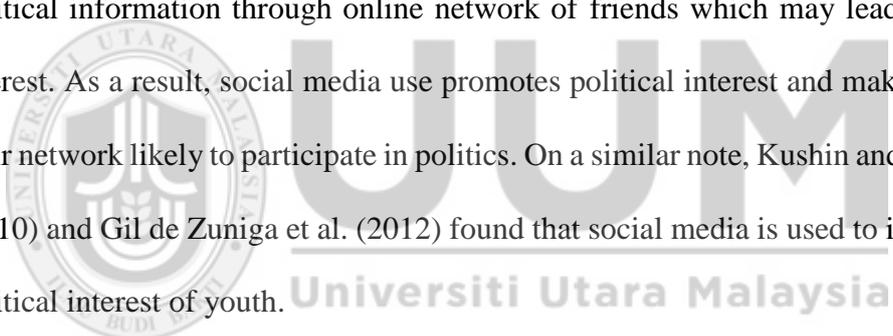
The second research question is to know to what extent political interest influences online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria and Malaysia combined and each country individually. To answer this research question, the second objective of this study is to assess the relationship between political interest and online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria and Malaysia as a whole, and each country individually.

5.3.2.1 Political Interest and Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter

Political participation is driven by interest in politics (Hur & Kwon, 2014). Consequently, scholars (Carlisle & Patton, 2013; Verba, Scholzman & Brady, 1995) have found that political interest has a positive effect on political participation. Based on these assertions, Hypotheses 2, 2_a, 2_b were formulated and tested using PLS-SEM analysis.

In line with the findings of the scholars above, results of this study also indicate that political interest is positively related to online political participation on Facebook and Twitter. Specifically, Carlisle and Patton (2013) found 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 has the strongest impact.

Similarly, Bae, (2014) and Sheppard (2012) found that social media positively influences political interest and subsequently, political participation. Youth get political information through online network of friends which may lead to political interest. As a result, social media use promotes political interest and makes people in their network likely to participate in politics. On a similar note, Kushin and Yamamoto (2010) and Gil de Zuniga et al. (2012) found that social media is used to influence the political interest of youth.



Thus, results of this study that the more Nigerian and Malaysian youth develop an interest in politics via social media, the more they participate in politics through it has support from the findings of other studies.

5.3.3 The Influence of Policy Satisfaction on Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter

The third research question concerns the extent to which policy satisfaction influences online political participation of youth in Nigeria and Malaysia combined and each country individually. To this end, the third research objective of this study is to examine the relationship between policy satisfaction and online political participation of youth in Nigeria and Malaysia as a whole, and each country individually.

5.3.3.1 Policy Satisfaction and Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter

Policy satisfaction entails policy-making processes and policy outcomes (Whiteley et al., 2013). As a result, the more citizens are involved in the process of policy-making, especially with the help of technology, the fairer the processes become; and the more the citizens are satisfied with the outcomes, the more they participate in politics. Pandian (2014a) noted that policy satisfaction is related to political participation. As a result, Hypothesis 3, 3_a, 3_b were formulated and tested using PLS-SEM analysis. Results of the analysis reveal mixed results as just two of the three hypothesis are supported.

Specifically, results for the combined respondents and Nigerian respondents support the formulated hypotheses because they indicate that policy satisfaction is positively related to online political participation on Facebook and Twitter. This is congruent with the findings of Vincente and Novo (2014) who indicated that there is a link

between political participation and citizens' policy satisfaction. Additionally, the fact that Nigerian respondents recorded significant relationship could be attributed to the fact that the Nigerian government provides for citizens' to make suggestions to contribute to policy formulation through social media, even if in most cases, the ideas of citizens are not implemented. However, this does not take away the fact that citizens feel a sense of belonging, thus propelling them to participate in politics.

Nevertheless, the result from Malaysian respondents which does not support the formulated hypothesis that policy satisfaction leads to online political participation also finds support with the statement of Campbell (2003) who noted that the influence of policies on political participation could be negative and this could foster non-participation. Moreover, Pandian (2014b), in a study of university students in Malaysia, noted that students are now critical of the government and are aware of some government policies pertaining to the welfare of the general Malaysian population which are unpopular. Perhaps, this may explain why the issue of their policy satisfaction does not lead to online political participation. Furthermore, lack of trust in messages passed by mainstream media in Malaysia has made alternative media sources, like social media, shape students perception of government policies in Malaysia. A case in point is the openly negative perception students have on the issue of the government tackling corruption in Malaysia. These negative perceptions could trigger non-participation in politics among youth who feel left out of the democratic process.

5.3.4 Moderating Effect of Political Knowledge

The fourth research question seeks to know if political knowledge moderates the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter, political interest and policy satisfaction with online political participation on Facebook and Twitter among youth in Nigeria and Malaysia combined and each country individually. The corresponding objective is to analyze the moderating effect of political knowledge on the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter, political interest and policy satisfaction with online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria and Malaysia combined and each country individually.

5.3.4.1 Moderating Effect of Political Knowledge on the relationship between Access to Political Information on Facebook and Twitter and Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria and Malaysia

Political knowledge is proposed as a moderator in the relationship between the exogenous and endogenous variables, both on a combined level and at the individual country level. This is because media is one of the major channels of political learning; hence it plays an important role in facilitating political participation (Banducci et al., 2009; Pasek, Kenski, Romer & Jamieson, 2006; Teng, 2012).

Similarly, Boulianne (2015) noted that social media is expected to increase citizens' political knowledge, which in turn, can lead to participation. Inherently, those who are more knowledgeable about politics are more likely to participate politically. Thus, it

has been discovered that the more knowledgeable citizens are, the more their political judgement can be distinguished from those of citizens who are not as knowledgeable politically. Therefore, citizens' participation depends on their access to information on social media, and this information is what eventually leads to knowledge that is useful to make informed political choices.

Based on the above discussion, three hypotheses (4, 4_a, 4_b) were proposed and tested using PLS-MGA analysis. Results of the analysis show varied results as some of the hypotheses are supported while others are not.

Generally, for the combined respondents and Nigerian respondents, Hypothesis 4 and 4_b are supported as there is a significant difference between respondents who do not have political knowledge and those who have political knowledge in terms of the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter. However, Hypothesis 4_a is not supported because there is no significant difference between respondents who do not have political knowledge and those who have political knowledge in terms of the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria.

Thus, result of Hypotheses 4 and 4_b which states that there is significant difference between respondents who do not have political knowledge and those who do in terms

of the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter, is in congruence with Valenzuela (2013) who found that frequent access to information is positively related to political participation because it increases users' political knowledge, which motivates participation. In searching for news on social media, knowledge can be acquired, thus increasing the probability for political participation.

Nonetheless, the result of Hypothesis 4_a which indicates that there is no significant difference between Nigerian youth without political knowledge and those with political knowledge in terms of the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter, also finds support in some literature. For example Fraile (2011) noted that that low quality of information provided by media decreases citizens' political knowledge which eventually affects participation.

Furthermore, Pattie, Seyd and Whiteley (2004), in highlighting a criticism of the CET, stated that as a choice-based theory that involves information processing, it does not take cognizance of the fact that citizens might decide not to act on political information once they have acquired it, especially with the absence of incentives. Furthermore, it is still unclear as to why knowledgeable people should be willing to act on media information once they have it.

Hence, it can be deduced that in as much as political knowledge can support access to political information on Facebook and Twitter in its role in propelling youth to participate in politics on Facebook and Twitter, the reverse could also be the case.

5.3.4.2 Moderating Effect of Political Knowledge on the relationship between Political Interest and Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria and Malaysia

According to Rahmawati (2014), political information on social media needs to be screened and contextualized before it can become political knowledge because the more knowledgeable youth are, the more likely they will be to be interested in politics.

Also, political participation does not just take place naturally but has to be learned, and for learning to take place, it has to be backed by motivation in the form of political interest. Thus, it is proposed that political interest alone cannot lead to political participation; political knowledge helps in this respect.

This assertion led to the formulation of Hypotheses 5, 5_a, and 5_b. The hypotheses proposed that political knowledge moderates the relationship between political interest and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter. However, results from the PLS-MGA analysis indicate that political knowledge does not moderate the relationship between political interest and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter for the combined respondents and Nigerian respondents; however it does for Malaysian respondents. This means that there is no significant difference between respondents who do not have political knowledge and those who have political

knowledge in terms of the relationship between political interest and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter for the combined respondents and Nigerian respondents, but there is a significant difference between those who do not have political knowledge and those who do in terms of the relationship between political interest and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter for Malaysian respondents.

Hence, the hypotheses that are not supported are in line with the statement of Pattie, Seyd and Whiteley (2004) that more knowledgeable citizens may have better cognitive ability but it cannot be directly translated into an automatic interest in politics which will lead to participation. Thus, even if individuals are well educated and politically interested, they may still need some resources or incentives for participation. On the other hand, the hypothesis that supports the statement that political knowledge moderates the relationship between political interest and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter, is consistent with the findings of Charles (2010) who noted that political participation is associated with an individual's political interest and political knowledge.

5.3.4.3 Moderating Effect of Political Knowledge on the relationship between Policy Satisfaction and Online Political Participation on Facebook and Twitter in Malaysia

Policies are not made unilaterally in a society but rather after wide consultations with stakeholders (Boubacar, 2005). Thus, participation of citizens in policy-making is

imperative in a democracy. It is through this participation that they communicate information regarding policy preferences and their concern to policy-makers (Potgieter, 2013; Verba et al., 1995). With this, power is expressed through political participation as citizens put pressure on leaders to make policies that will benefit them (Sani, 2014). To this end, Pattie, Seyd and Whiteley (2003) noted that media provides citizens with knowledge on how the system works and also policy information. Whiteley, Clarke, Sanders and Steward (2013) asserted that media plays a role in transferring information which leads to knowledge about the policy processes and policy outcomes to citizens. Hence, based on this assertion, Hypotheses 6, 6_a, 6_b were proposed and tested with PLS-MGA analysis.

Results show that there is no significant difference between respondents who do not have political knowledge and those who do in terms of the relationship between policy satisfaction and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter for the combined respondents and the Malaysian respondents, while there is a significant difference between Nigerian respondents who do not have political knowledge and those who do in terms of the relationship between policy satisfaction and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter. Hence, Hypotheses 6 and 6_b are not supported while Hypothesis 6_a is supported.

Thus, the hypotheses that are not supported are in line with the statement of Pattie, Seyd and Whiteley (2004) who noted that cognitively engaged citizens are individuals, who, if are not satisfied with government policies based on their political knowledge,

would decide not to participate in politics. Conversely, the hypothesis that is supported is in line with Eyo (2013) who noted that the media must be an enlightened purveyor of policy knowledge by providing credible knowledge-based reportage so that citizens can have the necessary tools to ensure government provides positive policy delivery (Eyo, 2013). Therefore, political knowledge entails the understanding of youth of the way the democratic system of their respective countries works, while policy satisfaction is about policy information and involvement in the policy-making processes which are relevant to making a decision about participation (Whiteley, 2005).

5.3.5 Difference between Nigerian and Malaysian Youth in terms of the Relationship between the Exogenous Variables and the Endogenous Variable

The fifth research question is to find out the differences between Nigerian and Malaysian youth in terms of the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter, political interest, policy satisfaction and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter. Hence, the research objective is to investigate the differences between Nigerian and Malaysian youth in terms of the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter, political interest and policy satisfaction with online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.

5.3.5.1 Comparison of the Relationship between the Exogenous Variables and the Endogenous Variable

Due to the cross-national comparative nature of this study, a comparison of the differences in the relationship between the exogenous and endogenous variables in Nigeria and Malaysia were investigated in terms of group differences with three hypotheses. Hypotheses 7, 8 and 9 were formulated and tested using PLS-MGA analysis.

Results show that there is no significant difference between Nigerian and Malaysian youth in terms of the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter. However, there is a significant difference between youth from both countries in terms of the relationship between political interest and policy satisfaction with online political participation on Facebook and Twitter. This implies that Hypothesis 7 is not supported, while Hypotheses 8 and 9 are supported.

This result indicates that there is a difference between Nigerian and Malaysian youth in terms of the relationship between political interest and policy satisfaction with online political participation on Facebook and Twitter, while in terms of the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter, youth from both countries almost have the same level of access to information on Facebook and Twitter which also translates into their political participation on Facebook and Twitter.

5.4 Implications of the Study

This study is necessitated by research gaps from previous research, both in terms of empirical and theoretical gaps identified in literature. This research is explained from the perspective of the CET (Inglehart, 1977; Dalton, 1984). This study also introduces political knowledge as a moderating categorical variable to better explain the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter, political interest, policy satisfaction and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter. Hence, based on the findings and discussions from this study, several theoretical, practical and methodological contributions are made.

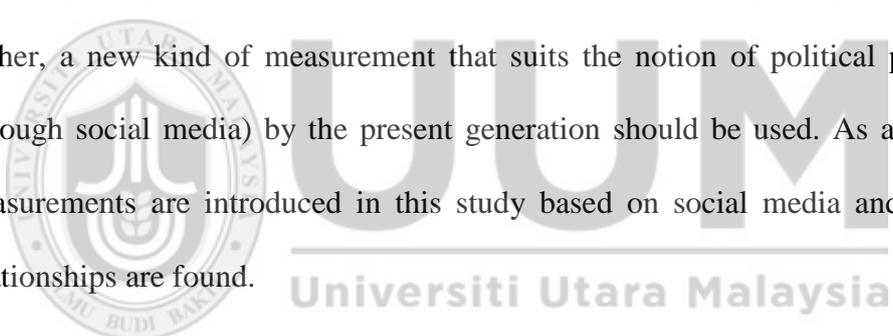
5.4.1 Theoretical Implication

This research contributes to modeling of the relationship between access to information, political interest, policy satisfaction and political knowledge with political participation. Specifically, these relationships are modeled from the perspectives of social media, with particular reference to Facebook and Twitter.

This study provides further empirical evidence in relation to the CET. The theory proposes that in an offline setting, individuals with more access to information, political interest, political knowledge and policy satisfaction, participate more in politics. Hence, rather than focus on the offline version of these variables, this study extends the theory to the online version, specifically in relation to social media, especially Facebook and Twitter. As a result, the CET is used by investigating a broad

range of online political activities. The extension of the theory is important because limiting research to offline forms of political participation will not adequately capture political participation in this digital age, especially among the youth.

Another premise for extending the theory is based on scholars' arguments about political participation of youth. These arguments have led to two perspectives of engagement of youth in politics: participation and non-participation (Bennet, 2008). Consequently, David (2013) recommended a way out of these arguments is that subsequent studies on new media and political participation should not measure political participation of youth with traditional forms of online participation (Internet). Rather, a new kind of measurement that suits the notion of political participation (through social media) by the present generation should be used. As a result, new measurements are introduced in this study based on social media and significant relationships are found.



Additionally, political knowledge which is theorized as having a direct relationship with political participation in the CET is introduced in this study as a moderator. This is particularly important because some researchers have noted that access to information, political interest, and political satisfaction alone might not be strong enough to have a direct and positively significant effect on political participation (Pattie, Seyd & Whiteley, 2004), hence prompting the need to include a moderator in this study. Thus, the moderator was analyzed by testing for group differences between

youth without political knowledge and those with political knowledge. In doing so, this study reveals that in some cases, there are significant differences between the two groups, while in others, there are not. Hence, both the significant and non-significant results have support from theory and previous studies. Therefore, although this study did not find significant relationships on all levels in terms of the moderating role of political knowledge between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter, political interest and policy satisfaction and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter, overall, it provides insights into the significant role political knowledge plays in online political participation on social media in Nigeria and Malaysia.

Consequently, additional theoretical contributions are made on the significant moderating role of political knowledge as this study also provides empirical evidence of its role in the relationship between the exogenous and endogenous variables. Thus, it is evident that political knowledge does have a role to play in online political participation on Facebook and Twitter among youth in Nigeria and Malaysia, making it an important variable in explaining online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter in Nigeria and Malaysia. Therefore, this study further adds empirical evidence to the body of knowledge in the area of political knowledge, such that results from this study could serve as a basis for future studies on social media and online political participation.

Furthermore, this study contributes to literature on comparative studies in the area of media and political participation in both Nigeria and Malaysia, especially with specific reference to social media and online political participation.

5.4.2 Practical Implication

This study provides some practical implications with regards to political participation in the context of the practices of Nigerian and Malaysian youth in the following ways:

First, results of this study indicate access to political information, political interest, policy satisfaction and political knowledge is an important consideration for increasing political participation by youth. Hence, stakeholders, especially the government, can make considerable efforts to encourage political participation by using social media to improve access to political information, political interest, policy satisfaction and political knowledge. This is because by making it easier for youth to access political information, or acquire political knowledge, or even increase their political interest and policy satisfaction, Nigerian and Malaysian governments can enable their youth to participate more in politics which will eventually benefit the society as a whole. This is important because in the long-run, this segment of the population is the one that will be in charge of the affairs of their respective countries. Hence, providing a solid foundation while they are still young could prove crucial for future democratic development.

Second, results of this study suggest social media is not just used by youth for social purposes but also political purposes. Specifically, use of Facebook and Twitter in the features of the CET for various political activities, are generally found to be positively related to online political participation on Facebook and Twitter in this study. Thus, stakeholders should take note of the important implications of using social media for political participation by improving access to it in both countries.

Third, youth have been noted to be apathetic to politics (Agboola, 2013; Bakker & De Vreese, 2011; Baumgartner & Morris, 2010; David, 2013; Theorcharis & Quintelier, 2014; Ward & Vreese, 2011; Yamamoto & Kushin, 2013), and socio-economic factors do not propel them to participate in politics. Therefore, it is important that technological factors, like the social media factors presented in this study be given strong consideration to encourage youth to participate online. This lends credence to the statement of Xenos et al. (2014) that social media is as good a measure, or even a better measure of political participation among youth than the socio-economic factor.

Lastly, the moderating role of political knowledge suggests that social media rather than classroom education can be used effectively to educate youth on politics since they are on social media most of the time. This will eventually maximize the possibility of their participation in politics. Thus, media and other sources of political information should make the effort to include meaningful and educative political information online that could educate youth and propel them toward political participation.

5.4.3 Methodological Implication

This cross-sectional survey has a number of methodological implications, one of which lies in assessing the study's variables using medium specific measures. Precisely, in an attempt to fill the methodological gap as suggested by Dimitrova et al. (2014), this study assessed the CET and online political participation based on medium specific measures as recommended by David (2013). Hence, all variables in this study were measured from the perspective of Facebook and Twitter based on the fact that they have been noted to be the most popularly used social media for political participation (Adaja & Ayodele, 2013; Bae, 2014; Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2012).

Additionally, in measuring access to political information, this study combined single measures previously used by other studies into one measure. Hence exposure, attention and reliance, which were separately used to measure access to information in previous studies (Chaffe & Schleuder, 1986; Johnson & Kaye, 2014; McLeod & McDonald, 1985), were all integrated to measure access to political information on Facebook and Twitter in this study.

Furthermore, a robust approach (PLS-SEM analysis) was used to assess reliability and validity of each latent construct in this study. This was applied to both the pilot and main study. Specifically, PLS-SEM analysis was used to assess the reliability and validity of the latent variables in this study. For reliability, the, internal consistency reliability, indicator reliability, AVE and composite reliability of each latent variable, both in terms of first and second stage constructs, were examined; while for validity,

convergent and discriminant validity were used. Specifically, indicator reliability and internal consistency reliability were determined by items loadings, Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, while convergent validity was examined by assessing the value of AVE. Additionally, discriminant validity was evaluated by making a comparison of the correlations among the latent constructs with the square roots of AVE and also assessing the value of HTMT. Furthermore, the cross-loadings matrix was looked into to further determine the discriminant validity in the conceptual model.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

Although all objectives of this study are achieved, some limitations are observed. The foremost limitation of this study is the nature of its design. Due to the use of the cross-sectional survey approach, there is no room for causal inferences to be made from the population over a long period of time. Thus, the cross-sectional nature of data collection provides a static perspective on the relationship between cognitive engagement and online political participation.

Secondly, online political participation of youth on Facebook and Twitter were assessed using self-report measures which is associated with common method variance (Podsakoff et al, 2003). Although an attempt was made to reduce common method variance by ensuring anonymity and improving scale items, the possibility that participants in this study might have under or over-reported their political participation on the questionnaire cannot be ignored.

Thirdly, generalizing results from this study may be limited. This is because participants are from public universities. This might not provide adequate representation of youth from both countries. This is in addition to the fact that purposive non-probability sampling was used to select respondents from each stratum. Furthermore, since countries for comparison were selected purposively based on the criterion that they are the countries the researcher is most familiar with, there is a possibility of bias. Also, another challenge of this comparative study is accessing comparable data, such as concepts and research parameters (Hantrais, 1995) which made it challenging to harmonize some concepts to suit both countries, for example age and some political knowledge questions in the questionnaire.

Fourthly, with an R-Squared of 0.58 for the combined data, it indicates the research model is able to explain only 58% of the total variance of online political participation on Facebook and Twitter, which means that the remaining 42% of the variance for online political participation on Facebook and Twitter could be explained by other factors outside this research. So also is the case for the Nigerian and Malaysian data with R-Squared values of 64% and 59%, respectively. This indicates that the percentages unaccounted for could be explained by other latent constructs not included in this study.

Lastly, in testing for the moderating role of political knowledge, some relationships proposed in the moderating hypothesis are not found to be significant for the combined respondents as well as the Nigerian and Malaysian respondents. Specifically, political

knowledge does not moderate the relationship between political interest and policy satisfaction with online political participation on Facebook and Twitter for the combined respondents. On a similar note, political knowledge does not moderate the relationship between access to political information on Facebook and Twitter and political interest with online political participation on Facebook and Twitter for Nigerian respondents. Also, political knowledge does not moderate the relationship between policy satisfaction and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter for Malaysian respondents.

5.6 Recommendations for Future Studies

It is recommended that a longitudinal design which could measure the attitude of youth on political participation over a longer period of time needs to be carried out. This will enable the measuring of the study constructs at different points in time to confirm the findings of this study.

Additionally, other measures than self-report could be used to assess participation of youth in politics on Facebook and Twitter. Possibly, the content of the Facebook and Twitter accounts of participants can be examined through a quantitative content analysis to find out the political participation activities they have carried out. This could perhaps provide a more objective perspective of their political participation activities on social media. Also, probability sampling could be used to select countries and respondents in future studies to provide stronger scientific justifications for the selection of research samples.

Furthermore, studies could be expanded to youth in other forms of tertiary institutions besides public universities. Data could be collected from polytechnics, colleges of education, private universities or even those out of school to further enhance the generalizability of the results of the study. Perhaps, in doing so, education could be included as a latent variable of the study and participants with different levels of education can be tested and comparison made on the extent of their political participation based on their level of education.

Also, since only 58%, 64% and 59% of variance is explained for the combined, Nigerian and Malaysian respondents, respectively, future studies can consider other factors that could motivate youth to participate in politics online. Particularly, researchers could investigate the role of political trust, political efficacy or education in increasing the relationship between predictors of political participation and online political participation on Facebook and Twitter.

Additionally, since political knowledge does not moderate the relationship between the exogenous and endogenous variables on all levels, perhaps it can be introduced as a mediator. Investigating such mediating effect in future research could provide significant results on all levels.

5.7 Conclusion

This study examines the relationship between cognitive engagement and online political participation among youth in Nigeria and Malaysia from combined,

individual and comparative perspectives. Also, the moderating role of political knowledge in this relationship is analyzed. Consistent with the CET as postulated by Inglehart (1977), this research finds that features of cognitive engagement lead to political participation. Most previous quantitative studies have not investigated specific online political participation activities taking place on social media. Thus, this study looks at specific online political participation activities carried out on Facebook and Twitter by youth in Nigeria and Malaysia.

This research proves that one of the major determinants for explaining online political participation of youth on social media is their attention and exposure to as well as retention of political information on Facebook and Twitter. These features are reflective measures for access to political information on Facebook and Twitter, a second order latent variable. In addition to examining access to political information on Facebook and Twitter, this study investigates the political interest of youth in both countries. It is discovered that political interest is a significant factor that contributes to online political participation of youth in Nigeria and Malaysia. Furthermore, the role of policy satisfaction in online political participation of youth in Nigeria and Malaysia was analyzed. This study finds that policy satisfaction leads to online political participation among Nigerian youth but not Malaysian youth. Additionally, it is revealed that political knowledge moderates the relationship between the exogenous and endogenous variables in some cases but not in others.

Consequently, additional research is needed particularly with regards to the moderator, political knowledge, and also the inclusion of a major variable in the study, education, which is not included in this study.

Nevertheless, this study has generated additional empirical evidence to the body of knowledge on social media and political participation. Also, some key theoretical propositions in the form of hypotheses are supported by the results of this present study and previous studies. Irrespective of some of its limitations, this study answers all the research questions and objectives posed at the beginning of the research. Furthermore, despite previous studies, this study has addressed the theoretical gaps by introducing political knowledge as a significant moderating variable. This study also lends some theoretical and empirical support to the moderating role of political knowledge in the relationship between the exogenous and endogenous variables.

Generally, theoretical, practical and methodological contributions are made, while limitations of the study and recommendations for further research are highlighted. Also, the conceptual framework of this study has added to the domain of the CET by examining its features from the perspective of social media.

This study reveals that access to information, political interest, policy satisfaction and political knowledge are important considerations in engendering online political participation among youth in developing nations, like Nigeria and Malaysia. Also, knowledge about politics could be acquired by youth through social media and not

necessarily via classroom education alone. Therefore, this study is able to advance the current understanding of key predictors of political participation by youth in the digital age. Hence, the important role of social media in prompting this important aspect of the democratic process among youth in both countries should greatly be considered by media, policy-makers and other stakeholders.



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