

# THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE UNDERSTANDING OF CURRENT ISSUES: A PRELIMINARY SURVEY ON MARA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY (UiTM) STUDENTS

Mohd Zulhilmi Mohd Yunus<sup>1</sup>

Nurul Nisha Mohd Shah<sup>2</sup>

Ahmad Faiz Yaakob<sup>3</sup>

Mohd Shariman Shafie<sup>4</sup>

Wan Rohila Ganti Wan Abdul Ghapar<sup>5</sup>

Shahidah Abdul Razak<sup>6</sup>

Hazlina Mohd Padil<sup>7</sup>

Aida Abdullah<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1, 3,6,8</sup>Faculty Of Administrative Science & Policy Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Seremban, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia,

(E-Mail: zulhilmi@uitm.edu.my, ahmad405@uitm.edu.my, shahidah056@uitm.edu.my, aida547@uitm.edu.my)

<sup>2</sup>Faculty Communication And Media Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Rembau, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia, (E-Mail: nurulnisha@uitm.edu.my)

<sup>4</sup>Faculty Of Sports Science And Recreation, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Seremban, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia, (E-Mail: shariman\_shafie@uitm.edu.my)

<sup>5</sup>Faculty Of Law & International Relations, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Malaysia, (E-Mail: rohilaganti@unisza.edu.my)

<sup>7</sup>Faculty Of Law, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Seremban, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia, (E-Mail: hazlina6749@uitm.edu.my)

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**Abstract:** *In today's digital age, the seriousness and accuracy of information disseminated through social media are often disputed, and different attitudes and views regarding the use of social media as a source of information are common phenomena found among various layers of society. Thus, this study investigates UiTM students' views and attitudes toward using social media to understand and disseminate information about current issues. This study employs a census sampling methodology involving all 165,594 UiTM students across thirty-four UiTM campuses nationwide, with the cooperation of campus administration. Although every student was allowed to participate, only 5,586 respondents participated in our survey. Data was collected and analyzed using IBM SPSS 27 Statistical Software by evaluating the frequency and percentage of information obtained. The study's findings reveal the complexity in students' views on using the Internet and social media as the primary source of information about current issues. While most respondents acknowledge the important role of social media, some express doubts about the validity and reliability of information from these platforms. Additionally, engagement in reading news portals and following political leaders on social media also*

*reflects the variation in attitudes among students. The implications of this study emphasise the need to improve media literacy among students, including the ability to assess the reliability of information sources and awareness of the risk of false information on social media. With a deeper understanding of the role of social media in shaping thoughts and actions, UiTM students are expected to better navigate the challenges related to the influence of social media in understanding current issues more effectively and efficiently.*

**Keywords:** *Social Media, UiTM Students, Current Issues, Media Literacy, Information Influence*

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## **Introduction**

Social media has become an increasingly popular platform for communicating information and interacting in contemporary society, including among university students at UiTM. The presence of social media has significantly influenced the way students understand the issues around them. These students often use platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to get information on current issues, especially in the political and economic fields. Social media has become a powerful medium for shaping the perception of one's surroundings. However, the influence of social media on their understanding of these issues still needs to be better understood. Therefore, a more in-depth study on the relationship between the use of social media and the knowledge of current issues among UiTM students is essential.

The use of social media has brought many benefits, such as easy access to information, but it also brings risks, such as the spread of false or inaccurate information. The effectiveness of social media as a source of information is not without risk and responsibility. This can affect students' understanding of current political and economic issues. In this context, a study on the influence of social media on the knowledge of current issues among UiTM students will provide a clearer view of the role and impact of social media in shaping their perspective on the world.

## **Statement of Problem**

The use of social media as the primary channel to obtain information on current issues has increased significantly among university students, including at UiTM. They no longer rely entirely on traditional sources such as newspapers or television to get information about something. Social media allows these students to get fast and up-to-date information with just one touch on their smartphone. However, the effectiveness and validity of information obtained through social media still need to be determined. There is concern regarding the possibility of students being exposed to false or inaccurate information that may influence their thinking and views on current issues. Agenda Setting Theory becomes relevant in this context, where the use of social media plays a role in determining which topics are emphasized, and this effect may influence students' views on current issues.

In addition, there are also differences of opinion and attitude among UiTM students regarding the reliability of social media as a source of information on current issues. Some students may completely trust the information obtained through social media platforms, while others may be more sceptical and choose to get information from other sources. Social media algorithms also adjust information display based on previous interests and views. This situation can cause students to get stuck in the filter bubble phenomenon, which is a situation where they are only exposed to points of view similar to their own. This situation can threaten the reliability of the information because students may be less exposed to various points of view. The theory of

selective exposure and confirmation bias also becomes relevant here, where students seek and accept information that confirms their opinions or beliefs and confirms information that aligns with existing views without considering opposing views or evidence.

Therefore, there is a need to systematically study the views and attitudes of UiTM students towards the use of social media in the context of recognizing and disseminating information on current issues. This study will help identify challenges and opportunities students face using social media as a source of information and provide guidance to improve media literacy and critical awareness among university students.

### **The Role Of Media And Public Opinion: Theory And Research Highlights**

Social media plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion on societal issues. By facilitating more efficient interactions, information sharing, and data verification, social media platforms have become integral to contemporary communication. The Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka dictionary defines social media as various mediums or communication channels that swiftly convey information to the public, creating a dynamic and interactive sharing environment. According to Hamizi (2023), the development of digital technology has led to the rise of social media as a form of 'New media,' characterized by its interactive and multimedia nature, free from traditional transmission constraints such as distance and time. While social media fosters online relationships and enhances information interaction, it also poses risks through excessive online engagement.

The impact of social media on information dissemination and public opinion is significant (Dewi & Gani, 2013). Shazalina and Rosyidah (2019) highlight how social media influences community involvement with current issues, while Syed et al. (2015) recognize its role as a key agent of socialization, alongside family and educational institutions. Social media not only serves as a medium for processing public opinion but also influences it. Public opinion, shaped by collective individual interactions, often reflects subjective, emotional responses influenced by personal sentiments. Despite its subjectivity, public opinion plays a vital role in democratic processes and societal decision-making. For instance, social media's impact on Barack Obama's U.S. presidential election victory (Ansari, 2013) demonstrates its potential to influence public opinion, with a small percentage of individuals swaying their networks' views (Graham & Wright, 2014; Himelboim et al., 2009; Huffaker, 2010). This underscores the need for further exploration of how social media impacts public opinion, particularly in political contexts.

To understand how social media shapes public opinion, several theories are pertinent. Agenda Setting Theory posits that media plays a vital role in setting the public agenda by highlighting specific issues. According to McCombs and Shaw (1972), the frequency and intensity with which an issue is covered in the media influence its perceived importance among the public. This theory suggests that the more frequently an issue is highlighted on social media, the more likely it is to be regarded as important by users. Studies supporting this theory include those by Weaver, Graber, McCombs, and Eyal (1981), which show a positive relationship between media coverage and public awareness of issues. Similarly, Price, Tewksbury, and Powers (1997) found that media agendas significantly affect public attention and perceptions of political issues. These findings support the notion that media coverage directly influences public priorities and perceptions.

Selective Exposure Theory describes how individuals seek out information that aligns with their pre-existing views while disregarding contradictory information. In the context of social media,

users often select content that confirms their beliefs, leading to information silos or "filter bubbles." Knobloch-Westerwick and Meng (2012) demonstrated that social media users tend to reinforce selective exposure by choosing content that aligns with their views. This theory is further supported by Knobloch-Westerwick and Meng (2009), who found that social media users actively seek and disseminate information that confirms their perspectives, while Bakshy, Messing, and Adamic (2015) highlighted how social media algorithms reinforce selective exposure by prioritizing content that matches user preferences. These findings illustrate how selective exposure on social media can limit exposure to diverse viewpoints and reinforce existing beliefs.

Confirmation Bias Theory reflects the tendency of individuals to interpret and recall information in a way that supports their existing beliefs. This is particularly evident in political contexts, where users often affirm information that aligns with their views, even if it is inaccurate. Nyhan and Reifler (2010) found that individuals frequently accept information that supports their political beliefs, regardless of its accuracy. Similarly, Lewandowsky, Ecker, and Cook (2017) emphasized that overcoming confirmation bias requires complex cognitive and psychological approaches. These studies highlight that social media interactions can reinforce users' pre-existing beliefs, making it challenging to alter their views despite the presence of contradictory evidence.

By integrating these theories, this study aims to investigate how the interplay between social media users, the content presented, and the platform's algorithm affects the formation of public opinion on specific issues, with a focus on UiTM students. It is hypothesized that the amount of time spent on social media correlates with individual views on these issues. Understanding this interaction will provide deeper insights into how media interactions shape public opinion and contribute to our knowledge of social media's role in influencing societal views, particularly among university students.

### **Research Methods**

The data obtained was analyzed using the IBM SPSS 27 Statistical Package, with a focus on frequencies and percentages related to 13 questions concerning social media. The analysis results provide a deeper understanding of the level of political awareness among UiTM degree students. Although the response rate was relatively low, with only 5,586 out of 165,594 students participating, the data collected still offers valuable insights into the political landscape within this demographic. The use of census sampling ensures that there is potential representation from various UiTM campuses nationwide. Additionally, the adaptation of the questionnaire based on previous research conducted by Marshelayanti (2016) and Yazid (2020) has enhanced the credibility of the study's methodology and strengthened the comparison of results with previous studies. Dissemination of study links via email and WhatsApp messages to campus authorities facilitated data collection without compromising respondents' comfort. Overall, the systematic approach to data collection and analysis, along with the use of robust research instruments, has contributed to the rigour and reliability of the research findings regarding the role and influence of media among UiTM students.

### **Findings and Analysis**

The impact of social media on youth political participation is evident in how it shapes their awareness, attitudes, and behaviors. This study explores the influence of platforms like Facebook and Twitter on young adults' engagement with current political issues, providing

insights into the evolving dynamics of political communication in the digital age. Below is a

Totally Agree	Agree	Neutral	Do not agree	Strongly disagree	
22	63	788	2125	2885	5883

description of the data obtained.

**a. 'I get information about current issues from the internet'.**

Social media has become an essential platform for disseminating information about current issues among UiTM students. With the increasing use of social media, it is important to understand the attitudes and responsibilities of students in spreading the information. This study aims to identify the extent to which students feel responsible for spreading information about current issues on their social media, as well as the implications for understanding current issues among UiTM students. The discussion is organized based on the questions asked.

The study titled, 'Perception and Influence of Social Media in Engagement Politics Student University: Study in the Circle UiTM students aims to evaluate the view of UiTM students' dependency on the Internet to get information about issue current. The first question was, "I get information about current issues online." The study's findings revealed various opinions among UiTM students regarding their sources of information about current issues.

Specifically, most respondents showed a high level of agreement, with 22 strongly agreeing and 63 agreeing that they get information about current issues from the Internet. This shows the heavy reliance on online platforms to stay informed. On the other hand, many respondents expressed doubts about relying on the Internet for information about current issues. Seven hundred eighty-eight students showed a neutral attitude, disagreed, or agreed with the statement. This neutral attitude reflects a segment of the student population that may take a balanced approach or interact with multiple sources of information.

The most noticeable trend is when many respondents disagree with the statement. Specifically, 2125 students disagreed, and an even larger group of 2885 students strongly disagreed, indicating skepticism or non-reliance on the Internet for information about current issues. This disagreement raises questions about the perceived credibility of online information sources among UiTM students.

In summary, this study explains the different attitudes of UiTM students toward getting information about current issues from the Internet. Although the majority acknowledges the Internet as the primary source of information, many students remain sceptical or do not rely on online platforms. This finding provides valuable insight into the information-seeking behavior of university students in the context of current affairs. It emphasizes the need for further research into the factors influencing this view.

**b. 'My main source of information on current issues is social media (Facebook etc.)'**

Totally agree	Agree	Neutral	Do not agree	Strongly disagree	
44	118	742	2047	2932	5883

The second question asked about the evaluation of the opinions of UiTM students is about their dependence on social media (Facebook etc) as the main source of information on current issues.

The study's findings show various opinions among UiTM students regarding their dependence on social media as the main source of information on current issues. A total of 44 students strongly agrees and 118 agree with the statement, showing that a segment of students acknowledge social media as their primary source of information on current issues.

Despite this, the number of students who expressed a neutral attitude of 742 people shows that many students have yet to make a firm decision regarding their dependence on social media. This situation may reflect caution or uncertainty among students regarding the validity and quality of information obtained from the platform. On the other hand, a significant number of students expressed disagreement and strongly disagreed, 2047 and 2932 students, respectively. This reflects a large group that is sceptical or only partially depends on social media as a source of information on current issues.

Overall, the findings of this study depict a complex landscape in terms of UiTM students' dependence on social media to obtain information on current issues, emphasizing the need to understand better the factors that shape the views and practices of social media use among university students.

**c. 'I like reading news portals related to current issues.'**

Totally agree	Agree	Neutral	Do not agree	Strongly disagree	
126	479	2221	1841	1216	5883

Based on the findings from the question 'I like to read news portals related to current issues,' this study shows various opinions among UiTM students regarding reading news portals related to current issues. Findings show that most respondents disagree or strongly disagree with the statement.

1316 students strongly disagreed with the statement, or 40.53 percent of the total respondents. Meanwhile, as many as 1841 students, or 61.24 percent of the total respondents, disagreed with the statement. Therefore, more than half of the respondents reject the idea that they like to read news portals related to current issues. Thus, there is a need to study more deeply the factors that cause this dislike, as well as steps that can be taken to bridge the gap in understanding current issues among UiTM students.

**d. 'I follow social media owned by leaders and political figures.'**

Totally agree	agree	Neutral	Do not agree	Strongly disagree	
887	1402	2069	929	596	5883

Next, the evaluation revolves around whether UiTM students follow social media belonging to leaders and political figures; most respondents show a positive tendency towards their involvement in following social media belonging to leaders and political figures. Of 5883 respondents, 887 people, or 15.1%, stated they "Strongly Agree" with the statement. Meanwhile, 1402 people, 23.8%, stated that they "Agree." This percentage shows that almost 39% of respondents agree with the statement.

On the other hand, 2069 people, or 35.2% of the respondents, stated that they are "Neutral." This may reflect those who still need to have a firm stance or think carefully before assessing

the influence of social media in a political context. Surprisingly, 929 people, or 15.8%, said they "Disagree," while 596 people, or 10.1%, said they "Strongly Disagree." Although this number is lower than those who agree or are neutral, it still shows that some groups look down on the influence of social media in political participation.

Overall, this response illustrates that most UiTM students acknowledge the influence of social media in shaping their perception and increasing their political participation. However, some groups have a negative view of the matter.

**e. 'I trust the news about politics on the internet.'**

Totally agree	agree	Neutral	Do not agree	Strongly disagree	
407	1229	3151	757	339	5883

When asked about the views of UiTM students regarding their confidence in online political news, the study's findings showed that out of a total of 5883 respondents, 407 expressed strong agreement with the effectiveness of political news on the Internet. 1229 respondents agree, but their confidence level is not as high as respondents in the "Strongly Agree" category. 3151 respondents were neutral, indicating a dominant neutral attitude toward online political news. On the other hand, 757 respondents disagreed with the view, showing doubt or distrust of political news online. Furthermore, 339 respondents strongly disagreed with the view, indicating a deep mistrust of online political news.

In conclusion, this study provides a detailed overview of the views of UiTM students regarding their trust in online political news, which is an important aspect of understanding the relationship between social media and political participation among university students.

**f. 'I believe in economic news on the internet.'**

Totally agree	agree	Neutral	Do not agree	Strongly disagree	
107	408	2766	1917	685	5883

In addition, the data shows that the majority of respondents fall into the 'Neutral' category regarding their belief in economic news on the internet, with a total of 2766 respondents. This reflects the average attitude of UiTM students who may be uncertain or lack a firm stance on whether to trust or distrust economic news found on online platforms.

A total of 1917 respondents disagree, while 685 respondents strongly disagree, indicating a significant level of skepticism towards the effectiveness and reliability of economic news on the internet. This attitude highlights the challenge of assessing the credibility of news sources in an increasingly sophisticated digital world.

On the other hand, 408 respondents agree, and 107 respondents strongly agree, indicating a small number of students who are inclined to trust economic news online. This suggests that although there is some level of trust, the majority of students remain unconvinced by the news they encounter on the internet.

With these clear differences in opinion among the respondents, this study provides a solid foundation for efforts to monitor and improve media literacy among university students. Additionally, the findings of this study open up opportunities for further research on the factors

influencing UiTM students' perceptions of economic news on the internet, as well as providing input for the development of learning programs and media awareness among university students.

**g. 'I often follow live broadcasts by leaders or political figures.'**

Totally agree	agree	Neutral	Do not agree	Strongly disagree	
1521	1748	1781	537	296	5883

The next is about assessment from the side, and they often follow cross-direct ( *live* ) decisions made by the leader or character politics. Findings research shows a variation in views among 5883 respondents. Of that number, 6.92%, or 407 respondents, stated that they strongly agree with political news on the Internet. 20.87% or 1229 respondents agreed, although their confidence level was not as high as the group strongly agreed.

The largest group is respondents in the neutral category, 53.57% or 3151 respondents. This neutral attitude reflects the average UiTM student who is not strongly inclined to trust or distrust online political news. Meanwhile, 12.87%, or 757 respondents, disagreed with the view, while 5.75%, or 339 respondents, strongly disagreed.

Overall, the tendency of UiTM students to be neutral highlights the need to emphasize improving media literacy among them. The findings of this study open up opportunities for developing a more holistic educational approach, focusing on critical evaluation skills and a deep understanding of political news in the digital world. The study's conclusion also provides a basis for building trust in news sources in the context of social media, which is increasingly dominant in obtaining political information.

**h. 'Following state and national political developments is my main interest.'**

Totally agree	agree	Neutral	Do not agree	Strongly disagree	
1133	1431	2094	774	451	5883

From the results of a survey on the interest of UiTM students in following the development of state and national politics, it was found that there is a variation of opinion among the respondents. A total of 1133 students, or 18.87 percent of the respondents, strongly agreed that following political developments is their primary interest. In addition, 1431 students, or 23.85 percent of the respondents, agreed with the statement. Despite this, the findings show that a more significant number, namely 2094 students or 34.87 percent, are in the neutral category, indicating that they do not express a clear stance on their primary interest in following political developments. Thus, while there are a few who are very interested and agree with this interest, there is also a large number who are still in neutral territory.

Therefore, this shows the need to understand more deeply the factors that influence students' interest in this matter and the measures that may be needed to stimulate their interest in following the development of state and national politics.

**i. "My friends on social media like to upload statuses about current issues."**

Totally agree	agree	Neutral	Do not agree	Strongly disagree	



716	1204	1968	1292	703	5883
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From the survey results on UiTM students' interest in following state and national political developments on social media, it is important to understand their patterns and tendencies. It was found that there was a variation of opinion among the respondents.

A total of 1133 students, or 18.87 percent of the respondents, strongly agreed that following political developments is their primary interest. In addition, 1431 students, or 23.85 percent of the respondents, agreed with the statement. Despite this, the findings show that a more significant number, namely 2094 students or 34.87 percent, are in the neutral category, indicating that they do not express a clear stance on their primary interest in following political developments. Thus, while there are a few who are very interested and agree with this interest, there is also a large number who are still in neutral territory.

Therefore, this shows the need to understand more deeply the factors that influence students' interest in this matter and the steps that may be needed to stimulate their interest in following the development of state and national politics.

**j. "I often give responses (comments) on current issues (politics, economics) that I read on social media".**

Totally agree	agree	Neutral	Do not agree	Strongly disagree	
1811	1639	1588	528	317	5883

Based on the feedback from UiTM students regarding questions related to their involvement in responding to current issues, 5,883 respondents participated in this study. Overall, 1811 respondents, or 30.8% of the total, strongly agree with responding or commenting on current issues, especially in the political and economic fields. Meanwhile, 1,639 respondents, or 27.8%, agreed with their involvement in responding.

In addition, 1,588 respondents, or 27%, chose to remain neutral on this issue, showing a thoughtful attitude or uncertainty in responding to the current issue. On the other hand, 528 respondents, or 9%, expressed their disagreement with responding to current issues read on social media. On a stricter level, 317 respondents, or 5.4%, strongly disapproved of the activity.

Overall, most respondents tended to agree or strongly agree in responding to the current issues they read on social media, with only a tiny proportion expressing an attitude of disagreement or strong disagreement. This reflects the high interest and involvement in current issues among UiTM students.

**k. "I feel responsible for spreading information about current issues on my social media."**

Totally agree	agree	Neutral	Do not agree	Strongly disagree	
790	1139	2510	930	514	5883

From the results of the study investigation based on the question, 'I feel responsible for spreading information about issues while on social media, I saw various opinions among UiTM students about responsibility for spreading information. A total of 790 students, or 13.17 percent of the respondents, strongly agreed that they feel responsible for spreading information about

issues on social media belong to them. In addition, 1139 students, or 18.97 percent of the respondents, agreed with the statement. Despite this, the findings show that a more significant number, namely 2510 students or 41.80 percent, are in the neutral category, indicating that they do not express a clear stance on this responsibility.

Thus, while there are a few who strongly agree with this responsibility, there is also a large number who are still in neutral territory. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out further research to understand the factors that may contribute to this neutral attitude and to formulate a better approach to encouraging the responsibility of spreading information about current issues on social media.

**l. "I follow a 'WhatsApp' group related to politics."**

Totally agree	agree	Neutral	Do not agree	Strongly disagree	
3254	1390	811	238	190	5883

Based on the feedback received from UiTM students regarding their participation in 'WhatsApp' groups related to politics, we can summarize the findings in statistical form as follows:

3254 students strongly agreed with participating in the political WhatsApp group. This accounts for 55.3% of the respondents, showing a large majority favoring being active on the platform. On the other hand, 1390 people, or 23.6% of students, agreed with their participation in the group. Although this number is less significant compared to those who strongly agree, it still reflects positive support for political involvement through the medium.

Eight hundred eleven people, or 13.8% of students, took a neutral attitude. This neutral attitude may indicate that some respondents are still considering or have not decided about their presence in the political 'WhatsApp' group, and for those who did not agree, 238 people, or 4.0%, expressed disapproval of their participation in the group. In addition, 190 people, or 3.2%, strongly disapproved of political involvement through the platform.

Overall, out of 5883 respondents, a large majority, i.e., 78.9%, expressed support or acceptance of their participation in the political 'WhatsApp' group. Nevertheless, it is important to pay attention to the minority with a negative or neutral attitude, which may require further understanding and dialogue to understand their perspective.

**m. "I like to share political information (forward) on WhatsApp/Telegram."**

Totally agree	agree	Neutral	Do not agree	Strongly disagree	
2832	1449	1103	289	210	5883

The response from UiTM students to the statement "I like to share political information (forward) on WhatsApp/Telegram" shows a different pattern of opinion. A total of 2,832 students, or 48.16%, expressed strong agreement with the statement. In addition, 1,449 students, or 24.62%, agreed with sharing political information. Surprisingly, 1,103 students, or 18.75%, remained neutral on the statement. This shows that many students need a firm attitude towards sharing political information on platforms such as WhatsApp or Telegram.

Although most students agree or strongly agree, 289 students, or 4.91%, disagree with the action. They may believe there are better places to share political information than social media platforms. It is interesting to note that 210 students, or 3.57%, strongly disagree with the statement. This indicates that there is a small section that expresses strong opposition to the practice of sharing political information in WhatsApp or Telegram groups.

By examining the responses, the opinions of UiTM students regarding the sharing of political information on the platform are varied, and there is a variety of attitudes regarding agreeing, disagreeing, and neutral attitudes. Therefore, it is important to encourage open and in-depth discussions to understand students' various views concerning their issues. This study discusses the views and attitudes of UiTM students in recognizing and disseminating information about current issues through social media. By detailing each question in the study, the study can see the variation of opinions among students and the implications for the understanding of current issues.

In this study, the findings show a complex variation of views among UiTM students regarding the use of social media in disseminating and obtaining political information. The Theory of Agenda Setting introduced by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw (1972), as well as the Theory of Selective Exposure and Confirmation Bias, can help explain students' behavior patterns and perceptions in this context.

First, in the questionnaire regarding the use of the Internet as the main source of information on current issues, there were various opinions among the respondents. Agenda Setting Theory states that the mass media play an essential role in setting the public agenda by emphasizing specific issues. In this context, respondents who strongly agree and agree may be more exposed to social media agendas that promote the Internet as the primary source of information. On the other hand, respondents who disagree may see other sources as more credible or more balanced.

Second, regarding the use of social media as the primary source of current issue information, the Selective Exposure theory states that individuals tend to seek and expose themselves to information that is consistent with their own beliefs and values. Therefore, respondents who strongly agree and agree may be exposed to social media content that aligns with their political and social views. Meanwhile, respondents who disagree or strongly disagree may be more likely to rely on something other than social media as the primary source of information, possibly due to doubts about the credibility or reliability of the information disseminated.

Third, regarding social media followers belonging to political leaders, the theory of Confirmation Bias states that individuals tend to seek confirmation or support for their views. Therefore, respondents who strongly agree and agree may seek confirmation and congruence from the political leaders they support. On the other hand, respondents who disagree or strongly disagree may see social media owned by political leaders as not credible or irrelevant to their interests and values.

Combining these theories with research findings can conclude that using social media in a political context among UiTM students is a complex phenomenon influenced by media agenda-setting, selective exposure, and confirmation bias. In order to holistically understand the perception and behavior of students in this regard, it is important to consider the underlying psychological and sociological factors and strengthen media and critical literacy among them. This is in line with the views of scholars such as Manuel Castells (2013), who emphasize the

importance of a deep understanding of the dynamics of social media in the context of contemporary politics.

### **Conclusions And Recommendations**

Overall, this study provides a detailed picture of the views and attitudes of UiTM students in recognizing and disseminating information about current issues through social media. The findings show a complex variation of opinion among students, reflecting the dynamic and evolving landscape of social media use in politics and current issues. Here is a little summary obtained:

- a. **Primary Source of Information:** A significant number of students use the internet as their primary source of information about current issues, but there is skepticism and distrust among students regarding the reliability of information from the internet.
- a. **Dependence on Social Media:** Although a small number of students rely on social media platforms like Facebook as their main source of information on current issues, many students exhibit skepticism or do not fully depend on these platforms.
- b. **Interest in Reading News Portals:** The majority of students are not interested in reading news portals related to current issues, indicating a need for further research into the reasons behind this lack of interest.
- c. **Following Political Leaders on Social Media:** Nearly 39% of students follow political leaders on social media, indicating the influence of social media in shaping students' political perceptions.
- d. **Trust in Political and Economic News on the Internet:** A neutral attitude dominates among students in evaluating the trustworthiness of political and economic news on the internet, reflecting challenges in assessing digital news sources.
- e. **Engagement in Live Broadcasts by Political Leaders:** While some students frequently follow live broadcasts by political leaders, a significant neutral attitude suggests a need to improve media literacy among students.
- f. **Interest in Following Political Developments:** There is variation in students' interest in following political developments, with the majority falling into the neutral category.
- g. **Sharing Information on Current Issues:** A significant number of students feel responsible for spreading information on current issues on social media, though many are neutral or uncertain about this responsibility.
- h. **Participation in Political WhatsApp Groups:** A large number of students join political WhatsApp groups, showing a high interest in political discussions through this platform.
- i. **Sharing Political Information on WhatsApp/Telegram:** Nearly 73% of students enjoy sharing political information via WhatsApp/Telegram, but a minority disagree with this practice.

Overall, this study shows that social media plays an important role in the dissemination and understanding of current issues among UiTM students, but there are varying attitudes towards the dependence on and trust in the information obtained through these platforms.

In conclusion, this study provides critical insight into the attitudes and views of UiTM students in recognizing and disseminating information about current issues through social media. The implications of this study include the need to understand better the factors that influence students' attitudes and behavior in the context of using social media in current affairs. Based on the findings and discussion above regarding the influence of social media on the understanding of current issues among UiTM students, social media significantly influences students'

understanding of current issues. Students get information and interact with current issues through social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

The study's findings show that social media provides easy access to various sources of information and opinions on current issues and exposes students to false and inaccurate information. There is a clear tendency among students to follow the dominant trends and views in social media without carefully evaluating the truth and relevance of the information received.

Recommendations that can be given based on these findings are:

- a. Increased awareness and critical skills in the use of social media. Students need to be trained to be intelligent and vital users who can assess the reliability and relevance of information received from social media.
- b. Education on media literacy needs to be strengthened in the study curriculum at UiTM. This includes learning how to recognize and evaluate sources of information, identify biases, and understand the impact of social media on thought and action.
- c. Construction of an alternative platform to obtain quality information on current issues. This can involve collaboration with trusted news media and developing quality internal information sources at the campus level.

With the implementation of these recommendations, it is hoped that UiTM students will be able to face challenges related to the influence of social media in understanding current issues more effectively and efficiently.

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