



The Involvement of Malay Youth in the Process of Election in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Democracy in the context of Islam is perceived as the responsibility of an individual to choose leaders among them who are capable to withstand justice and prevent evil (*amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar*). Every Muslim needs to be aware that the responsibility of voting is compulsory for those who have qualified. In Malaysia, majority of the Islamic scholar (Ulema) has agreed that every Muslim has to be involved in the process of election and it is considered compulsory upon them as the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said "When three Muslim men are bound to travel, choose a leader among them" narrated by Abu Daud. In this article, Malay youth is the focus in order to view the involvement in proses of election through the registration as voters, checking the status of voting and participation in the upcoming election. A total of 906 respondents were identified to participate in this research by answering the questionnaire provided. Description method was used to analyse the criteria of the respondent and to identify the involvement of the Malay youth in the election process in Malaysia. The research outcome shows the higher statistic of the respondents to be involved in the upcoming election with 704 respondents (77.6%), compared to respondents who have registered as voters with 550 respondents (60.6%) and the respondents who have checked on the voting status with only 459 respondents (50.6%). Nevertheless, the highest total for the involvement in the next election will not bring any impact and will be meaningless to the overall involvement of youth in the election if there are still many of the Malay youth do not register as voters.

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Introduction

Youth is a key element of sustainability in a country's development. This is clearly seen when various slogans have been created to educate youths in the importance of being together with the leadership of the country and to continue the legacy of excellence, among them are "Youth Expectation of the Nations", "The United Nations Forward", "Today's Youth Leader Tomorrow", and many more. These slogans clearly proved that youth are the most dominant and influential groups in a society and are seen as having physical and mental strength. Therefore, youth expertise must be well-established to ensure that the youth are on the right track and stays together in developing the country (Mohd Muslim et al., 2012).

Tracing an understanding to the concept of democracy in the context of Islam is emphasizing one's responsibility to choose leaders among those who are capable of upholding justice and preventing evil (*amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar*). Islamic principles in this democratic system need to be practiced and enforced by every leader in order to create a peaceful and prosperous society (Saiful Mujani, 2007). Every Muslim needs to know that voting is mandatory for those who have met the requirements. In Malaysia the Ulama or scholars consider that every Muslim should play a role in the process of voting and the law is mandatory as the Prophet S.A.W said, "If three Muslims went out travelling, then appoint one as the leader" - Narrated by Abu Daud. Therefore, the Ulama

thinks that choosing the leader through the democratic system and the election is a part of world affair that is permitted (Utusan Online, 2017).

The involvement of youth in Malaysia politics is still low and not popular. Data obtained from the Election Commission clearly shows that up to September 30, 2016, 4.2 million Malaysians failed to register as voters (V. Ambalagan, 2016). The youth cared less and is not sensitive to the country's political socialization because they enjoyed life living in the comfort. In addition, the percentage of electoral rolls is low because there is a lack of awareness and encouragement from all parties involved and they do not care about their rights as Malaysians in choosing the leadership of the country. Similarly, research conducted by Atory Hussain, shows that most youths are more likely to focus on education and career to build a better life (Atory Hussain, 2012).

Thus a study was conducted and discussed in this article to identify the extent of Malay youth participation and to discuss their level of engagement in Malaysia electoral process.

Literature Review

A democratic system is a form of government based on legislation with concrete and established procedures to determine leaders and governments (Runi Haryanti, 2003). Protodemocracy is a system of democracy that has been practiced for a long time in a country or a nation that achieved independence and conducts leadership selections

through electoral processes chosen by the people (linz, 2000). Indeed, most countries regardless of whether it is a republic that elect the president as the head of government, for example The United States of America, Indonesia and Singapore or other countries that uses the constitutional monarchy system with the Prime Minister as the head of state administration, for example Malaysia, England, Thailand and others are considered as a democratic country.

In Malaysia elections are run by an independent body conducting the process of electing leaders who carries the voice of the people whether at the level of the parliament or the state assembly. The body is known as the Election Commission (EC). The EC was established on 4th September 1957 in accordance with Article 113 and 114 of the Federal Constitution. The EC members consists of a Chairman, a Deputy Chairman and three other members. The EC members were appointed by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong (YDPA) after consulting the Council of Rulers. In addition, to the objective of the establishing of the EC is to preserve, monitor and maintain the parliamentary democracy system in Malaysia, through a fair and equitable election (Election Commission, 2016).

Statistics in many countries showed a reduction in various forms of political engagement among youth such as voting and becoming members of political parties (Biezen & Poguntke, 2014; Ng, 2015). The issue of youth less interested in politics is a global issue, experienced by most other countries. This issue has become the concern and attention of all since youth is the future leaders who will determine the direction of the State (Stetsenko, 2002).

The study of youth involvement in politics should take into account the political socialization factor that gives impact to the political developments in youth. Political socialization starts from the environment context, where youth are given a translation of politics in daily activities. Good political socialization helps youth understand their interests and roles in state politics. According to the Malaysia Youth Index Report 2015, the domain of political socialization is at an unsatisfactory level. In line with that, it is important to emphasize socialization agencies to educate youth in politics to improve their well-being. Traditionally, political socialization starts from the context of a family. Previous studies have proven the socialization of family politics generally cause youth to venture into political activities, and later exclusively join any political parties (Cross & Young, 2008). However, studies on family influence specifically in the electoral process such as registration and voting are still limited. The role of local community was also found to be influential.

Methodology

This study uses a quantitative approach with respondents answering questionnaires randomly distributed in each selected state. The sample was selected by simple random method with 906 respondents identified in Malaysia. The study focuses on the selection of youths aged 21 up to 40 years old. The age range is chosen in accordance to Malaysia's Constitution through the Election Commission that allows people in that age range to vote, and in addition to the age-appropriate setting of youth in Malaysia ranging from 15 years to 40 years (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2015). In quantitative studies, selected respondents are divided into specific numbers by computing the Probability Proportional to Size (PPS) Cluster Sampling. This method is used to ensure the number of respondents required is balanced and unbiased. This method is also used to choose better respondents and facilitates the researcher to get the

respondents according to the USP method (Yeo Wee Teck, 2010).

Method used to analyse data this study was "Statistical Package of the Social Science for Windows" (SPSS). SPSS method, uses descriptive statistical tests in the result findings. Descriptive statistics comprising frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation, were used to analyze the respondents' background information.

Descriptive statistics were also used to analyze the involvement of youth in the electoral process which include registering as voters, conducting polling reviews and voting in the future general election. Results of the study in terms of the number and percentage of each category were obtained by measuring the number of respondents who answered "Yes" and "No" in order to visualise clearly the youth involvement in the electoral process.

Result and Discussion

Table 1. Types of Respondent's Demography (N = 906)

Demography	n	%
Gender		
Male	455	45.2
Female	452	49.8
Age		
21 years old – 25 years old	513	56.6
26 years old – 30 years old	160	17.6
31 years old – 35 years old	105	11.6
36 years old – 40 years old	129	14.2
Highest Education Level		
Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (Malaysia Education Certificate)	189	20.8
Diploma/STPM	269	29.7
Undergraduate	402	44.3
Graduate and above	47	5.2
Occupation		
Government Employees	202	22.3
Private Employees	229	25.2
Self-employed	119	13.1
Student	309	34.1
Housewife / Unemployed	48	5.3

Respondents' demography is a total of 906 people comprising Malay youth aged 21 to 40 years old in Malaysia and taken randomly. A total of 455 (45.2%) male and 452 (49.8%) female were identified for this study. The total number of respondents aged 21 to 25, were 513 (56.6%), aged 26 to 30 were 160 (17.6%), aged 31 to 35 were 105 (11.6%) and aged 36 to 40 were 129 (14.2%).

The education level of respondents were, Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia 189(20.8%), Diploma or STPM 269(29.7%), Bachelors Degree 402(44.3%) and Master's Degree 47(5.2%). Respondents involved in the government sector were 202(22.3%), private sector 229(25.2%), self-employed 119(13.1%), students 309 (34.1%), housewives and unemployed 48(5.1%). Table 1 shows the respondents' demographic characteristics.

Table 2. The Involvement of Malay Youths in the Process of Registering as Voters (N=906)

Variables	n	%
I have registered as a voter		
Yes	550	60.6
No	357	39.4

Table 2 shows the involvement of Malay youths in the process of registering as voters. From 906 respondents identified, 550(60.6%) had successfully registered as voters and 357(39.4%) failed to register as voters. From the findings, it clearly showed that many Malay youth failed to register as voters. This reduction effects clearly shows that

register as voters. This reduction effects clearly shows that the level of involvement of Malay youth in the election process is low and unsatisfactory. If no encouragements are given, more Malay youth will decline to participate in the electoral process of democratic system in Malaysia.

Table 3. The Involvement of Malay Youth in the Process of Checking Voters' Lists (N=906)

Variables	n	%
I have completed checking the voters' list		
Yes	459	50.6
No	448	49.4

Table 3 shows the involvement of Malay youth in the process of checking voters' lists. A total of 459(50.6%) have checked the voter's list and 448(49.4%) have not checked the voters' list. The level of awareness of voting reviews is less noticeable to the target group, very few youths knows how to conduct polling reviews and information on how to conduct polling reviews were scarce. This will cause problems during polling session when there is a change in voting location. There is a lack of attention from youth especially in conducting polling reviews.

Table 4. The Involvement of the Malay Youth in Detemining Who Will Vote in the Coming Election (N=906)

Variables	n	%
I will vote in the next election		
Yes	704	77.6
No	203	22.4

Table 4 is the involvement of the Malay youth in detemining who will vote in the coming election. The results showed that respondents who will vote in the next election were 704(77.6%) and 203(22.4%) are not going to vote. This clearly showed that a high percentage of youths wanted to vote in the coming elections but they failed to register as voters. This situation should be taken seriously if Malaysia wants to ensure the democratic electoral process continues to grow and the young is interested.

Conclusion

Overall results showed that Malay youth involvement in the electoral process is low and not comprehensive. This should be contained and improved because as Malays and Islam, participation in the electoral process is mandatory especially in choosing leaders who will be the people's voice and help the people in solving their problems. The results showed that the involvement of Malay youth in the future general election is much higher compared to youth who have registered and conduct polling reviews. This situation does not give any meaning in detemining the involvement of Malay youth in the electoral process. Voters registration is low and not regarded as important to Malay youths in Malaysia. Everyone, especially the authorities who are directly managing the electoral process, the Election Commission, political parties, community and family should

work in tandem to ensure youth understands and participate in the election process.

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