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ORIGINAL

Developing a Framework for Electoral Education Among Students with a Focus on Vulnerability

Desarrollo de un marco para la educación electoral entre estudiantes con un enfoque en la vulnerabilidad

Zuliana Azwa Zulkifli[1], Mokhtafizam Mokhtar[1], Zawiyah Mohd Zain[1]

[1]School of Government, College of Law-Government and International Studies (COLGIS), Universiti Utara Malaysia, Sintok, Malaysia.

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Corresponding author: Zuliana Azwa Zulkifli

ABSTRACT

The *Undi18* bill, lowering the voting age from 21 to 18, marked a significant step in Malaysia's democratic evolution. However, the political maturity of young voters and their vulnerability to external pressures remain major concerns. This study explores university students' perceptions of general elections, their views on the *Undi18* legislation, and their political awareness in the lead-up to Malaysia's 15th general election. Through a mixed-methods approach—combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews—this research highlights the need for a structured electoral education framework to mitigate the vulnerabilities of young voters. Findings suggest that while most students show strong awareness and engagement, many are still vulnerable to political influences and societal expectations. This study proposes educational strategies to bolster political literacy and protect student voters from manipulation.

Keywords: Electoral Education; Vulnerable Voters; Youth Political Awareness; *Undi18*; General Elections; Malaysia.

RESUMEN

El proyecto de ley *Undi18*, que reduce la edad de votación de 21 a 18 años, marcó un paso significativo en la evolución democrática de Malasia. Sin embargo, la madurez política de los jóvenes votantes y su vulnerabilidad a presiones externas siguen siendo preocupaciones importantes. Este estudio explora las percepciones de los estudiantes universitarios sobre las elecciones generales, sus opiniones sobre la legislación *Undi18* y su conciencia política en la antesala de la 15ª elección general de Malasia. A través de un enfoque de métodos mixtos—combinando encuestas cuantitativas con entrevistas cualitativas—esta investigación resalta la necesidad de un marco estructurado de educación electoral para mitigar las vulnerabilidades de los jóvenes votantes. Los hallazgos sugieren que, aunque la mayoría de los estudiantes muestra una fuerte conciencia y compromiso, muchos siguen siendo vulnerables a influencias políticas y expectativas sociales. Este estudio propone estrategias educativas para fortalecer la alfabetización política y proteger a los votantes estudiantes de la manipulación.

Palabras clave: Educación Electoral; Votantes Vulnerables; Conciencia Política Juvenil; *Undi18*; Elecciones Generales; Malaysia.

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INTRODUCTION

The introduction of the *Undi18* bill, which lowered the voting age from 21 to 18, represents a transformative moment in Malaysia's democratic process. This reform grants over 5,8 million youths the right to vote, making young voters a critical demographic in the upcoming general elections. However, this change raises questions about the political maturity of these new voters, particularly university students, who are educated yet may face vulnerabilities such as political inexperience, susceptibility to manipulation, and external social pressures (e.g., peer and family influence).

While many countries—including the UK, India, and Korea—implemented similar age-lowering reforms decades ago, Malaysia's political landscape is distinct, with complex factors like the existence of the Universities and University Colleges Act (AUKU), which has historically limited student political engagement. This reform also comes at a time of political flux in Malaysia, where recent developments like shifting party alliances and economic uncertainty further complicate the responsibilities young voters are expected to shoulder.[1] Other countries have shown varying outcomes with age-lowering reforms; for instance, recent studies in the United States and Taiwan indicate that younger voters may benefit from tailored educational resources to counteract misinformation and increase civic engagement.[2,3]

For Malaysia, an approach to developing electoral literacy is essential to empowering this new demographic effectively. Singapore, a neighbouring country, provides a model by incorporating comprehensive civic education in its school curricula, aiming to build a politically aware and responsible citizenry by the time young adults reach voting age. Similarly, Indonesia has expanded its educational outreach on electoral processes to rural areas, recognizing that informed voters contribute more positively to democratic consolidation.[4] In the case of Malaysia, the vulnerability of young voters, especially in times of political instability and economic uncertainty, underscores the importance of preparing them through proper electoral education that encompasses critical thinking, civic responsibility, and political awareness.

This article seeks to develop a comprehensive framework for electoral education aimed at mitigating these vulnerabilities. By exploring students' perceptions of electoral processes, their understanding of *Undi18*, and their awareness of current political issues, we aim to propose educational interventions that will better prepare young voters. This framework will draw on regional insights and lessons from other countries to equip young Malaysian voters with the necessary tools to participate effectively and responsibly in the democratic process.

Research Objectives

The primary objectives of this study are:

1. To explore students' perceptions of general elections in Malaysia.
2. To examine students' views on the *Undi18* policy and its implementation.
3. To assess students' political awareness and readiness to engage in electoral processes.

Literature review

Vulnerability Theories and Youth in Electoral Processes

Social and Cognitive Vulnerabilities in New Voters

Vulnerability theories underscore that youth face specific cognitive and social vulnerabilities in complex decision-making situations, including elections. For instance, developmental psychology suggests that late adolescents (ages 18-21) are still refining their critical thinking and decision-making abilities, especially in areas requiring discernment, such as evaluating political information[5]. According to Turner[6], vulnerable populations, particularly those with limited experience, often rely on social cues and familiar influences—such as family, peers, or social media—for guidance.

In Malaysia, research by the Merdeka Center[7] found that 65 % of young voters depend on family and social networks for political perspectives, underscoring their susceptibility to social influence and peer pressure. This reliance highlights cognitive vulnerabilities in decision-making, where new voters may prioritize familial or peer opinion over informed, independent judgment. The introduction of *Undi18* without a concurrent rise in civic education thus places these voters at a higher risk of making decisions driven by social or emotional influences rather than political awareness.

Situational Vulnerability in Malaysia's Socio-Political Context

Vulnerability theories also address situational vulnerability, which relates to a person's susceptibility based on contextual and environmental factors.[8] In the case of Malaysia's new voters, situational vulnerability is influenced by the country's rapid digitalization, political volatility, and recent economic challenges. A study by Khoo[9] revealed that youth in Southeast Asia, including Malaysia, are disproportionately exposed to misinformation and polarized political discourse via social media. This environment intensifies their situational vulnerability, as youth may lack the media literacy skills required to critically assess information sources.

Unlike older, more experienced voters, young people may be more vulnerable to manipulation through

digital misinformation due to both limited experience and high engagement with online platforms. This is evident in a Merdeka Center report[7], which found that 72 % of Malaysian youth get their political information exclusively from social media, where fact-checking and credible sourcing can be inconsistent. Without robust electoral education, young voters face an increased risk of being swayed by biased or false information, which could skew electoral outcomes and limit informed participation.

Empowerment as a Response to Vulnerability

A critical element of vulnerability theories is the concept of empowerment as a response to vulnerability.[10] Empowering vulnerable groups through education, support structures, and resources is key to mitigating their susceptibility to adverse influences. For young Malaysian voters, empowerment through comprehensive electoral education could counteract cognitive and situational vulnerabilities, equipping them to navigate political complexities confidently and independently.

A comparative analysis of Taiwan's approach, where electoral education has been integrated into curricula, reveals that young voters who receive early civic education are 45 % more likely to vote based on policies and platforms rather than social influences[2]. This empowerment model suggests that Malaysian youth, too, could benefit significantly from a structured electoral curriculum that builds critical thinking, media literacy, and an understanding of democratic responsibilities.

The Urgency of Addressing Youth Vulnerabilities in Malaysia's Democratic Transition

Malaysia's transition to a younger electorate amid political and economic flux further amplifies the urgency of addressing youth vulnerabilities through targeted electoral education. Turner[6] suggests that when vulnerable groups are exposed to unstable environments, the likelihood of adverse outcomes increases, making interventions essential. With approximately 20 % of the electorate now consisting of first-time, young voters[1], the stakes are high for Malaysia's democratic integrity. Effective electoral education could reduce vulnerabilities, decrease susceptibility to political manipulation, and foster a more stable, informed voter base that supports transparent governance.

Moreover, vulnerability theories suggest that equipping young voters with tools to recognize and resist undue influence not only serves their interests but also contributes to broader societal resilience. By fostering an informed, critically engaged young electorate, Malaysia can build democratic resilience and reduce instances of policy-making influenced by uninformed or manipulable voters. This aligns with findings by the International IDEA[11], which show that countries investing in voter education report up to 30 % fewer instances of political exploitation among vulnerable groups, enhancing democratic stability and public trust.

The Underpinning Theory

Analysis of Democratic Education Theory in the Context of Electoral Education for Students

The Democratic Education Theory is a vital foundation in shaping political knowledge and understanding the democratic process among students. This theory highlights that democratic education does not solely focus on basic electoral knowledge but also emphasizes critical skills, democratic attitudes, and social awareness to reinforce support for democratic values. Democratic Education offers an integrated approach to imparting the essential aspects of democracy to students through three core components: knowledge, skills, and attitudes, aimed at fostering a generation capable of contributing effectively to national development.

This study aims to develop an electoral education framework with a particular focus on students in vulnerable groups. Vulnerability, in this context, refers to students who may face limitations in comprehending and actively participating in political processes due to socio-economic background, restricted access to information, or limited exposure to political issues. Therefore, applying the Democratic Education Theory here seeks not only to impart knowledge on the principles of democracy but also to cultivate attitudes and skills enabling these students to engage more effectively in democracy.

Applying Democratic Education to Shape Electoral Skills and Attitudes

Democratic Education Theory emphasizes forming a deep understanding of each individual's rights and responsibilities within a democratic system. One of the theory's focuses is to clearly convey knowledge about electoral processes, political structures, and voting rights. As articulated by Dewey[12] in his work on education and democracy, education should provide individuals with relevant knowledge to enable them to take an active role in society. Dewey posited that education is not merely for disseminating information but to nurture individuals capable of critical thinking and meaningful decision-making in their social context. This is particularly relevant in an electoral education framework where students are taught fundamental rights, such as freedom of speech and the responsibility to voice opinions responsibly.

In the context of electoral education, the theory suggests a learning approach that emphasizes essential political skills, such as critical thinking, communication, and decision-making. These skills allow students

to analyze political issues in-depth and understand various political party platforms and policies. Such skills help students evaluate their choices more carefully, leading to a firm and relevant democratic attitude in a pluralistic society.

The Role of Democratic Attitudes in Electoral Education for Vulnerable Students

Beyond skills, Democratic Education Theory also focuses on fostering positive democratic attitudes, such as respecting others' views and valuing diverse opinions. This principle is essential in the context of electoral education, as it teaches students to understand and respect individual rights in society. For instance, through election simulations and political discussions, students are taught to express their opinions ethically and responsibly, aligned with democratic principles. These democratic attitudes are crucial to creating a peaceful and constructive political atmosphere that allows every student—including those from vulnerable groups—to voice their views without fear or barriers.



Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHOD

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods.

Data collection occurred in two phases:

1. Quantitative Survey: A survey was distributed to 311 university students enrolled in the *Constitution of Malaysia* course at Universiti Utara Malaysia. The survey assessed students' perceptions of elections, the *Undi18* legislation, and their level of political awareness.
2. Qualitative **Interviews**: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with three student leaders to gain deeper insights into their views on *Undi18* and their experiences with political engagement. These leaders were selected using purposive sampling to represent diverse leadership roles within student organizations.

Data were analyzed using SPSS for quantitative responses, while qualitative data were thematically analyzed to uncover patterns in perceptions and experiences.

RESULTS

General Perceptions of Elections

Survey results revealed that students have moderate awareness of the political system, with 64 % to 77 % demonstrating a general understanding of Malaysia's electoral processes. Many students expressed a sense of civic duty, but some reported skepticism due to perceived political instability, particularly following Malaysia's frequent changes in leadership between 2020 and 2022. Although the majority were enthusiastic about participating in elections, 35 % expressed concerns about the integrity of the political system.

Perceptions of *Undi18*

The implementation of *Undi18* received overwhelmingly positive feedback, with 90,7 % to 95,5 % of respondents supporting the legislation. However, students also highlighted potential vulnerabilities, including the risk of being swayed by misinformation, social media, and family pressures. Despite being more exposed to political discourse, many felt inadequately prepared to make informed voting decisions without additional support in understanding the political landscape.

Political Awareness and Readiness

Despite the broad support for *Undi18*, many students admitted to feeling vulnerable due to their limited exposure to real-world political scenarios. The qualitative interviews further revealed that student leaders recognized the importance of political participation but noted a gap in structured political education. They advocated for more practical engagement opportunities, such as simulations of elections and public debates, to help students develop critical thinking and decision-making skills.

Table 1. Findings and analysis each objective

Objective	Findings	Analysis	Related Past Studies
Objective 1: Exploring Student Perceptions of General Elections in Malaysia			
Exploring Student Perceptions of General Elections in Malaysia	73 % of students understand the democratic system fully; 26,4 % understand partially.	The high awareness level suggests students have adequate foundational knowledge about democracy, aligning with Dewey's[12] notion of education as preparation for active societal participation.	Dewey[12]. Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education.
Understanding Political and Administrative Systems	64,3 % have full understanding, 34,1 % partial, and 1,6 % do not understand.	Students exhibit substantial awareness of Malaysia's political system, indicating effective civic education.	Norris[13]. Democratic Deficit: Critical Citizens Revisited. This study supports that increased civic education enhances democratic knowledge among youth.
Understanding of Electoral System	77,2 % full understanding, 22,2 % partial, and 0,6 % do not understand.	A robust understanding of the electoral process highlights the impact of educational initiatives in political literacy.	Print and Milner[14]. *Civics and Citizenship Education*. Findings align with Print's argument on the positive impact of civic education on electoral knowledge.
Objective 2: Identifying Student Perceptions on Voting at 18 (Undi 18)			
Knowledge on Undi 18 Policy and Automatic Registration	95,5 % are aware of Undi 18 and automatic registration; 3,9 % are unaware.	High awareness shows effective dissemination of information regarding the voting age, reflecting civic responsibility among youth.	Dalton[15]. *The Civic Culture Transformed*. Dalton emphasizes that policies like Undi 18 can promote civic engagement and responsibility among young citizens.

Table 1. Findings and analysis each objective

Objective	Findings	Analysis	Related Past Studies
Need for Democracy Education in Schools	90,7 % agree on the need, 9,0 % disagree.	This supports integrating democracy education in schools to strengthen political understanding, aligning with global trends of early civic education.	Hahn[16]. *Becoming Political: Comparative Perspectives on Citizenship Education.* Highlights the importance of civic education at the secondary school level.
Objective 3: Analyzing Youth Awareness of Political Issues Ahead of PRU-15			
Decision-Making on Candidates	72,3 % have decided on candidates to vote for.	This indicates a high level of engagement and readiness among youth to participate in elections.	Hooghe and Stolle[17]. *Good Governance and the Civic Culture.* Their findings link informed decision-making with robust political engagement among youth.
Preparedness for Gathering Election Information	86,5 % are prepared to obtain information on PRU-15 and candidates.	Demonstrates proactive behavior in seeking political knowledge, critical for informed voting.	Delli Carpini and Keeter[18]. *What Americans Know about Politics and Why It Matters.* Emphasizes that knowledge-seeking behavior is vital for democratic health.
Main Sources of Election Information	Social media (TikTok, Facebook) dominates, with 19 % and 13 %, respectively.	Indicates a shift to digital platforms for political information, which could influence how information is consumed and the types of messages young voters receive.	Loader and Mercea[19]. *Networking Democracy? Social Media Innovations and Participatory Politics.* Supports the role of social media in political engagement.
Political Party Alliances Supported	55 % support Perikatan Nasional (PN), 31,2 % Pakatan Harapan (PH), 13 % Barisan Nasional (BN).	Shows youth preferences for specific political alliances, possibly reflecting alignment with their values and expectations of governance.	Levitsky and Ziblatt[20]. *How Democracies Die.* Notes the influence of political alliances on young voters' preferences in democratic settings.
Key Considerations in Voting	36 % consider candidates as a priority, while 31 % focus on the manifesto.	Indicates the importance of candidate integrity and manifesto content in youth's voting decisions, reflecting a demand for transparent and accountable leadership.	Campbell et al.[21]. *The American Voter.* Found that candidate qualities and manifestos significantly impact voters' choices.
Preferred Prime Minister Candidates	46 % prefer Muhyiddin Yasin, 29 % Anwar Ibrahim.	Shows specific leadership preferences among youth, which may shape future political landscapes.	Norris[22]. *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Governance.* Examines how leader preference can affect political stability and youth engagement.
Key Criteria for Candidates	Integrity (23 %), education (18 %), and experience (17 %) are top factors.	Integrity and qualifications are seen as critical, indicating a strong youth preference for ethical and knowledgeable candidates.	Hibbing and Theiss-Morse[23]. *Stealth Democracy.* Found that transparency and integrity are increasingly important to modern voters.
Key Criteria for Political Parties	Manifesto (21 %), party ideology (20 %), and candidate choice (16 %) are prioritized.	Emphasizes the role of ideological alignment and promises made in manifestos, which can guide youth voter loyalty to a party.	Dalton[24]. *Citizenship Norms and the Expansion of Political Participation.* Demonstrates that party ideology and manifesto greatly influence younger voters.

Qualitative interview

In the FGD (Focus Group Discussion) session with the UUM Student Representative Council, they agreed that integrity issues, such as corruption, depend on the individual.

"If a leader goes astray, it will have a significant impact not only on the individual but also on the party and the country. For instance, cases of corruption, breach of trust, abuse of power, and others involving UMNO leaders have damaged the reputation and image of UMNO and Barisan Nasional (BN). Due to this issue, Barisan Nasional (BN) lost in the elections for the first time in 2018"

"Corruption is a serious issue, a virus involving many parties in pursuit of personal gain. According to them, when a figure is convicted of corruption, if found guilty, they must be properly punished. Otherwise, it will lead to division in society if the figure escapes accountability. They believe that, regardless of the

leader's background, integrity is essential. Without it, students are left questioning whom to trust. If a leader is involved in corruption, breach of trust, or similar offenses, their words in Parliament become difficult to believe, and their arguments are likely to be disregarded."

Although many issues related to political leadership are discussed as mentioned above, it cannot be denied that political leaders, whether legislative or executive, play an important role in the administration of the country. Leadership duties continue as usual despite issues like party-hopping and integrity. It is not easy to be an outstanding and successful leader, respected by both opponents and allies, and appreciated by all levels of society. Within political parties, for instance, various issues and challenges exist that can undermine the leadership of representatives as political leaders.

DISCUSSION

The study's findings underscore the importance of addressing the vulnerabilities faced by young voters in the political process. Although university students generally possess the intellectual capacity to engage in elections, they are often unprepared for the pressures and complexities of actual political participation. This vulnerability is exacerbated by the rapid influx of information, especially on social media, which can expose students to biased or inaccurate information.

To mitigate these vulnerabilities, a comprehensive electoral education framework is essential. This framework should emphasize critical political literacy, enabling students to navigate complex political landscapes, evaluate information critically, and make informed decisions. Key components of the proposed framework include:

1. Political Literacy Curriculum: Integrating modules on political processes, electoral systems, and democratic values into university courses.
2. Practical Engagement: Offering students hands-on experiences through election simulations, debates, and discussions with political figures to enhance their understanding of real-world politics.
3. Media Literacy Training: Educating students on how to critically assess media sources and identify misinformation, particularly in the digital age where social media plays a dominant role in shaping political opinions.
4. Civic Responsibility Initiatives: Encouraging active participation in civic duties, not only through voting but also by engaging in community-led political activities such as town halls and public forums.

The findings of this study also provide valuable insights into Malaysian youth's perceptions of political engagement, especially in the context of Malaysia's evolving electoral landscape. The data reveals both enthusiasm and reservations among young voters as they navigate their responsibilities in a politically dynamic environment. This discussion addresses the implications of these findings by examining the general awareness of elections, the impact of the *Undi18* initiative, and the broader political awareness and readiness of young voters.

General Perceptions of Elections

The study revealed that the majority of students have a foundational understanding of Malaysia's political system and electoral processes, with 64 % to 77 % reporting general awareness. This suggests a moderate level of political literacy among youth, which aligns with Dewey's[12] theory that civic education prepares individuals for active societal participation. However, despite this awareness, about 35 % of respondents expressed skepticism towards the political system, particularly due to frequent leadership changes from 2020 to 2022, which contributed to a perceived sense of political instability. This skepticism reflects the findings of Norris[13], who argues that political instability can erode trust, especially among younger citizens.

While the majority of students feel a sense of civic duty and are enthusiastic about voting, the concerns regarding political integrity suggest that trust in the electoral system is not fully established. This aligns with the theory that while knowledge is necessary for political engagement, trust and perceived integrity in the system are equally important to ensure sustained involvement. Therefore, enhancing transparency and accountability within the political system could play a crucial role in addressing these concerns and increasing youth participation.

Perceptions of *Undi18* and Civic Responsibility

The overwhelming support for the *Undi18* initiative, with 90,7 % to 95,5 % of students in favor, highlights a significant interest among youth in participating in the democratic process. Lowering the voting age to 18 has provided a pathway for young people to contribute meaningfully to governance, as suggested by Dalton[15], who argued that policies like *Undi18* can foster civic engagement and responsibility among young citizens.

However, the qualitative data and survey responses highlight some vulnerabilities among young voters, such as the potential influence of misinformation, social media, and family pressures. Many students expressed

concern about their limited experience in interpreting political information independently, which could lead to uninformed decision-making. Loader and Mercea[19] support this view, noting that while social media platforms have increased youth exposure to political information, they also present risks related to selective exposure and misinformation. This finding emphasizes the need for critical media literacy programs to equip young voters with the skills to critically analyze political content.

Additionally, 90,7 % of respondents expressed a desire for more structured civic education in schools, indicating that while *Undi18* has successfully mobilized youth interest, it may not have adequately prepared them for informed voting. This aligns with Hahn's[16] argument that early civic education is essential to fostering knowledgeable citizens. Implementing more comprehensive political education in schools could help bridge this gap, ensuring that young voters are not only informed but also equipped to make independent and responsible decisions.

Political Awareness and Readiness to Engage

Although the findings indicate strong support for *Undi18* and enthusiasm for political participation, there remains a gap in students' readiness to engage critically with political issues. While 72,3 % of respondents felt prepared to decide on candidates for the upcoming election, qualitative interviews revealed that many students feel vulnerable due to their limited exposure to real-world political scenarios. This suggests that while they may possess a foundational understanding of politics, there is a lack of practical experience that would enable them to critically evaluate political candidates and policies.

The influence of social media as the main source of election information, particularly platforms like TikTok (19 %) and Facebook (13 %), may also impact the depth and quality of political knowledge among youth. This reliance on social media for political information raises concerns about selective exposure and the role of echo chambers, where individuals are exposed to a narrow range of perspectives. The role of social media in shaping political beliefs among young voters is consistent with the findings of Loader and Mercea[19], who highlight the potential risks of digital influence. Therefore, fostering digital literacy and encouraging young voters to engage with a diverse range of information sources could help mitigate these risks.

Furthermore, preferences for specific political alliances—such as Perikatan Nasional (55 %) and Pakatan Harapan (31 %)—reflect the values and expectations that youth have for governance. This trend indicates that young voters may align with political parties based on perceived alignment with their own principles and desired policy outcomes. Levitsky and Ziblatt[20] argued that political alliances significantly influence voter preferences, particularly among youth, who are often more idealistic and value-driven in their political choices.

Integrity as a Key Factor in Political Engagement

The study's qualitative findings from Focus Group Discussions (FGD) underscore the importance of integrity among political leaders. Students emphasized that issues like corruption are critical concerns that directly impact their trust in the political system. According to the participants, when leaders involved in corruption are not held accountable, it erodes public trust and creates a sense of disillusionment. This view aligns with Hibbing and Theiss-Morse[23], who found that modern voters increasingly value transparency and ethical conduct in their leaders.

Moreover, students expressed concern that if leaders lack integrity, it affects the credibility of their statements and policy arguments, diminishing their influence in Parliament and reducing public trust. They argued that regardless of a leader's background, integrity is essential, and any deviation could result in societal division and weaken democratic structures. The youth's demand for ethical leadership reflects a broader trend among modern voters, who increasingly prioritize transparency and accountability over traditional party loyalty.

Implications for Policy and Practice

These findings have several implications for policy and practice. First, integrating comprehensive civic education into school curricula could strengthen youth political literacy and better prepare them for informed voting. Such education should include practical engagement opportunities, such as election simulations and debates, to build critical thinking and decision-making skills.

Second, the influence of social media on young voters highlights the need for digital literacy programs that address misinformation and selective exposure. Encouraging young voters to seek information from multiple, reliable sources can help counter the potential biases of digital platforms.

Finally, promoting integrity and transparency within political institutions is essential to restore and maintain trust in the political system. Addressing concerns about corruption and fostering ethical leadership could strengthen youth confidence in democratic processes, ultimately leading to a more engaged and informed electorate.

CONCLUSION

The introduction of Undi18 in Malaysia marks a significant step toward fostering youth participation in the

democratic process. However, this opportunity comes with challenges, as young voters remain vulnerable to external influences, misinformation, and a lack of political education. This study underscores the urgent need for a comprehensive electoral education framework that emphasizes civic education and digital literacy.

By equipping young voters with the necessary knowledge, skills, and resilience, such initiatives can empower them to engage responsibly in the political landscape. Addressing these concerns will not only safeguard the integrity of elections but also nurture a politically informed and engaged generation, thereby enhancing the quality of democracy and strengthening Malaysia's democratic governance for the future.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

AUTHORSHIP CONTRIBUTION

Conceptualization: Zuliana Azwa Zulkifli, Mokhtafizam Mokhtar, Zawiyah Mohd Zain.
Data curation: Zuliana Azwa Zulkifli.
Formal analysis: Mokhtafizam Mokhtar.
Research: Zawiyah Mohd Zain.
Methodology: Zuliana Azwa Zulkifli, Mokhtafizam Mokhtar.
Project management: Zawiyah Mohd Zain.
Resources: Mokhtafizam Mokhtar.
Software: Zuliana Azwa Zulkifli.
Supervision: Zawiyah Mohd Zain.
Validation: Mokhtafizam Mokhtar.
Display: Zuliana Azwa Zulkifli.
Drafting - original draft: Zuliana Azwa Zulkifli.
Writing - proofreading and editing: Zawiyah Mohd Zain.