

# Voting Identification through Value Approach: A Case Study on Malay Young Voters

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## Abstract

The voting identification among the young voters in Malaysia is a reflection of the value which is gained through a political stance. There is a series of political studies that shown the role of value towards democratic system, especially in influencing the voting involvement in elections. Therefore, this study is aimed to identify significant values among Malay young voters in selecting a political leadership. This study applied the quantitative research method and administered to a sample of 544 respondents. The study was developed based on the sample selection pattern using purposive sampling technique by Krejcie & Morgan sample determinant table. The findings were analyzed descriptively using percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Findings disclosed that the element of value is very significant to the political system in Malaysia.

**Keywords:** Values, Young Voter, Malay

## 1.0 Introduction

Post-independence political experience have initiated that there is a significant relationship between values and the political system in Malaysia. The evolution of social change has separated society into different capsules. Research done by Kamaruddin M. Said (2012) discovered that the generation of nationalism period will continue to hold on the historical consciousness struggle in order to achieve independence. Whereas the Independent and New Economy Policy (NEP) generations continue to recall on how state independence implemented the restructuring process of Malaysian society and enjoyed the benefits of independence.

However, the post-NEP generations, namely the young generation who had the opportunity to experience the NEP's effects, especially among the Malay community and Bumiputera Sabah and Sarawak, are more likely to conclude that the success of their current life is due to their own efforts and abilities. The history on colonialism, the struggle for

independence, and the implementation of the NEP are considered as dry and unexciting story to be remembered.

In fact, the value background of each generation plays an important role in their life as a determinant factor in choosing a capable political leadership in the political field. The transitional value separated the post-NEP generations (the younger generation) from the three generations namely, nationalism, independence, and the NEP (adult generation) and the values are transformed into the process of polling stations during elections.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

Datuk Seri Hashim Abdullah, the Chairman of The Election Commission of Malaysia (SPR) reported that as of February 2017, there was 4.1 million of Malaysian populations are eligible for voting but had yet to register as voters (BERNAMA, March 14, 2017). Based on these statistics, 45% of this citizens are among the young generation.

The involvement of young generation in the elections is considerably important but the registration pattern of this group is still in a state of concern. As early as the year of 2006, the Election Commission (EC) has conducted a survey on the factor that influenced many eligible citizens who had failed to register as voters (Wan Ahmad Wan Omar 2010). The study which is focused on the young voters revealed that there are four main factors of this failure to register, namely:

- a. Attitude; does not put priority and effort to register as voter. This group gives personal reasons such as busy with work, do not have enough time, do not even care to vote, have no interest in politics, busy with family affairs, feel there is no benefit in voting, and forget to register.
- b. Registration system; with two reasons. First; the assumption that the registration method based on the address stated on the identity card is not relevant as the person has moved to other places and he has no time to update the new residential address at the National Registration Department and second; there is no time to register at the registration counter.
- c. Infrastructure; includes time constraints and laziness to go for the registration. Information; reasons such as do not know the place to register, no information or advice to register, no idea on the reason and the conditions to register.

The imbalance of the registration pattern and the uncertainty of voting number can be referred to Franklin's (2004) study which suggested that voting is influenced by factors which are involving both parties, voters and condition of the election as well. Hence, he recommended three models of voter's behavior, namely;

- a. The source model which is associated with the voter's income, occupations, and education that may influence their involvement in the elections.
- b. The model which considers the rational choices, that prioritise on the calculation of relative costs and benefits towards an individual involvement in elections.
- c. The model of the mobility factor to show how the voters are encouraged by the political parties, support groups, and candidates themselves to go for voting.

Brady et al. (1995) applied the Theory of Political Desires and has proposed three factors that influenced some voters to not involve in the political process, namely; a) Lack of resources, b) Lack of psychological involvement with politics, and c) Separation from a series of political movements. However, there are also some other theories which discussed on voting and Amer Saifude (2009) divided the related theories into three parts, namely, rational choice theory, sociology, and political will.

Based on the Rational Choice Theory, the voters will vote based on their rational calculations, by which they will decide to vote due to their judgement that the candidates will give benefits if the party succeed (Pattie & Johnston. 1998). On the other hand, this theory also recommends that most rational voters also decided to not involve for voting due to the expectation that their votes would not contribute to the successful of the party.

From the sociological point of view, Heat et al. (1985) in his work argues that voter's behavior is influenced by the personality of their social group. This involves their social class structure, housing area, and membership in social groups. The voters are expected to form the party identification which they have formed since they were small and this will affect their voting during elections.

However, Eagles & Erfle (1989) suggested that there was a significant relationship between voting out in elections and socioeconomic similarities of an electoral district; and also the geographical relationship between workplace and residential areas. Hence, this study proved that there is an important role played by the middle-class workers which involving professionals and management in the elections to show their willingness to participate in politics.

### **3.0 Methodology**

The study employs a quantitative research design using survey method. Responses from 544 respondents were obtained and they were informed that participation was voluntary and information they provided would be kept confidential. The purposive sampling technique was applied based on certain characteristics to be selected as the respondent (Chua Yan Piaw 2006) and the sampling is based on the sample determinant table of Krejcie & Morgan (1970).

The set of questionnaires has been approved by the experts and the validation of the feasibility of this study was the result of the pilot study. Data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for the descriptive statistics of percentage, mean and standard deviation to see the reliability of the research instrument and identify the level of internal consistency of the items used by employing the Value of Coefficient Correlation and Alfa Cronbach Coefficient.

### **4.0 Results and Discussions**

Table 1.0:  
Importance of political leaders

No	Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Less Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	The selection of a political leader is valuable in my life.	4 (0.7%)	15 (2.8%)	81 (14.9%)	306 (56.3%)	138 (25.4%)
2.	The selection of current political leadership is important for future generations.	1 (0.2%)	4 (0.7%)	16 (2.9%)	267 (49.1%)	256 (47.1%)
3.	The country needs a strong government through a 2/3 majority of the ruling party.	5 (0.9%)	4 (0.7%)	56 (10.3%)	291 (53.5%)	188 (34.6%)
4.	Malaysia needs a strong opposition party to ensure there is 'Check and balance' in the state government.	6 (1.1%)	21 (3.9%)	89 (16.4%)	266 (48.9%)	162 (29.8%)
5.	The election of a political leadership is important because a government can only be formed through the democratic system as stated in the Federal Constitution.	5 (0.9%)	12 (2.2%)	50 (9.2%)	304 (55.9%)	173 (31.8%)
6.	A government can only be dropped through elections.	14 (2.6%)	35 (6.4%)	156 (28.7%)	223 (41%)	116 (21.3%)
7.	The failure of a country can be caused by the wrong selection of leaders in the elections	4 (0.7%)	18 (3.3%)	59 (10.8%)	295 (54.2%)	168 (30.9%)
8.	Citizens are able to control their leaders by choosing to vote or not voting in the elections	8 (1.5%)	31 (5.7%)	94 (17.3%)	287 (52.8%)	124 (22.8%)
9.	I do not believe in the political system	84 (15.4%)	82 (15.1%)	236 (43.4%)	107 (19.7%)	35 (6.4%)
10.	I will not voting in any elections	215 (39.5%)	134 (24.6%)	131 (24.1%)	44 (8.1%)	20 (3.7%)

Table 1.0 shows the importance of political leaders in life. The findings indicated that 47.1% of the respondents strongly agree that the selection of current political leadership is important for future generations, followed by 34.6% who were strongly agreed that the country needs a strong government through the 2/3 majority of ruling parties. Whereas 31.8% of the respondents strongly agreed that the election of political leadership is important since a government can only be formed through the democratic system as stated in the Federal Constitution. The findings also revealed that 39.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed to the item that they would not vote in any elections. On top of that, more than 10% of the respondents expressed their incompetence as voters in the elections.

The findings are significant because the demographics revealed that there was a number of respondents who are not registered as voters. The demographic information of the registered and nonregistered voters in the Election Commission is presented in Table 2.0. The samples include 544 respondents with 485 registered voters (89%) and 59 (11%)

respondents were among the nonregistered voters. This shows that majority of the respondents have been registered as the voter in the Election Commission.

Table 2.0

*Demographic Information of Sample*

Category		Total (n)	Percentage (%)
Registered Voter in EC	Yes	485	89%
	No	59	11%

**(n): 544**

However, the total number of registered voters would not fully guarantee that this group will vote during the elections. This is due to the fact that registration as the voter and voting turnout during the elections has different value of commitments. The lower and decline of voting rates would lead to a negative impact in the practice of modern democracy. A study done by the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (Pintor et al. 2002) shows that the voting turnout in the world's elections increased before the 1990s, but the voter turnout declined after the year 1990.

Generally, the parliamentary elections in Malaysia is quite stable but are decreasing from time to time (Amer Saifude 2009). The declining number of voter turnout often has been an issue in the election geographical discipline and labeled as an unhealthy environment in the democratic process. Syed Ahmad Hussein (1996) stressed that a particular system surely could be destroyed if the member of a society or majority of the population was decided to not support the system. Relatively, a political system will fail if the party could not gain any support from the citizens. Hence, the value approach is important in studying the voting identification in the elections.

## 5.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study showed that the element of value is very significant due to several importance; 1) acknowledges the importance of political leadership in life; 2) confirms the relationship between values and the selection of political leadership; and 3) values act as a key factor in selecting a political leadership.

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