Factors on political involvement among university student in Malaysia

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Abstract For a country to remain stable, young people's participation in politics is crucial. Today's youth, even university students who ought to be at the forefront of this crucial issue, are becoming less and less interested in participating in politics. The purpose of this study was to determine the elements that influence university students' political participation. A cross-sectional survey of 417 university students from Peninsular Malaysia's East Coast was done. The AMOS programme was used to analyze the data obtained through the questionnaire using the Structural Equation Model (SEM). The results demonstrate that factors such as attitude, family, media, and socializing have a favorable impact on university students' political involvement. This conclusion is supposed to serve as a foundation for different stakeholders to take all required steps to boost the involvement of university students in politics.

Keywords: political involvement, political engagement, youth

1. Introduction

For representative democracies to work, young people's participation in politics is essential (Dahya et al., 2021). Youth participation is necessary for the survival of democratic systems (Medeiros and Almond, 2020) and helps to foster increased political engagement, legitimacy, and accountability (Myers, 2017). However, according to data, young people are the least likely to cast ballots and engage in politics (Dahya et al., 2021), which means that they are not represented in politics, democracy, elections, or decision-making processes.

Public policy and governmental decision-making are also influenced by political activity (Yamamura et al., 2020). By participating in the democratic process, young people help to shape policies that are in line with their needs and ideals (Schlichtman, 2016). Government policies are also influenced by political participation; when more young people vote, political candidates are more likely to promote causes close to the hearts of voters, such as health care, employment opportunities, and education (Dahya et al., 2021).

Youth involvement in politics also motivates them to volunteer in their communities in ways other than just casting ballots (Medeiros and Almond, 2020). Youth who become involved in politics not only have the ability to voice their thoughts but also develop the ability to be strong advocates for their communities (Schlichtman, 2016). Young people can become agents of social change, and by participating in politics, they can help advance issues such as equal access to education, healthcare, civil rights, environmental sustainability, and equality regarding culture, gender, and sexual orientation. Political involvement among youth also supports social justice and equity (Myers, 2017).

Even college students recognize the value of young people becoming involved in politics. Students in higher education are in a unique stage of life where they are developing their worldview and preparing for their professions. Students who become involved in politics have the chance to learn the abilities and information required for effective civic participation and leadership positions in their future occupations. University students who are politically active have the chance to gain practical experience and opportunity to hone critical teamwork, communication, and organization skills (Saunders et al., 2020).

Students who join student organizations, for instance, gain experience motivating their peers, collaborating with university administration, planning events, and overseeing budgets. They may have better work opportunities in the future having developed and learned such skillsets. University students who are politically engaged also develop their critical thinking and decision-making abilities. Actively participating in policy conversations helps students develop a broader understanding of social and political concerns, which helps them make decisions that will affect their futures (Fisler et al.,

2019). Participating in politics also encourages peer dialog, active listening, and the growth of public issue mental competency.

Additionally, political participation may encourage activism and social change among college students. Politically active students are more likely to participate in local activity and advocacy (Ginwright et al., 2019). Students at universities contribute to initiatives aimed at advancing social justice, inclusion, and civic engagement outside of academic contexts by speaking up for social change. University students who are politically active go through transformative experiences and become future leaders who are committed to social justice, equity, and the common good.

It aids in paving the way for students to take on leadership positions in the future. University students can develop and hone their leadership skills, expand their personal networks, and elevate their visibility inside the university and beyond by participating in and serving in various leadership roles, such as those in student government, clubs, and organizations (Carleton, 2019). University students who take on leadership positions develop decision-making skills, a greater awareness of organizational culture, mentorship skills, confidence, and better job chances.

Therefore, political participation is crucial for university students. Participating in politics is an investment in the development of future advocates, leaders, and innovators of the next generation. Participating in politics encourages students to become active citizens and positively impact their communities through practical experience, the development of critical thinking and informed decision-making skills, the promotion of social change and activism, and the provision of a pathway to future leadership roles. Promoting civic engagement, social welfare, and the advancement of society requires increasing the participation of university students in politics.

This study was carried out to determine the factors that significantly contribute to university students' involvement in politics because it is crucial and essential for students to become involved in politics. This discovery is crucial so that all parties involved can utilize it to develop strategies for boosting student political involvement. This issue becomes much more crucial in the context of Malaysia when that country began implementing Undi18 (eligibility to vote at age 18) in 2022. With this most recent adoption, every university student has an automatic right to vote in Malaysia's political, democratic, and electoral systems.

2. Background

Many social and political scientists have been interested in the question of political engagement or involvement among college students. The future of democracy is thought to be shaped and decided by university students. They have the power to influence dialogs and laws regarding matters that have an impact on their present circumstances and prospects for the future. However, recent research has revealed that university students are not very politically engaged; globally, this problem has persisted for decades.

2.1. Lack of political engagement

According to a 2020 survey by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI), for instance, political and social involvement among university students is down from prior years. The survey, which concentrated on changes among first-year students, notes a decline in political involvement, protests, and volunteerism (HERI 2020). This finding emphasizes the need for additional study on the factors behind university students' declining political engagement.

Political disillusionment is a prevalent subject among young people, notably college students. According to research by van Stekelenburg et al. (2019), university students have a cynical attitude toward the political system and political actors. The survey also discovered that students typically have a negative perception of political leaders and institutions, seeing them as dishonest and unreliable. Students who are disenchanted and cynical become apathetic and uninterested in politics.

Additionally, many university students lack political understanding and exposure. According to a study by Goidel and Gross (2019), 36 percent of college students in the United States lack fundamental civic knowledge. A enormous obstacle is created by the lack of political education, particularly for students who want to become involved in politics. This situation is not localized; in fact, numerous other studies conducted by academics have found the same issue, namely, that university students worldwide have a dissatisfactory degree of exposure to and knowledge of politics.

A possible explanation for these phenomena is that individuals' busy schedules, which often include academic and social obligations, limit their opportunities to become involved in politics (Saunders et al., 2020). Students have been encouraged to put their personal interests ahead of political activism because of the focus placed on individualism in society. According to the HERI study previously mentioned, college students are less likely than their high school counterparts to take part in political gatherings and open demonstrations. As a result, busy schedules are thought to be a major obstacle to university students becoming involved in politics.

Social media is another reason for university students' low level of political engagement. Despite social media's success as a tool for political engagement, it has also contributed to information overload and misinformation (Motta et al., 2018). Some students seem to have become overwhelmed by the wealth of political material available online, fostering a climate that discourages political engagement.

The low level of political engagement among university students is also influenced by the absence of political campaigns and mobilization initiatives. University students may become involved in and more conscious of certain issues through political campaigns or other forms of mobilization (Wolfinger, 2018). However, the frequency and visibility of political campaigns and mobilization have decreased, which has reduced the opportunity for students to become involved.

The lack of political participation among college students highlights the need for renewed attention and action on the part of universities, and other important stakeholders should play in fostering political participation. While many stakeholders cannot influence some issues, such as social media and busy schedules, politicians and academics can take proactive steps. Introducing and incorporating political events, campaigns, and leadership development programmes for university students is one viable technique that might be used to promote expanded civic education initiatives (Goidel and Gross, 2019).

Low political engagement among college students is a multifaceted issue that necessitates multiple solutions. Academics, student organizations, university management, and the students themselves can contribute to the enhancement of political engagement and the promotion of a sense of civic responsibility among university students.

2.2. Consequences of low political engagement

A general decline in civic participation is caused by university students' low political engagement. The democratic process, including voting and lobbying, suffers when students withdraw from political problems (Goidel and Gross, 2019). Therefore, a lack of political participation threatens the democratic underpinnings of society. Students at universities are thought to be crucial in influencing and forming political discourse. In addressing social and political challenges affecting the younger generation, their views are crucial. However, their lack of political engagement limits their political voices and results in underrepresentation, particularly in regard to issues that concern them (Dahya et al., 2021).

Students who are politically active at their universities are exposed to real-world problems and grow in their sense of civic duty. Low political engagement will result in a separation from important issues and their impacts upon people's lives and society as a whole. Students at universities have the opportunity to grow personally and professionally by becoming involved in politics. Students' future responsibilities and possible career pathways are shaped by opportunities, including leadership positions, communication and organizational abilities, and mentorship (Carleton, 2019). Students lose out on the ability to develop their potential and acquire crucial life skills when they choose not to take advantage of these chances, such as political campaigns and mobilization.

University students' disengagement from politics has a negative impact on civic involvement. According to academics, university students' poor political engagement negatively impacts their participation in other civic duties, such as volunteering, charitable giving, and other community services (Binder and Wood, 2019). Therefore, political disengagement among university students has implications that go beyond a person's political actions.

University students are regarded as important contributors to political discourse and policymaking since they are a more educated population than their peers, who do not pursue further education. Low political engagement, however, limits their ability to speak out on topics that matter to them and diminishes true representation (Almond et al., 2021). As a result, university students who are less politically active are underrepresented in the political system, which eventually reduces their potential to shape political outcomes.

Another perspective is that if college students stay out of politics, political cynicism and indifference may spread. Politics-related disillusionment can breed a climate of political indifference, which has far-reaching effects on society as a whole (Trussler and Soroka, 2019). The lack of political participation among college students emphasizes the need to better include them in politics to prevent political cynicism and indifference.

Participating in politics offers opportunities for growth and development on a personal level. Students' future responsibilities and possible jobs are shaped by opportunities such as leadership roles, communication, and organizational abilities (Gildersleeve, 2019). A lack of political participation results in lost possibilities for personal growth and development, which may have an impact on future success and career options.

2.3. Causal Factors

Numerous factors affect university students' political engagement, according to studies. The recent trend of low political engagement highlights the necessity of determining and comprehending the causes of the situation. For instance, socioeconomic status (SES) is one of the most important variables influencing political activity among college students. Socioeconomic differences have a direct impact on political participation, particularly among university students (Allen and Fahey, 2020). Low SES students frequently have restricted access to resources, including political information, which impacts how much they participate in politics. High SES children, on the other hand, have greater access to resources, which enables them to engage in more political activities.

Additionally, important predictors of political activity among college students are political ideology and allegiance. Students who identify with particular political views are more likely than those who do not to participate in political activities

(van Duyn, 2019). However, because of the ideology of the ruling majority, some minority group students who may hold differing political views might not be allowed to express their ideas.

Individuals' knowledge of politics and current events is referred to as civic literacy. The Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) has found that students who are more knowledgeable and civically literate are likely to be more politically engaged (HERI, 2020). Through general education classes and outreach initiatives, universities and educators can make a substantial contribution to the promotion of civic literacy.

The atmosphere on college campuses and the political atmosphere are also significant determinants of students' political activity. The amount of political engagement among students is directly influenced by the campus environment and political climate (Estrada et al., 2020). Political speech and actions are made easier by the campus climate and political culture, which also give all students a sense of security and belonging.

University students' social networks and peer pressure are important variables that affect their political activity. According to Dalton and Klingeman (2018), students who participate in political activity frequently have politically minded acquaintances. Therefore, a student's social network significantly influences how politically engaged they are.

University students' political engagement is significantly influenced by psychological characteristics such as motivation, self-efficacy, and political interest (Brady et al., 2019). Students with greater motivation engage in politics to a greater extent. An individual's level of self-efficacy, or self-belief in one's capacity to engage in politics, affects their level of engagement. Students who have high levels of self-efficacy are more likely than those who have low levels to become involved in politics. Furthermore, those who are more politically engaged than those who are less politically interested tend to report higher levels of political interest.

2.4. Gaps of knowledge

While it is generally acknowledged that the previously mentioned elements have a substantial impact on university students' political engagement, further research is still needed to pinpoint additional aspects that could have an impact. For instance, in a recent study, researchers pointed out that despite the topic receiving much attention, there are still considerable knowledge gaps about the psychological mechanisms behind student political engagement (Lelkes et al., 2021). They contend that more research is required to fully understand the influence of student political activity on beliefs, values, emotions, and attitudes.

In another study, Arnold and Alvarez (2018) make the case that the conventional view of political knowledge as a unidimensional construct oversimplifies the variety of abilities necessary for political involvement. The authors contend that a reconsideration of the notion of political knowledge may result in more accurate methods for gauging the connection between political activity and knowledge.

In addition, a different study highlights how research on student political involvement frequently focuses on the unique traits and characteristics of the students themselves, omitting the larger institutional and contextual elements that also play a role in engagement (Stetsenko and Simpkins, 2021). They contend that extending research beyond the individual level can help researchers gain a better grasp of the larger institutional and contextual elements influencing university students' political activity.

Despite the importance of the aforementioned aspects in understanding what determines political participation among university students, further research is still required to pinpoint any unidentified factors that might have an impact. Studies should continue to concentrate on the psychological underpinnings of students' political involvement, rethink the conventional understanding of political knowledge, and examine the institutional and environmental influences on political engagement.

2.5. Hypothesis Model

Political engagement among college students is crucial, as was previously discussed, as it has a direct impact on the growth of civil society. The beginning point of every behavior, including engaging in politics, is hence intention. The underlying inclination of an individual to act in a particular way is known as intention. Individuals' intentions influence their behavior and play a critical role in determining whether they will engage in politics.

The theory of planned behavior is among the most important theories in social psychology (Ajzen, 1991). This theory holds that the most crucial variable in predicting behavior is intention. According to the idea, three factors - attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control - have an impact on intention. An individual's attitude might be thought of as either a favorable or negative assessment of the behavior. Subjective norms are the perceived social pressure to engage in a behavior or refrain from doing so. An individual's opinion of how simple or difficult it is to carry out the behavior is referred to as perceived behavioral control.

Political involvement is a complicated behavior that is affected by a variety of contextual, societal, and personal factors. Personal characteristics such as personality traits and values are considered personal factors. Political, economic, and cultural issues are contextual elements, whereas social aspects include peer and familial influences (Bennett et al., 2017). University students' attitudes, subjective standards, and perceived behavioral control have all been found to be significant

predictors of political activity, according to research. For instance, a study by Jenkins et al. (2018) found that among university students, attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control were important predictors of political participation.

Social characteristics are crucial in predicting political activity among college students. Kim et al. (2018) discovered that classroom, peer, and family influences strongly impacted college students' political activity. The study found that first-generation, low-income, and minority students may benefit most from social factors.

More research is still required in the context of Malaysia, although earlier studies have highlighted attitudes, family, social media, and interaction behavior as significant factors impacting university students' political involvement. This is because the political atmosphere in Malaysia differs from that of other nations, and particular causes may have varying effects on political activity among university students.

For instance, a study demonstrates the significance of opinions in predicting political activity among college students. According to the study's findings, students' political involvement was influenced by their positive views toward political activities, such as sharing their thoughts on political matters (Nweekwele et al., 2019). However, the political environment in Malaysia may also have differing effects on attitudes toward political activity, necessitating more research.

According to a different study, the family environment, which includes communication within the family and parental political activity, affects college students' political involvement. University students' involvement in politics is positively correlated with family communication and parental support, according to the study (Salleh et al., 2021).

Additionally, although social media's function in encouraging political engagement among college students has been well documented, its efficacy is greatly influenced by the milieu and political context of the individual (Hosseini and Azman, 2021). According to another Malaysian study, peer support has a significant impact on university students' political participation (Mydin et al., 2021). According to the study, peers may serve as a source of motivation by sharing and debating current political concerns with one another and by kicking off engagement in political activities.

Finally, a study by Sazlina et al. (2021) looked at the influence of social behavior on Malaysian student political participation and involvement. They discovered that social interactions, including political debates, online political participation, and attendance at political events, significantly influence student political involvement in Malaysia, indicating that these characteristics should be taken into account in future studies.

The particular political environment in Malaysia needs further research to identify the precise elements that influence Malaysian university students' political activity, even if earlier studies have identified a variety of factors that influence student political involvement elsewhere. Attitudes, family support, media influence, and social interaction style are all potential contributing elements that should be investigated.

A hypothesis model, as shown in Figure 1, is suggested for this investigation based on the justifications given and tailored to Malaysia's political climate. According to this study, the intention of university students to become involved in politics is influenced by factors including attitude (H1), family (H2), media (H3), and associations (H4), while the actual involvement of university students in politics is influenced by the intention (H5) itself.
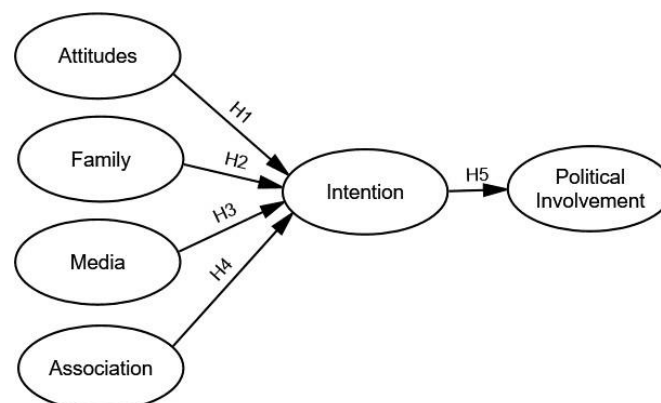

Figure 1 Hypothesis model.

3. Methods

3.1. Designs

This study employs generic theories to uncover unique political involvement behaviors among university students using a deductive approach. Additionally, this study applied a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional survey design to investigate political engagement behavior among respondents. For political studies, whether to identify voter behavior, voter

tendencies, voting patterns, etc., this design is appropriate, frequently used, and may produce accurate and reliable results (Luskin and Bullock, 2021; Hillygus and Shields, 2019; Traugott and Wlezien, 2019; Goren, 2019; Neundorf and Adams, 2018).

3.2. Participants

The participants were 417 public university students from Peninsular Malaysia's East Coast who were chosen by a stratified random sampling technique that took into account differences in gender, age, study field, residential location, parent's socioeconomic position, and other factors. The relevant university's dean of student affairs gave his or her consent for undergraduate students to participate in the study. With authorization, a Google Forms online survey was employed because it offered a free platform for online data collection. Emails with the online survey and an explanation of the study's goals and participants' roles were delivered to responders. Participants were assured of the confidentiality of their answers and personal information, and they had the option to leave the study at any time. Despite attending institutions on Peninsular Malaysia's East Coast, the respondents hail from all Malaysian states, including Sabah and Sarawak. A total of 62.8 percent of the 417 respondents were women, while the remainder were men. In addition, 52.5 percent of the students are majoring in social sciences, with the remaining students coming from science and technology. A total of 55.4 percent of respondents are Malay, 24.0 percent are Chinese, 11.8 percent are Indian, and the balance is from other ethnic groups. The majority of respondents (61.8 percent) came from urban areas, with the remaining respondents coming from rural areas. The responders are all between the ages of 20 and 25.

3.3. Measures

A questionnaire with seven primary sections, namely, respondent demographics, attitudes, family, media, associations, intention, and political involvement, was used to gather research data. With two response categories ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree and from never to very frequently, a Likert scale with five feedback points is used. The instrument's overall reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) is 0.951, while the reliability coefficients for each individual variable range from 0.82 to 0.90.

3.4. Analysis

Software such as SPSS and AMOS Version 26 was used to investigate the relationship among attitudes, family, media, associations, intention, and political involvement. The four basic statistical components of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were factor loading, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and composite reliability. Any variable and item will be considered to be a valid measurement scale if the beta weight value for factor loading is over 0.5 (>0.5) but still acceptable for more than 0.4 if AVE for its variable is achieved, the value of average variance extracted (AVE) for convergent validity is over 0.5 (AVE>0.5), the square root of AVE is greater than the correlation values between items in the same construct for discriminant validity (square root of AVE > r), and the composite reliability is acceptable once the CR value is over 0.70 (Hair et al 2014). A hypothesis will be considered valid for testing if the critical ratio (C. R) is greater than ±1.96. Several fit indexes from the absolute, relative, and parsimony categories are checked to ensure that the tested model fits the hypothesis and the study data. According to Hair et al. (2014), the model is deemed to fit if the ratio is greater than 5, the CFI is greater than 0.95, the NFI is greater than 0.90, and the RMSEA is less than 0.08. The overall results of the study, in particular the tested assumptions, are summarized in the final model shown below.

4. Results

Table 1 below displays the study's preliminary findings. Student political involvement has a score of 3.09 out of a possible five points, which is considered to be at a modest level. The normality test also demonstrates that the dependent variable that is student involvement in politics has a normal distribution, allowing for the use of parametric tests and the generalization procedure. The instrument's overall reliability, which ranges from 0.82 to 0.90, is also very excellent. According to the presented hypothesis, there is also a strong correlation between the factors that the hypothesized model predicts will interact with one another. In Table 1, every preliminary finding is shown.

Table 1 Preliminary results.

Variable	Mean	Sd	Skew	Kurt	Alpha	1	2	3	4	5	6
(1) Attitudes	4.41	0.76	-1.59	4.17	0.86	1	0.30	0.09	-0.01	0.25	0.19
(2) Family	3.86	0.91	-0.73	1.01	0.82		1	0.60	0.61	0.58	0.62
(3) Media	2.86	1.21	0.28	-0.72	0.90			1	0.85	0.40	0.84
(4) Association	2.79	1.20	0.46	-0.40	0.85				1	0.43	0.85
(5) Intention	3.65	1.09	-0.59	0.30	0.90					1	0.56
(6) Involvement	3.09	1.31	-0.08	-0.73	0.82						1

CFA was used to assess the validity and reliability of the measurement of all the study variables before the research hypothesis was put to the test. Of all the suggested items, item IN4 from the Intention variable was dropped because it only received a Beta value of 0.30, which prevented the Intention variable's Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value from reaching the required level of convergent validity. Additionally, because it only received a Beta Weight of 0.36, one item from the Political Involvement variable, IV4, had to be eliminated for the same reason. When the AVE square root values for each variable are higher than the correlation values between the items in each variable, all the measured variables likewise achieve a suitable level of discriminant validity. The correlation between the elements in each variable ranges from 0.268 to 0.702; however, due to the large number of correlation values, only a portion of them are shown in this report. All of the measurements for the CFA test are shown in Table 2, which supports the claim that all research variables achieve an adequate level of convergent validity, discriminant validity, and composite reliability in the measurement.

Table 2 CFA results.

Variable	AVE	AVE Square Root	Composite Reliability, CR
Attitudes	0.570	0.755	0.869
Family	0.509	0.714	0.832
Media	0.666	0.816	0.908
Association	0.537	0.733	0.852
Intention	0.500	0.682	0.722
Involvement	0.548	0.741	0.915

The results indicate that all study hypotheses are accepted because the critical ratio (CR) value for all interactions between the evaluated variables attained a value above ±1.96. Thus, it can be deduced that the factors of attitude, family, media, and associations significantly influence students' intentions to become active in politics, while those intentions positively influence students' actual political involvement. The values for Beta, Standard Error, Critical Ratio, and P Value for the tested hypothesis are all shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3 Hypothesis testing.

Hypothesis			Beta, β	S.E	C.R	P Value	Decision
Intention	<---	Family	.961	.150	6.407	0.00	H1 accepted
Intention	<---	Media	.332	.037	9.002	0.00	H2 accepted
Intention	<---	Association	.375	.036	10.398	0.00	H3 accepted
Intention	<---	Attitudes	.272	.054	5.042	0.00	H4 accepted
Involvement	<---	Intention	.830	.078	13.570	0.00	H5 accepted

With the intention of finding at least one fit index for each of the three categories that is basic, relative, and parsimony, the model fit test is carried out. According to the results in Table 4 below, the fit indexes CMIN Ratio, CFI, NFI, PCFI, PNFI, and RMSEA all reach a sufficient score while meeting the required standards. As a result, the hypothesis model put forward in this study is congruent with the field research results.

Table 4 Model Fitness.

Fit Indexes	Needed value	Score	Result
CMIN Sig	>0.05	0.000	Not achieve
CMIN Ratio	<5	5.151	Acceptable
CFI	>0.90	0.911	Achieve
NFI	>0.95	0.963	Achieve
PCFI	>0.5	0.726	Achieve
PNFI	>0.5	0.690	Achieve
RMSEA	<0.08	0.100	Acceptable

The final model demonstrates that the four independent variables, namely, student attitudes, parental involvement, media exposure, and behavioral associations, have a beneficial impact on university students' intentions to participate in politics. All of these factors together account for 68 percent of university students' intentions to participate in politics. The actual behavior of university students' involvement also benefits from the intention variable, which adds up to 68 percent. The study's final model is shown in Figure 2 below exactly as anticipated.
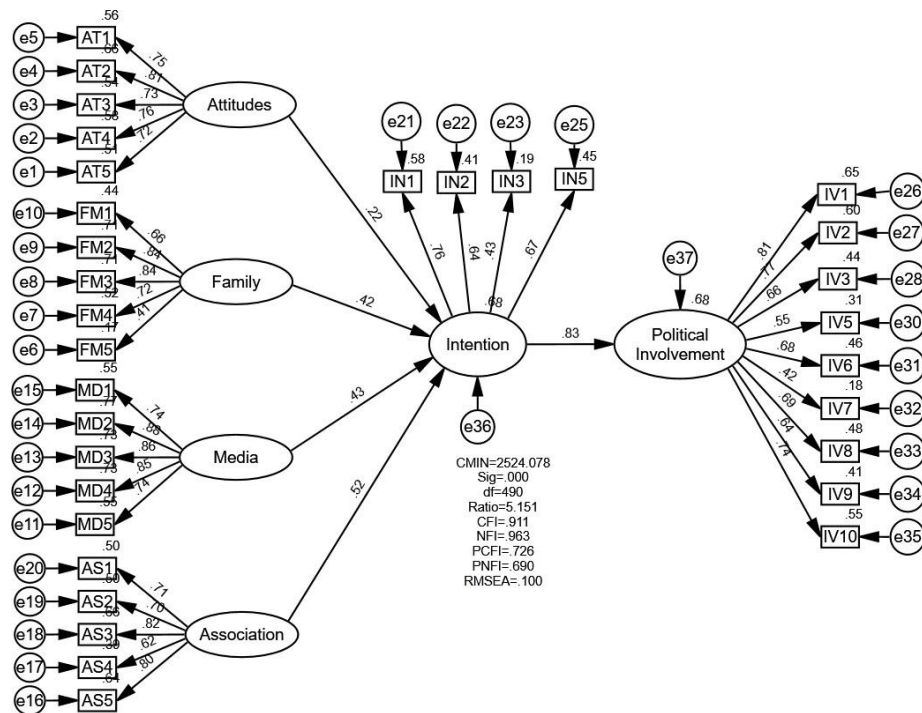
Figure 2 Final model.

5. Discussion

This study aims to examine the factors influencing the political participation of students at universities in Peninsular Malaysia's East Coast. According to the results, attitudes, family, the media, and affiliation with like-minded people are all significant determinants of whether students will become involved in politics.

Since attitudes affect how people perceive political activity, attitudes play a significant role in predicting political involvement. According to research, positive attitudes toward political participation have been linked to higher levels of political activity (Jost et al., 2018). These prior studies' conclusions are supported by the findings, which also emphasize the significance of attitudes in determining students' intentions to become involved in politics. For instance, encouraging students to become involved in politics can boost their enthusiasm to do so, as well as their levels of political efficacy and civic engagement (Wojcieszak, 2020).

Young people's political association is significantly shaped by their family (Flanagan and Levine, 2018). Most young people receive their socialization mostly from their families, who are also very important in passing down political opinions, values, and attitudes. The discovery that family has an impact on students' intentions to become involved in politics highlights the significance of socialization processes in determining political behavior. According to a recent study by Matthews (2021), for instance, parents' political beliefs and behaviors, particularly their effectiveness in handling politics, are linked to higher levels of political engagement among university students.

Another element that has an impact on college students' political engagement is the media. Media exposure can raise students' political consciousness and give them information they can use to become involved in politics. According to research, social media in particular can have a significant impact on how young people feel about politics and behave in that regard (Bode and Vraga, 2018). In contrast, polarizing and reinforcing media can be harmful to political engagement since they can erode trust in institutions and reduce the perceived importance of political activities (Bakir and McStay, 2018). The findings highlight the important role that media play in influencing young people's political views and behaviors by indicating that media exposure does have a significant impact on university students' intentions to become involved in politics.

Association with like-minded people plays a crucial role in influencing how young people behave politically. According to social identification theory, when people feel connected to others who share their political beliefs, they are more inclined to participate in political activities (Van Bavel and Pereira, 2018). The study's findings underscore the importance of social identity in influencing political behavior by concluding that students' intentions to become involved in politics are shaped by their associations with people who hold similar political beliefs. Students who were associated with a specific political group or organization were more likely to participate in political activities and were more politically educated than students who were not, according to a recent study by O'Toole et al. (2021).

These findings demonstrate the significance of a number of variables in determining college students' political activity and intentions. Students' involvement in politics is influenced by a variety of crucial elements, including attitudes, family, the

media, and friendships with like-minded people. The results highlight how crucial it is to comprehend these elements to encourage young people to become involved in politics.

These findings have a number of consequences for educators and policymakers. First, authorities should take into account focused initiatives that aim to enhance young people's attitudes toward political engagement. These efforts should emphasize the possible effects of youth participation in politics on their communities and work to increase their perception of the relevance and significance of political activity.

Second, educators must ensure that children are exposed to knowledge and events that favorably influence their socialization processes. This entails giving students access to factual information about political activity, encouraging critical thinking, and giving them chances to become involved in politics. Third, decision-makers should ensure that the media landscape supports the promotion of favorable political attitudes and conduct. This includes policing media that support extreme viewpoints and supporting media that present honest and impartial reporting.

6. Conclusions

In conclusion, the study found that association with like-minded people is the main contributor to students' participation in politics. Nevertheless, other factors also have a significant impact on university students' intentions to participate in politics, and these intentions also considerably influence their actual participation in politics. It is simple to summarize that the influences of attitude, family, media, and associations favorably and significantly contribute to college students' participation in politics, democracy, and the electoral process. The significance of numerous elements in determining university students' intention to become involved in politics and their political activity has been highlighted by these findings, which serve as a conclusion. The ramifications of these findings highlight how crucial it is to comprehend these elements to encourage young people to become involved in politics.

7. Recommendations

This study suggests numerous steps that different stakeholders should take to promote and encourage political involvement among university students based on the findings of factors leading to political involvement among students. It aims to boost political participation, particularly among Malaysian university students who are already entitled to vote thanks to the country's 2022 plan to lower the voting age to 18.

First and foremost, educational institutions are crucial in influencing students' attitudes toward political participation. As a result, universities and colleges ought to think about including political involvement in their curricula, such as by providing courses that are devoted to politics and civic engagement. The current educational curricula should include a special subject that focuses on politics to encourage students to learn about political concepts such as democracy, policies, decision-making, critical thinking, and the political system to increase their social awareness of younger people. In addition to inviting speakers to campus to speak with students on the importance of politics and civic engagement and reflecting a range of perspectives on matters that are significant to students. Instructors should give kids the chance to take part in civic engagement activities and election campaigns. Instructors must also take on a variety of tasks in the classroom to enhance students' critical thinking abilities, research skills, logical argumentation skills, and soft skills. Students can improve their political self-efficacy and understanding of how their participation might affect their communities by taking part in these activities.

Second, during a young person's formative years, the family is an essential source of political socialization. To encourage young people to become politically involved, parents, guardians, and other family members can talk to them about politics, current affairs, and political issues. Families may also urge their children to participate in or attend town hall meetings and political rallies. Youth will increase their social networks, acquire an interest in politics, and gain a better understanding of political principles and procedures by doing this.

Third, the media significantly influences how young people think about and behave in relation to politics. Media businesses should therefore encourage political participation by promoting correct information and offering material that emphasizes the significance and relevance of political action. Additionally, media outlets should work to cover political events impartially and steer clear of radical viewpoints. They should strive to provide fair information that promotes wise decision-making instead.

Finally, political parties and other political organizations may launch focused outreach programmes for young people. For instance, they might provide internship opportunities so that students can experience politics and the decision-making process directly. Political parties may also host town hall meetings and rallies where attendees could ask questions and engage in interactive debates while also learning more about their programmes and ideas. Students will thus have a deeper comprehension of political procedures and experience a stronger sense of involvement in politics as a result.

In terms of implementation, there are a number of things stakeholders may do to boost political participation among college students. Educational institutions, family members, media firms, and political organizations are some of these

stakeholders. By offering chances and rewards for political participation, we not only promote more engaged and responsive democracy but also more active and educated citizens.

In conclusion, theoretically, this study was successful in identifying up to 68 percent of the variables that support college students' involvement in politics. Thirty-two percent of additional elements, which were not found in this study, nevertheless play a role in student political engagement. In addition to the four main factors that have been effectively identified through this study, further research should be conducted to determine what additional factors influence university students' involvement in politics.

Ethical considerations

The authors confirm that have obtained all consent required by the applicable law to publish any personal details or images of patients, research subjects, or other individuals used. The authors agree to provide Multidisciplinary Science Journal with copies of the consentor evidence that such consent has been obtained if requested.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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