



## **Factors Influencing Youth's Leadership Participation in Peninsular Malaysia**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study aimed to examine the effects of social (family, friends, mentors, teachers, community leaders), political and legal influences (public policy and democratic ideas), and access and usage of social media on information and resources (leadership, community development, volunteerism, professional association, and funding), and youth's leadership participation (extra-curricular activities, community associations, social works, political activities) under the premise of the theory of planned behavior. This study adopts the cross-sectional design and the stratified random sampling method to collect quantitative data from 400 student leaders from selected public universities, colleges, and schools in Peninsular Malaysia. Findings of this study reveal that social, political and legal influences, and access and usage of social media have a significant positive effect on information and resources; and information and resources have significant positive effects on youth's leadership participation. To promote youth leadership participation in Malaysia, the government and development agencies should therefore focus on social and political influences, and youth's involvement in sharing information and resources using social media.

**Keywords:** Social Influence, Political and Legal Influence, Access and Usage of Social Media, Leadership

**JEL Classifications:** L82, D71, D72

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Participatory leadership, in the context of the present study, is perceived as an instrument for enhancing the involvement of youths in social activities by creating newer youth participation opportunities in terms of leadership (Powers and Allaman, 2012). Such leadership entails membership recruitment, teamwork, stewardship, accountability, and balancing the needs of the leader's group. Leadership participation also involves organizing community service, extra-curricular activities, community representation, public speaking forums, campaigns, voting, political participation, community projects, and thereby generating a communal identity (Burns et al., 2001; Gray et al., 2010; McFarland and Thomas, 2006). It has long been stressed that a self-sustaining societal development is essential to the economic and social development of any developing nation. This is because when leaders unite and make collective decisions, the community maintains peace and development (Gray et al., 2010; Kuponiyi, 2008).

The significance of youths as future leaders in the political and social-economic development of a country is undeniable as they are considered the active working group in any economy (Aminu, 2012). Much has been reported advocating a vibrant democracy where ethnic equality and multi-party democracy exist that is able to thrust youth leadership participation, which is considered better than any one-party system (UNDP, 2012). In Nigeria for example, a multi-party democratic system empowered youths to actively participate in the constitutional review process in 2014 by means of sending representatives and thereby submitting a memorandum to the concerned committee. The Nigerian youth also formed a political platform, called the youth inter-party forum in the same year for the preparatory general election of 2015 in the country. Similarly, in Bangladesh, the youths formed the National Youth Parliament as a platform for direct dialogue with their respective parliament members thereby ensuring their participation in leadership (UNDP, 2012).

Based on the existing literature, the present study has acknowledged access, use of social media, social influence, and political-legal influence as key factors affecting the acquisition of information and resources resulting in leadership participation. The factors were considered not only because of their rigor in existing literature but also due to their inter contingency as found in the review of literature. Social network is required to mobilize the resources needed for leadership. Social media, on the other hand, consists of online platforms and applications that empower users to share and create content and thereby participate in social networking. One of the many ways of achieving mass participation in activities related to leadership is by employing social media. With the advancement in social media technologies, understanding, creating awareness, perceiving, and increasing leadership participation has tremendously improved in recent times (Ahmad et al., 2012). On the other hand, social influence refers to the phenomena where specific others influence the opinions, emotions, and behavior of an individual. Social influence takes many forms that are usually reflected in socialization, conformity, peer pressure, leadership, obedience, and persuasion. The concept of social influence revolves around social ties, the influence of family and friends, advisors and role models, and others, who could possibly influence one's long-term behavior, such as leadership participation (Koe and Majid, 2014; Tata and Prasad, 2008). In terms of political-legal influence, research dictates that negative influence of the political-legal paradigm, including inadequate political freedom, legal rights, and freedom of speech, could significantly deter youths' leadership participation in any country (Kuhn, 2012).

Although, it is undeniable that the significance of youth leadership has inspired a good number of researchers to explore the relevant areas, a critical review of existing related studies, however, reveals a gap in literature that the present study aspires to fulfill. Previous studies (Ahmad et al., 2012) have examined youth's development and a few others (Aminu, 2012) have researched youth's political involvement. However, limited studies have dwelt on social media and youth's social development. Aside from Mohamad et al. (2009) and Pandian (2014), studies similar to the current one have not been found, indicating the need for further research penetration in the study area, as it could be that the negative use of the information and resources provided by social media and other social or political groups could lead to a negative impact on youths' leadership participation, and vice versa. Thus, the present study responds to the scarcity of scholarly studies examining social media, socio-political influence, and youth's leadership participation in a single model, particularly in the Malaysian context by investigating the effects of social media and socio-political influence on youth's leadership participation in Malaysia, thereby bridging the gap in literature.

Moreover, exploring the mediating effect of information and resources on the relationship between social media, social influence, political-legal influence, and youth's leadership participation is the other novel contribution of this study towards the body of knowledge in the field of leadership. In terms of literature, the inclusion of information and resources as a mediator is in line with the scholarly work of Baron and Kenny (1986). The mediator is introduced into the present study's context because based on literature review, it is perceived that public information

acquisition and delivery are only possible in networks, which could be used by leaders to shape their opinion. In addition, the information flow from the consumed media has been found to have a stronger influence on the network members in their decision-making activities (Opsahl et al., 2010; Tata and Prasad, 2008). Furthermore, the present study also makes a remarkable theoretical contribution towards the theory of planned behavior (TPB) in particular, and towards leadership and management theories in general. It aims to extend the TPB by altering the independent construct in its original model by including political-legal factors, aside from the social influence. It is expected that the findings of this study, and the policy implications or recommendations to be proffered, would be able to address the issues as highlighted in this study.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Youth Leadership in Malaysia

The multi-ethnic and multi-racial cultural background of Malaysia is complimentary to participatory and collaborative leadership, as has been rightly promoted by several previous studies in the Malaysian context (Silong et al., 2008; Mohamad et al., 2009; Tam, 2008). However, according to the C.E.C (2009), youths in Malaysia have limited access to opportunities in regards to effective leadership participation within their communities as a result of inadequate trust between them and the government institutions, political parties, and lack of authorities' intention towards capability development for youths and youth associated entities, resulting in social vices in the country. An example of youths' limitation in the country in regards to leadership participation is also reflected in its Universities Act of 1971, a much controversial by-product of the 1969 racial riots in Malaysia that banned students from supporting or joining any political party (Kuhn, 2012).

This is perhaps why research has found that although the participative leadership approach offers more effective governance, participation levels of involvement of other people in community efforts is still an issue among the Malaysian youths (Mohamad et al., 2009). According to Ahmad et al. (2012), most youths in Malaysia understand the environmental issues but do not participate and practice the rights or duties towards a better environment because they are not bothered. They also perceive that they would not be able to make any changes to impact the community as single individuals. A similar picture was uncovered in a recent study (Pandian, 2014) that investigated university students and their voting pattern in general elections. Employing a survey of 614 local university students, the study found that a majority of Malaysian students had never voted due to issues such as their background, government policies, electoral process, party leadership, and traits of an ideal leader. Meanwhile, Sahri et al. (2013) stated that community participation of university students in volunteer activities were found to be limited in Malaysia due to the lower levels of self-motivation and commitment among the local youths.

Such a difference between what is ideal and what is real in terms of the political-legal scenario of Malaysia creates a gap worth of

inquiry. Therefore, the need for this research on such issues is justified as such policies of the Government could significantly hurt leadership participation in the country particularly by the youth and thereby hinder critical analysis and personal opinion on issues related to national concern. Moreover, this could also lead to inferior quality graduates and weaker quality future leaders in the country.

## 2.2. Theoretical Foundation

The present study involves the constructs of social media, social influence and political-legal influence, linked to the acquisition of information and resources, which in turn is connected to leadership participation. Therefore, to explain this linkage, the present study relies on the TPB. The TPB pays much importance on the intention of individuals to perform a given behavior, which indicates how keen people are to attempt, and how much effort they are ready to put in to perform the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). TPB asserts that intentions could be the best predictors of behavior. However, the performance of any particular behavior is also contingent on other non-motivational factors, including availability of resources and opportunities, such as money, skills, time, and cooperation of others. The theory in general dictates the attitude of individuals towards a behavior that could be either negative or positive. Thus, social media, social influence, and political-legal influence may exist in an environment but the ability of the youth to utilize these opportunities and acquire relevant information and resources to contribute positively to leadership activities in his/her community lies within him/her. The original model of TPB took into consideration and measured attitude towards behavior, perceived behavioral control (PBC), subjective norm (SN), intention, and the actual behavior (AB) (Ajzen, 1991) as constructs of the original model.

The first construct in the TPB, attitude toward the behavior refers to the subject's unfavorable or favorable evaluation of the behavior in context. PBC or locus of control focuses on the personality traits of a person, such as self-confidence, self-efficacy, or beliefs. The third construct, SN measures the social pressure on the person to not perform or perform a particular behavior. According to TPB, an aggregate of the factors mentioned could successfully predict intention (I) and AB (Ajzen, 1991). TPB emphasizes more on the personality of individuals and the influence of an individual's social groups on his/her intention to behave and the AB of the individual. In the words of Ajzen (1991), "social attitude and personality trait have played an important role in these attempts to predict and explain human behavior." This could be translated as other people's ability to conditionally influence a person's intention or behavior depending on the availability of resources and opportunities including money, time, skills, and support of the others (Ajzen, 1991). It could also be deduced from TPB that lesser emphasis was awarded on other external factors such as laws and government policies that could influence the decision of an individual, though it was indicated that a person's intended behavior could be influenced by information regarding the behavior, individual past experiences, experience of their relatives and friends, and by other factors (Ajzen, 1991).

The "other factors," as mentioned above, could be the political-legal force, which reflects a gap in literature that the present

study intends to fill. Therefore, this study intends to modify the PBC construct of the TPB, to include the political-legal factor. This would mean that when youths perceive that opportunities to participate in leadership related activities exist and their expectation towards success is guaranteed, it would motivate them to participate in leadership. However, if their perception is the opposite, and they assume that their intended behavior and participation would be significantly hindered by policies of the government and the political ideology, this would de-motivate the youth from intending to or participating in leadership related activities. This is how the present study attempts to extend the TPB further by considering the legal and political environmental impact on individuals' behavioral intentions and actions. In terms of empirical evidence, numerous behavioral studies have employed the TPB to support their research related to social media and leadership participation (Aminu, 2012; Gazzar, 2011; Kahne and Middaugh, 2012; Koe and Majid, 2014). However, no theory is without its share of weaknesses and upon critical review of the existing literature, it has been found that there is a scarcity of studies that have employed the TPB to support their work by integrating political-legal factors into the model. The only studies found employing the construct of political-legal influence was that of Mohamad et al. (2009) and Pandian (2014), however both studies differ from the present in measuring leadership participation, as they used the Lewin Leadership and the Ohio and Michigan Leadership theories, respectively, instead of the TPB. Therefore, this study aspires to fill this gap and to make a theoretical contribution to the body of knowledge by extending the TPB by integrating and measuring political-legal factors to the PBC in the TPB model.

## 2.3. Access and Usage of Social Media and Information and Resources

Social media includes applications and websites that can empower users to share and create content and thereby participate in social networking activities. One way of achieving mass participation in leadership related activities is by employing social media. With the advancement of social media technologies, understanding perception, creating awareness, and increasing leadership participation has been tremendously trending in recent times (Ahmad et al., 2012). Logically, the social network is necessary to mobilize the resources needed for leadership. Furthermore, referring back to the TPB, it could be argued that people's attitudes, values, practices, and identities could be influenced through interactive communication with other people on the social media, which could in turn influence leadership, and the acquisition of information and resources could theoretically be perceived to be affected by accessing and using social media (Ajzen, 1991).

The ability of citizens to access information from social media for political activities enhances the political development of a country (Ahmad et al., 2012). Previous related studies found a positive effect of social media on youth's political engagement and involvement in social activities such as cleaning streets; and a negative impact of social media on leadership activities such as receiving a forwarded message or spreading calls about a revolution (Gazzar, 2011). This proves that social media is able to provide information and resources to the youths that could either be beneficial to leadership or anti-leadership in a country.

Kahne and Middaugh (2012) found the positive impact of digital media on academic and political engagement of youths, in terms of networking and information exchange. Kafai et al. (2012) found a positive relationship between online social awareness and task completion, due to collaborative teamwork, while Park and Suh (2014) discovered a significant positive influence of direction of message in social networking service and word-of-mouth information on a receiver's attitude.

According to Chang et al. (2014), social media affects youth's decisions in many aspects in recent times. By means of social media, decisions could be made quickly irrespective of distance, and information, conversations, files, videos, and pictures can easily be shared among members, which strengthen social ties within the social group (Gray et al., 2010). Social media was not intended to be used for negative purposes, however, conversely research has discovered that the attitude, energy, and time devoted to social media applications, websites, and networks mostly by the youths have enslaved them, causing a negative impact on their personal lives, academics, and societal morality (Jean-Marie et al., 2009; Ayub et al., 2014).

However, although debatable, several researchers have upheld that social media provides useful information and resources to youths in terms of educational, personal, social, and leadership development, if used in the right manner (Brown, 2010; Gray et al., 2010). Nevertheless, at the same time, the varied findings of earlier studies regarding the effect of social media on the acquisition of information and resources indicate that a deeper exploration of the issue is required. Therefore, based on the theory and the existing literature, the present study forwards the following hypothesis for empirical investigation:

H<sub>1</sub>: Social media access and use has a significant positive effect on information and resources acquisition among student leaders in Malaysia.

#### 2.4. Social Influence and Information and Resources

Social influence refers to the phenomena where specific others influence the opinions, emotions, and behavior of a person. Social influence takes many forms, and is usually reflected in socialization, conformity, peer pressure, leadership, obedience, and persuasion. The concept of social influence revolves around social ties, influence of family and friends, advisors and role models, and others, who could possibly influence one's long-term behavior, such as leadership participation (Koe and Majid, 2014; Tata and Prasad, 2008). It is often rationally observed that the advice of some parents, relatives, and peers aids or hampers youths' participation in leadership. Theoretically, the TPB could be referred to as the starting point for articulating a relationship between social influence and information and resource acquisition leading to leadership participation. TPB emphasizes a lot on social groups' influence on the intention of individuals to behave and the AB itself. According to the theory, social attitude and personality trait play significant roles in predicting and explaining human behavior, provided resources and opportunities such as money, time, skill and required support of other people that could influence the intention or behavior of a person are available (Ajzen, 1991). For the purpose of the present study, this could be translated

as social influence dependency on information and resource acquisition in order to affect leadership participating behavior.

Empirically, previous studies have established that social networks provide access to information and resources necessary for entrepreneurial activity (Tata and Prasad, 2008). Research also reveals that general involvement in extracurricular (social) activities such as sports and voluntary community associations, such as clubs, require teamwork in schools. This provides social networks that help to share information, experiences and motives, and encourages future leadership participation among youths (McFarland and Thomas, 2006). On the other hand, Oc and Bashshur (2013) reveal that followers directly influence the behavior of leaders in regards to group cohesion and individual strength. Other studies suggest that a good societal relationship with parents at home and peers at school is able to produce better behavior and the pursuit of excellence (Blair et al., 2008; Asikhia, 2009).

Conversely, research has also found that youths perform in contrary to parental advice mostly when depending on the recommendation of their peers and role models while formulating most crucial decisions, which sometimes remain unknown to their parents (Lawal et al., 2009). Unfortunately, this sometimes leads to negative consequences, whereas social influence has been generally perceived to provide positive information for holistically developing young minds. Moreover, social influence has also been linked to societal vices such as drug abuse and sexual assault among youths in most developing countries, including Malaysia (C.E.C., 2009). Hence, based on literature, this study acknowledges social influence as a key factor that influences information and resource acquisition, thereby resulting in leadership participation. However, at the same time, the varied findings of earlier studies regarding the effect of social influence on acquisition of information and resources is found to be inadequate and requires deeper exploration. Therefore, based on the theory and existing literature, the present study forwards the following hypothesis for empirical investigation:

H<sub>2</sub>: Social Influence has a significant positive effect on Information and Resources acquisition among Student Leaders in Malaysia.

#### 2.5. Political-legal Influence, Information and Resources

Political-legal influences involve public policies in the context of political freedom or association, tolerance, ethnic minority, political ideology, legal rights, and freedom of speech (Kuhn, 2012). In order to synthesize a relationship between Political-legal influence and Information-Resources, leading to Youths' Leadership Participation, this study refers to the TPB. According to the theory, a person's intended behavior could be influenced by information regarding the behavior, personal past experience, experience of relatives and friends, and by other factors (Ajzen, 1991). Rationally, it could be perceived that environmental issues such as political and legal factors could hamper youths' participation in leadership activities, particularly in a country such as Malaysia that is characterized by the lack of ethnic or racial equality, political freedom, and one-party democracy. Therefore, for the purpose

of the present study, the other factors, as mentioned above, are perceived as the political-legal force, which is expected to depend on Information and Resource acquisition in order to influence Leadership Participation.

Previous studies have established that favorable political-legal factors such as political freedom, multi-party democracy, and ethnic minority tolerance could provide youths the opportunity to work with the adults and peers, and gain information and resources on sustainability, as required for leadership participation (Ahmad et al., 2012; Powers and Allaman, 2012). Hence, based on literature, this study acknowledges political-legal influence as a key factor in influencing information and resource acquisition, thereby resulting in leadership participation. However, at the same time, the inadequate and varied findings of earlier studies regarding the effect of political-legal influence on acquisition of information and resources indicate that a deeper exploration of the construct is required. Therefore, based on the theory and existing literature, the present study forwards the following hypothesis for empirical investigation:

H<sub>3</sub>: Political-legal influence has a significant positive effect on Information and Resources acquisition among student leaders in Malaysia.

## 2.6. Information and Resources and Youth's Leadership Participation

The above sections articulate relationships between access and use of social media, social influence, and political-legal influence with youths' leadership participation. Logically however, social media and socio-political influence alone cannot lead to youth's leadership participation without information and resource acquisition. According to theory (TPB), social attitude and personality traits, along with other factors play significant roles in predicting and explaining human behavior, provided resources and opportunities such as money, time, skills, and the support of others that could influence intention or behavior of a person are available (Ajzen, 1991). That is, if the youth perceives that information and resources to participate in leadership activities are available and their expectation for success is guaranteed, they would be influenced by social and political factors and the social media to participate in leadership related activities. However, if they perceive that they are not able to acquire the necessary information or resources, social, political factors, along with social media can no longer influence them to participate in leadership activities.

Previous related studies have also revealed that social media, social influence, and political-legal influence produce information and resources which lead to youth's leadership participation (Ahmad et al., 2012; Kafai et al., 2012; Mohamad et al., 2009; Powers and Allaman, 2012). However, in a different study, it has also been reported that no significant influence of media news exposure (the types of social media news) was found on youth's political participation, in a study among Dutch and German college students in Netherlands (Mergner, 2009). Meanwhile, in the same study, the mediating variable, interpersonal communication (information) was found to significantly mediate the relationship between social media and intended political behavior among the youths. The inconsistencies in these studies establish both strong and weak relationships between social media, environment factors and

youth's leadership participation, which thereby necessitates the inclusion of a mediator in the present study's model, in line with the suggestion of Baron and Kenny (1986). This study therefore, based on the theory, literature and empirical evidences, forwards the following hypothesis:

H<sub>4</sub>: Information and resources have a significant positive effect on youth's leadership participation among student leaders in Malaysia.

## 2.7. The Mediating Effect of Information and Resources

In response to the differences in causal relationships reported, the present study argues the adoption of leadership participation among youth leaders in Malaysia, and conceptualizes the access and use of social media, social influence, and political-legal influence as factors affecting the acquisition of information and resource. The study simultaneously articulates a relationship between acquisition of information, resources, and youths' leadership participation. Therefore, the study rationally expects information and resources to significantly mediate the association between access and use of social media, social influence, and political-legal influence with youths' leadership participation among student leaders in Malaysia.

Moreover, recent studies based on the TPB (Ajzen, 1991), focusing on the direct influence of followers on behavior of leader in terms of group cohesion and individual strength indicate that information acquired from group social ties and social groups could impact leadership participation of youths (Oc and Bashshur, 2013). Additionally, the inconsistencies in previous studies have established both strong and weak relationships between social media, environment factors, and youth's leadership participation, thereby necessitating the inclusion of a mediator in the present study's model, in line with the suggestion of Baron and Kenny (1986), and hence, the study forwards the following hypothesis:

H<sub>5</sub>: Acquisition of information and resources significantly mediates the relationship between access and use of social media, social influence, and political-legal influence with youths' leadership participation among student leaders in Malaysia.

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs the cross-sectional design and a quantitative approach to measure the mediating influence of information and resource acquisition on the relationship between social media, social influence, political-legal influence, and leadership participation among youths in Malaysian public universities. Sample respondents from the youths were studied at a given point in time and the results were analyzed statistically.

### 3.1. Research Instrument

In this study, structured and self-reported questionnaires were used. This is similar to that used by Al-Rahmi and Othman (2013), Gazzar (2011), Kennedy et al. (2003), Pandian (2014), and Tata and Prasad (2008). However, more question items were developed on the environmental factors to reflect Malaysia's social, political, and legal situations. The questionnaire or interview format was

centered on social media, social influence, political-legal influence, information and resources, and youth's leadership participation. Student's demographics came last because not everyone likes to disclose personal information at first sight. The questionnaire was framed in bilingual languages including a simple English language and Bahasa Melayu. These were sent to students (age between 15 and 30 years) in the Malaysian public universities, polytechnics, colleges, and secondary/vocational schools through their Faculty Deans or Principals.

### 3.2. Sample Selection

The quantitative approach was based on a survey of male and female students (age 15-30) from the Malaysian Public Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges, and Secondary/Vocational Schools in Peninsula Malaysia, stratified into three regions, which are East, West, and North Coast. This study adopted probability sampling; the study adopted a proportionate stratified random sampling method for selecting the sample. This involved separating the population into sub-groups, and then randomly drawing a sample from each group (Gay and Diehl, 1996).

To select the respondent, this study randomly selected the respondents from the list, which was obtained from the Department of Statistics, Malaysia. Every youth in the population has an equal chance of being selected, and he or she will be selected randomly. The sample size was obtained based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size measurement. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) recommended 380 sample sizes for a total of 30,949,962 youth population (July 2016 est.). According to Salkind (1997), the sample size can be increased by 40-50% to account for uncooperative subjects. This study therefore distributed questionnaires to 400 students to back up any unusable questionnaire and missing values.

The questionnaires were distributed to students at Universiti Malaysia Kelantan City Campus, Polytechnics Kota Bharu, Polytechnics Kok Lanis, UITM Machang, Kolej Teknologi Darul Naim, University Technology Petronas, Polytechnics Ungku Omar, University Tun Abdul Razak, University Malaysia Perlis, Polytechnics Dungun, and University Utara Malaysia.

## 4. DATA ANALYSIS

### 4.1. Demographic Characteristics

Among the 400 participating student leaders in Malaysia, most respondents (50.7%) were Bahasa Melayu users, followed by 45.5% of respondents who used more than one language (Table 1). Mandarin and Tamil acquired 6% of respondents for each of the two, while only 0.8% of respondents were users of the English language. The respondents were divided into four categories of ages. For the first category (between 18 and 19 years old), there were 60 respondents (15%). For the second category (20-21 years old), there were 146 respondents (36.5%), reportedly the largest age group of respondents. This was followed by the third category (22-23 years old), with 89 respondents accounting for 22.3% and the fourth category (24-25 years old), with 105 respondents accounting for the remaining 26.3%. In terms of Education, most student leaders were found to be Bachelor students (50.0%),

**Table 1: Profile of the respondents**

Participants	n (%)
Age	
18-19 years old	60 (15.0)
20-21 years old	146 (36.5)
22-23 years old	89 (22.3)
24-25 years old	105 (26.3)
Total	400 (100.0)
Language	
Bahasa Melayu	203 (50.7)
Mandarin	6 (1.5)
Tamil	6 (1.5)
English	3 (0.8)
More than 1 language	182 (45.5)
Total	400 (100.0)
Education	
PMR	1 (0.3)
SPM	16 (4.0)
STPM	7 (1.8)
Diploma	148 (37.0)
Bachelor	200 (50.0)
Masters	26 (6.5)
PhD	2 (0.5)
Total	400 (100.0)

followed by Diploma students (37.0%), Masters (6.5%), SPM (4.0%), STPM (1.8%), PhD (0.5%), and PMR (0.4%).

### 4.2. Validity and Reliability Analysis

The Cronbach's Alpha values for access and use of social media, social, political and legal influences, information and resources, and youth's leadership participation are all more than 0.7. Since the Cronbach's alpha for all the items are more than 0.7, this study considers all items as reliable. For the composite reliability, the indicators have different loadings for all items at more than 0.7. According to experts, if the indicators are higher than 0.7, it is considered reliable (Hair et al., 2013). Convergent validity signifies that a set of indicators represents one and the same underlying construct, which can be demonstrated through their unidimensionality, and the average variance extracted value for all items is more than 0.5, which indicates sufficient convergent validity (Hair et al., 2011) (Table 2).

Moreover, according to Table 3, the cross loading values are below the outer loadings, which suggest good discriminant validity. Experts note that to assess the discriminant validity, the cross loadings of the indicators should be examined (Hair et al., 2013). The Fornell-Larcker assesses the discriminant validity at the construct level. The Fornell-Larcker criterion in Table 4 is largely unable to detect any lack of discriminant validity. Furthermore, the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio is an estimate of the correlation between constructs, which parallels the disattenuated construct score creation. Using a value of 0.9 as the threshold, this study concludes that there is no evidence of a lack of discriminant validity and all the constructs meet the criteria.

### 4.3. Path Coefficients

Path coefficients are estimated as path relationships in the structural model between the constructs in the model. As presented in Table 5, the path coefficients between access and use of social

**Table 2: Reliability analysis**

Variables	Items	Mean±SD	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite reliability	AVE	VIF
Access and usage of social media	6	4.2829±1.0180	0.882	0.839	0.557	1.025
social influence	5	4.1820±0.8451	0.841	0.788	0.527	1.249
Political and legal influence	6	3.3738±1.0250	0.921	0.898	0.660	1.268
Information and resources	14	3.3546±0.9276	0.956	0.950	0.609	1.000
Youth's leadership participation	9	3.6808±0.8494	0.930	0.915	0.596	-

SD: Standard deviation, AVE: Average variance extracted

**Table 3: Outer model loading and cross loading**

Variables and items	AUSM	SOIN	PLIN	INRE	YOLP
<b>AUSM</b>					
I enjoy checking my social media account	0.813	0.052	0.089	0.240	0.250
I am disappointed if I am unable to use social media at all	0.808	0.071	0.092	0.273	0.190
I get upset when I cannot log on to social media	0.767	0.053	0.041	0.214	0.162
I use YouTube everyday	0.629	0.086	0.272	0.277	0.207
I prefer to communicate with others through social media	0.665	0.088	0.056	0.165	0.143
I spend more than 2 h on social media in a day	0.777	0.054	0.083	0.222	0.245
<b>SOIN</b>					
I always have discussions with my family	-0.016	0.537	0.083	0.121	0.195
I always chat with my friends	0.194	0.468	0.118	0.110	0.229
I always get advice from my mentors	0.048	0.858	0.379	0.386	0.292
I always have discussions with my teachers	0.015	0.875	0.404	0.393	0.292
I always have discussions with community leaders	0.139	0.792	0.413	0.408	0.289
<b>PLIN</b>					
I am aware of common public policies in Malaysia	0.118	0.412	0.763	0.407	0.168
I refer to public policy documents for certain purposes	0.102	0.457	0.819	0.483	0.214
I am interested in public policy issues	0.165	0.388	0.847	0.582	0.297
I always attend political talks or meetings	0.171	0.354	0.830	0.668	0.288
I strongly believe in the democratic idea	0.109	0.280	0.818	0.507	0.155
I believe in the freedom of giving ideas about governance	0.046	0.293	0.796	0.419	0.177
<b>INRE</b>					
I always have discussions on professional associations using social engagements	0.218	0.365	0.492	0.794	0.458
I have discussions on professional associations using social media	0.227	0.391	0.491	0.811	0.495
I always update myself through the PLF	0.223	0.362	0.522	0.794	0.418
I always have discussions on funding in social media	0.211	0.350	0.499	0.802	0.420
I always discuss funding through my social engagement	0.197	0.338	0.532	0.805	0.412
I always update myself about funding through the political-legal framework	0.198	0.331	0.547	0.780	0.403
I always follow discussions on leadership in social media	0.294	0.306	0.398	0.678	0.456
I always have discussions on leadership through my social engagement	0.295	0.338	0.453	0.750	0.436
I always update myself about leadership through political-legal framework	0.303	0.309	0.496	0.764	0.435
I always have discussions on community development in social media	0.278	0.348	0.552	0.808	0.405
I always discuss about community development through social engagement	0.292	0.350	0.540	0.820	0.452
I always update myself about community development through PLF	0.256	0.382	0.560	0.787	0.428
I always follow discussions on volunteerism in social media	0.208	0.345	0.472	0.727	0.427
I always have a series of discussions about volunteerism on PLF	0.287	0.345	0.491	0.792	0.454
<b>YOLP</b>					
I'm always involved in planning and organizing charity activities	0.253	0.255	0.221	0.465	0.775
I'm always involved in planning and organizing sporting activities	0.214	0.210	0.204	0.411	0.750
I always give ideas to my club/association	0.200	0.305	0.188	0.431	0.743
I'm actively involved in the decision-making of my club/association	0.145	0.219	0.206	0.406	0.764
I'm always involved in planning and organizing activities in my club	0.162	0.289	0.209	0.386	0.774
I'm always involved in planning and organizing religious activities	0.163	0.278	0.267	0.427	0.780
I'm always involved in planning and organizing campaigns for volunteer work	0.221	0.279	0.261	0.429	0.790
I'm always involved in planning and organizing student union activities	0.220	0.318	0.178	0.394	0.783
I'm always involved in planning and organizing student union political activities	0.287	0.300	0.182	0.505	0.785

AUSM: Access and usage of social media, SOIN: Social influence, PLIN: Political and legal influence, INRE: Information and resources, PLF: Political-legal framework, YOLP: Youth's leadership participation

media, social, political, and legal influences, have a positive and statistically significant effect on information and resources (at the chosen 5% level of significance). Moreover, information and resources are also found to have a positive and statistically significant effect on the youth's leadership participation (at the chosen 5% level of significance).

According to the effect sizes  $f^2$  in Table 5, both access and use of social media and social influence have a small effect on information and resources while political and legal influence is found to have a medium effect on information and resources among student leaders in Malaysia. Moreover, information and resources are also found to have a moderate effect on youth's leadership

**Table 4: Fornell-Larcker criterion and Heterotrait-monotrait ratio**

Variables	AUSM	SOIN	PLIN	INRE	YOLP
Fornell-Larcker criterion					
AUSM	0.746				
SOIN	0.090	0.726			
PLIN	0.153	0.446	0.813		
INRE	0.319	0.445	0.646	0.780	
YLPA	0.272	0.354	0.276	0.559	0.772
Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio					
AUSM	-				
SOIN	0.157	-			
PLIN	0.172	0.456	-		
INRE	0.349	0.446	0.679	-	
YLPA	0.301	0.416	0.294	0.595	-

AUSM: Access and usage of social media, SOIN: Social influence, PLIN: Political and legal influence, INRE: Information and resources, PLF: Political-legal framework, YOLP: Youth's leadership participation

**Table 5: Path coefficient**

Variables	Coefficient	t value	P value	f <sup>2</sup>	r <sup>2</sup>	Q <sup>2</sup>
AUSM→INRE	0.222	6.144	0.000	0.095		
SOIN→INRE	0.190	4.148	0.000	0.058	0.493	0.301
PLIN→INRE	0.527	13.828	0.000	0.436		
INRE→YLPA	0.559	14.314	0.000	0.454	0.310	0.182

AUSM: Access and usage of social media, SOIN: Social influence, PLIN: Political and legal influence, INRE: Information and resources, PLF: Political-legal framework, YOLP: Youth's leadership participation

participation among student leaders in Malaysia. The coefficient of determination (r<sup>2</sup>) of three endogenous latent variables as shown in Table 5 is considered acceptable, as this study is not designed to identify the key factor affecting information and resources; rather, the study only attempts to identify how different constructs in the context of the study's model affect information and resource. As for youth's leadership participation, the coefficient of determination (r<sup>2</sup>) is found to be weak but acceptable.

Q<sup>2</sup> value assesses the relative predictive relevance of a predictor construct on an endogenous construct value and a larger than zero value indicates that the path model's accuracy is acceptable (Hair et al., 2013). Based on Table 5, Q<sup>2</sup> values are greater than zero indicating the predictive relevance of the factors (i.e., access and use of social media, social, political, and legal influences) on information and resources; and of information and resources on the youth's leadership participation among student leaders in Malaysia.

**4.4. Mediating Effect of Information and Resources**

In terms of the mediating effect of information and resources between access and use of social media and youth's leadership participation, the steps, requirements for next steps, and the status are presented in Table 6. In step one, the coefficient of access and use of social media on youth's leadership participation is found to be 0.282 with a P-value of 0.000, which satisfies the requirements and allows conducting step two. Step two tests the effect of access and use of social media on information and resources. As the coefficient value for step two is found to be 0.222 with a P-value of 0.000, it satisfies the requirements and allows conducting step

three. In step three, the coefficient of information and resources on youth's leadership participation is found to be 0.559 with a P-value of 0.000, which satisfies the requirements and allows conducting step four. Step four tests the effect of access and use of social media and information and resources on youth's leadership participation. The coefficient value for step four is found to be 0.111 with a P-value of 0.012. The statistically significant (P < 0.05) effect of access and use of social media on youth's leadership participation in Steps 1-4 indicates partial mediation of information and resources between access and use of social media and youth's leadership participation among student leaders in Malaysia.

The mediating effect of information and resources between social influence and youth's leadership participation, the steps involved, requirements for next steps, and the status are also presented in Table 6. In step one, the coefficient of social influence on youth's leadership participation is found to be 0.364 with a P-value of 0.000, which satisfies the requirements and allows conducting step two. Step two tests the effect of social influence on information and resources. As the coefficient value for step two is found to be 0.190 with a P-value of 0.000, it satisfies the requirements and allows conducting step three. In step three, the coefficient of information and resources on youth's leadership participation is found to be 0.559 with a P-value of 0.000, which satisfies the requirements and allows conducting step four. Step four tests the effect of social influence and information and resources on youth's leadership participation. The coefficient value for step four is found to be 0.155 with a P-value of 0.001. The statistically significant effect of social influence on youth's leadership participation in Steps 1-4 indicates partial mediation of information and resources between social influence and youth's leadership participation among student leaders in Malaysia.

As for political and legal influence, Table 6 is referred to in reporting the following. In step one, the coefficient of political and legal influence on youth's leadership participation is found to be 0.287 with a P-value of 0.000, which satisfies the requirements and allows conducting step two. Step two tests the effect of political and legal influence on information and resources. As the coefficient value for step two is found to be 0.527 with a P-value of 0.000, it satisfies the requirements and allows conducting step three. In step three, the coefficient of information and resources on youth's leadership participation is found to be 0.559 with a P-value of 0.000, which satisfies the requirements and allows conducting step four. Step four tests the effect of political and legal influence and information and resources on youth's leadership participation. The coefficient value for step four is found to be -0.139 with a P-value of 0.007. The statistically significant effect of political and legal influence on youth's leadership participation in Steps 1-4 indicates partial mediation of information and resources between political and legal influence and youth's leadership participation among student leaders in Malaysia.

**5. DISCUSSION**

The findings from the study reveal that access and use of social media has a positive and significant effect on information and



**Table 6: Mediating effects**

Mediation	Coefficient	P	Requirements for next	Decision
AUSM→INRE→YLPA				
Step 1: AUSM→YLPA	0.282	0.000	Statistically significant	Satisfied
Step 2: AUSM→INRE	0.222	0.000	Statistically significant	Satisfied
Step 3: INRE→YLPA	0.559	0.000	Statistically significant	Satisfied
Step 4: AUSM and INRE→YLPA	(AUM→YLPA) 0.111	0.012	Step 1: P<0.05 Step 4: P<0.05	Partial mediation
SOIN→INRE→YLPA				
Step 1: SOIN→YLPA	0.364	0.000	Statistically significant	Satisfied
Step 2: SOIN→INRE	0.190	0.000	Statistically significant	Satisfied
Step 3: INRE→YLPA	0.559	0.000	Statistically significant	Satisfied
Step 4: SOIN and INRE→YLPA	(SOIN→YLPA) 0.155	0.001	Step 1: P<0.05 Step 4: P<0.05	Partial mediation
PLIN→INRE→YLPA				
Step 1: PLIN→YLPA	0.287	0.000	Statistically significant	Satisfied
Step 2: PLIN→INRE	0.527	0.000	Statistically significant	Satisfied
Step 3: INRE→YLPA	0.559	0.000	Statistically significant	Satisfied
Step 4: PLIN and INRE→YLPA	(PLIN→YLPA) -0.139	0.007	Step 1: P<0.05 Step 4: P<0.05	Partial mediation

AUSM: Access and usage of social media, SOIN: Social influence, PLIN: Political and legal influence, INRE: Information and resources, PLF: Political-legal framework, YOLP: Youth's leadership participation

resource among student leaders in Malaysia (H<sub>1</sub>). This could be interpreted as student leaders' dependence on social media for acquiring resources and information. Social influence has been proven to have a positive and significant effect on information and resources among student leaders in Malaysia (H<sub>2</sub>), which indicates that student leaders consider the perception of family, friends, mentors, teachers, and community leaders while acquiring information and resources. Political and legal influence has also been found to have a positive and significant effect on information and resources confirming hypothesis (H<sub>3</sub>) and this could be interpreted as student leaders' expression of trust towards public policy and democratic ideas while acquiring information and resources.

Lastly, information and resources have been found to have a positive and significant effect on youth's leadership participation among student leaders in Malaysia (H<sub>4</sub>). The finding reflects that student leaders in Malaysia depend on leadership, community development, volunteerism, professional associations, and funding for their extra-curricular activities, community associations, social works, and political activities. In terms of mediation, the mediating effect of information and resources on the relationships between access and use of social media, social influence, and political and legal influence with the youth's leadership participation, has been found significant (H<sub>5</sub>). This indicates that information and resource acquisition acts as a significant conjunction and is responsible for the relationship between access and use of social media, social influence, and political and legal influence with the youth's leadership participation reflecting that all relationships in this study depend on the partial interference of the mediator.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The present study examined the possible effects of social media, social influence and political-legal influence on youth's leadership participation via information and resource acquisition under the premise of the TPB (Ajzen, 1991), among youth leaders in Malaysia. It has long been held that collaborative and participatory

leadership, instead of an autocratic style, could develop leadership participation among citizens particularly the youth (Silong et al., 2008; Mohamad et al., 2009; Tam, 2008), whereby Participatory leadership acts as an instrument in increasing youths' involvement in societal activities by creating newer opportunities for youth participation in community-based leadership (Powers and Allaman, 2012). In such an attempt, the present study contributes to the existing literature in several folds as discussed below. Firstly, this study forwarded an extended TPB model to explain the effects of access, use of social media, social influence, and political-legal influence on youths' leadership participation by means of acquiring information and resources, among youth leaders in Malaysia. The present study has made a remarkable theoretical contribution towards the TPB in particular, and towards leadership and management theories in general by extending the TPB, by means of modifying the independent variables in its model by including political-legal factors, aside from the social influence.

Moreover, the present study integrated the mediating effect of information and resources on the relationship between social media, social influence, political-legal influence and youth's leadership participation in the adapted TPB model and thereby contributed towards the body of knowledge in the field of leadership. The integration of information and resources as a mediator was based on critical literature review, where it was found that social media, social influence, and political-legal influence alone could not lead to youth's leadership participation without the interference of information and resource acquisition, and hence the inclusion of the mediator in this study, in line with Baron and Kenny (1986). The present study further contributes theoretically by providing empirical evidence on the relationship between social media, social influence, political-legal influence, information and resources, and youth's leadership participation in Malaysia. Lastly, the study addresses the scarcity in studies focusing on social media and youths' social development, as disclosed by the literature review, thereby enriching the existing literature, particularly in the Malaysian context.

In terms of practical implications, the results achieved from this study could guide the Malaysian government in taking appropriate policy actions regarding youth's social and leadership development in general. Specifically, the findings of this study could be used by the Malaysian government in decision making related to social and youth development policy formulation. The findings of the present study would also help the youth of Malaysia to understand the effects of social media, socio-cultural factors, and political-legal dimensions on their behavior as future leaders, which should prevent them from joining unproductive social groups through social media or reacting negatively to social issues originating from other neighboring nations, as is being experienced in some countries around the world in recent times. The findings of the present study could also be helpful in reducing youth migration. Once enthusiastic about participating in leadership activities, the youth would rather focus on their studies or vocations that would help them to have better lives in the future, and contribute to community leadership within the country. Lastly, if by means of measures formulated with the help of the present study's findings, Malaysia could control youth related social vices; then, the country would achieve the deserving positive image internationally.

The present study could guide future researchers to understand the effect of access, use of social media, social influence, and political-legal influence on youths' leadership participation by means of acquiring information and resources, among youth leaders in Malaysia. Furthermore, future work could attempt to integrate more constructs into the study's model or implement the same model in different cultural or geographical settings to reveal deeper and generalized understanding of participatory leadership in the context of youth in developing countries.

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