

The Role of Social Media on Political Behaviour in Malaysia

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Abstract : General Election has been the backbone of democracy that permits people to choose their representatives as they deem fit. The support preferences of the voter differ from one to another, particularly in a plural society like Malaysia. The turning up of high numbers of young voters during the Malaysia 14th General Election has been said to have been caused by social media including Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube and Telegram, WeChat and SMS/MMs. It has been observed that, besides using social media as an interaction tool among social friends, it is also an important source of information to know about issues, politics and politicians. This paper exhibits the role of social media in providing political information to young voters, before an election and during the election campaign. This study examines how this information is being translated into election support. A total of 799 Malay young respondents in Selangor have been surveyed and interviewed. This study revealed that social media has become the source of political information among Malay young voters. This research suggested that social media had a significant effect on the support during the election. Social media plays an important role in carrying information such as current issues, voting trends, candidate imagery and matters that may influence the view of young voters. The information obtained from social media has been translated into a voting decision.

Keywords : social media, political behaviour, voters' choice, election.

Conference Title : ICMFC 2022 : International Conference on Media, Film and Communication

Conference Location : Amsterdam, Netherlands

Conference Dates : September 15-16, 2022