Social media usage and pyschosocial as contributing factor towards the formation of ideology: A preliminary study

check for updates

🆔 **Mohamad Afzanizzam Zahran**[1+]
🆔 **Mohd Azmir Mohd Nizah**[2]
🆔 **Afi Roshezry Abu Bakar**[3]
🆔 **Munirah Aayuni Mohd Mokhtar**[4]

[1,2,3,4]Centre for Core Studies, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, Bandar Baru Nilai, Malaysia.
[1]Email: jzack49@yahoo.com
[2]Email: azmirnizah@usim.edu.my
[3]Email: afi@utar.edu.my
[4]Email: munirahaayuni@gmail.com

(+ Corresponding author)

ABSTRACT

Social media platforms have become the primary source of information, especially among young people. The reason is that the information shared on social media is quicker and more current. Exposure to social media information helps shape how they think and build their character and personality. Similarly, society, family, ideology, and media, grouped as psychosocial factors, influence ideological formation by contributing towards character building and strengthening worldview. However, excessive social media usage may negatively influence young people and the way they think, whereas psychosocial factors influence an individual's personality and thinking. Therefore, this study examines social media usage and psychosocial factors and their influence on young people's ideological formation. Using the quantitative methodology with a set of self-reporting questionnaires, about 128 respondents took part in the pilot study. It is found that ideological influence, social media influence, and socialization agents' influence positively correlate to ideological formation. These constructs positively impact and influence the formation of ideology, character-building, and rational thinking. Thus, the findings of this study are expected to help authorities apply positive values from social media influence and psychosocial factors to the thinking process and ideological formation of young generation leaders today.

Contribution/ Originality: Previous studies on ideology among Malaysian university students usually relate to tolerance and perception issues as an outcome. Meanwhile, this article contributes to the knowledge by identifying and examining the influence and the interrelationship between social media and psychosocial factors towards the ideological formation of university students.

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media has transformed into an essential component of contemporary life, influencing not only our methods of communication but also the development of our ideas and worldviews. The information shared on social media platforms is readily and expeditiously obtainable on various compatible gadgets, including smartphones and tablets. It replaces traditional media formats, like newspapers, television, and radio, as the preferred method of accessing information. In recent years, social media has notably increased popularity as a medium for establishing relationships and networking, obtaining information, and promoting enterprises. Social media platforms have

brought about a fundamental shift in how users engage with information. Social media platforms enable the widespread distribution of ideas, beliefs, sentiments, and points of view to an international audience.

As of January 2023, datareportal.com reported that a total of 4.88 billion people across the globe were utilizing social media for various purposes, with many users being young people. The number continues to rise annually. According to the estimate, the number of social media users aged 18 and above in Malaysia is 24.80 million as of February 2023, representing 99.8 per cent of the entire population aged 18 and above. Moreover, as of January 2023, 81.1% of internet users in Malaysia, irrespective of background or age, were active on at least one social media platform (Kemp, 2023). Social media has also evolved into a public forum where political and social topics are frequently the subject of heated debate (Wike et al., 2022). Additionally, social media facilitates the formation of echo chambers in which users seek content that supports their existing opinions.

The interconnection between social media and psychological factors creates intricate mechanisms that significantly impact our ideology and worldview. Consequently, this forum has evolved into an ideal setting for the discourse of ideologies, which in turn serves to strengthen and legitimize their predisposition towards specific facts and matters. Dialogue and spirited discussions among individuals on the Internet notwithstanding, divergent ideological perspectives can sometimes contribute to the polarization of societies. The long-term strength of ideologies increases because of societal polarization. As a result of the interconnectedness of the digital age, the relationship between psychological elements and social media in the formation of ideologies is, in conclusion, an essential research topic. It is crucial to fully grasp this intricate interplay to comprehend the contemporary ideological landscape and its societal ramifications. Thus, the convergence of these elements ought to facilitate a heightened consciousness regarding numerous other societal issues; consequently, additional scholarly investigations regarding the impact of psychosocial factors on social media usage are warranted in tandem with the proliferation of social media.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Social Media Usage

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) defined social media as a collection of web-based apps that enable the exchange of content and operate on the technological and ideological underpinnings of Web 2.0. The term "social media" has been applied to a wide range of online platforms, including collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia), video sharing sites (e.g., YouTube), blogs and microblogs (e.g., Twitter), social network sites (e.g., Facebook), virtual worlds (e.g., Second Life), and so on (Demangeot & Broderick, 2010). In a similar vein, social media can be defined as online platforms that enable individuals to selectively self-present and interact with others opportunistically, either in real-time or asynchronously. Both wide-ranging and specific audiences utilize social media for the value of user-generated content and the experience of interacting with others (Carr & Hayes, 2015). Conversely, social media offers the general public a platform as a service via which they can access internet-based applications constructed upon a technological framework in computer science (Butt, Saleem, Siddiqui, Saleem, & Awang, 2021).

Presently, social media usage is gaining importance in society. In 2023, 24.80 million individuals aged 18 and older in Malaysia utilized social media, per (Kemp, 2023). Social media platforms are widely utilized for a variety of purposes, including social contact, access to news and information, and decision-making, Communication theory scholars have posited that individuals' media preferences are influenced by their motivations or the type of enjoyment they seek to attain. Hence, the fundamental assumption is that people actively pursue media that satisfies their desires and results in the greatest sense of satisfaction. Traditional media such as newspapers and television, as well as emerging media such as social media and blogs, are all examples of media.

Numerous academics have examined the factors that influence media preferences. It encompasses a diverse range of pleasures, such as amusement, social interaction, exposure, solace, and the pursuit of knowledge, to mention a few. A trend in young people' news consumption, according to Omar, Ismail, and Kee (2018) is a

transition from print to online media, as they actively seek information and amusement. In addition, like the real world, social media is a space where individuals collaborate and share ideas to create art, promote thought and commerce, spark debate or discussion, and even find new allies, lovers, or friends. These concepts have contributed as the basis for many civilizations.

Furthermore, in their study, Stafford, Stafford, and Schkade (2004) delineated three fundamental aspects pertaining to Internet usage by consumers: content gratification—information, education, learning, entertainment, and social gratification—and process gratification—interacting with resources, technology, search engines, and browsing—are examples of process gratification (e.g., chatting, friends, interaction, and people). In a similar vein, theorists have classified the notion of uses and gratifications into many needs categories, including emotive, cognitive, personal, social, and tension-free needs.

According to the definitions provided by scholars concerning the true motivations behind media consumption, most scholars concur that individuals select media to satisfy their desires for amusement, information, knowledge, relationships, social standing, personal enjoyment, and escapism. Notwithstanding Mayfield's description, many experts do not see economic necessity as a factor influencing an individual's choice of media. Furthermore, academics refrain from citing spiritual or religious requirements as influencing media consumption, even though religious and spiritual content is accessible via social media and other media platforms. It contradicts the fifth level of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, which designates spiritual requirements as self-actualization needs. Islamic philosopher Said Nursi expressed a similar viewpoint concerning the necessity of religion in human existence, stating that spirituality is constructed upon the teachings of Tauhid, which represent the essence of the Islamic spirit, the meaning of life, and the underlying realities of creation. Tauhid is God's declaration that is present in all things, beginning with a singular essence that serves as a compass for human existence (Ihsan, Rahmadi, & Jamal, 2022).

In summary, it is widely accepted among both historical and modern scholars that an individual's choice of media is determined by his or her own requirements and the form of gratification he or she desires to attain.

2.2. Social Media and Political Participation

Utilizing social media to solicit votes is not a novel occurrence in Malaysia. Change is nonetheless imminent, as evidenced elsewhere in the 14th General Election (GE14), including virtual reality (Abdullah & Anuar, 2018). Furthermore, during GE-14, opposing parties made great use of social media to woo voters. The general election of 2018 (GE-14) is commonly referred to as the "Facebook Election" on account of Facebook's extensive utilization as a news dissemination medium in comparison to alternative social media platforms (Chinnasamy, 2018). Facebook facilitates the dissemination of content that is more closely associated with the elements that it can channel, such as online news produced by private or traditional internet media, blogs, portals, videos, or interactive videos uploaded by internet users expressing their own opinions and complaints.

Social media can influence and entice its users, particularly young people, to participate in politics or become involved for political purposes. As an illustration, YouTube is employed as a platform for individuals to share personal videos and is utilized to upload and download videos pertaining to political lectures and various other political movements (Kahne & Bowyer, 2017). Social media facilitates the democratization of knowledge and information, transforming individuals into both information producers and consumers. Social media's democratizing benefits stem from the fact that it provides citizens with avenues to engage and participate in political processes (Omotayo & Folorunso, 2020). In a similar vein, Mohd Nizah and Abu Bakar (2021) posit that individuals commonly utilize social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Telegram, YouTube, Snapchat, WeChat) to disseminate personal perspectives and opinions, document diary-like experiences, and engage in blogging pertaining to matters of personal interest. Furthermore, concerns regarding the political voice of young Malaysians in relation to online political activity among university students were the subject of a study. Students at Universiti

Teknologi Mara (UiTM) exhibit a high degree of online political participation, which is influenced by internet literacy, political interest, and social media communication, according to the study's findings (Zainon, Hashim, & Zulkifli, 2017).

Scholars concur that social media facilitates the engagement of young individuals in political courses and the pursuit of political knowledge. Additionally, it enhances their political awareness of contemporary concerns in their immediate vicinity. However, academics have suggested that despite the undeniable significance of social media's impact on young people, it is also susceptible to malicious misuse, such as disseminating misleading information online. Additionally, during election seasons, many social media users are more receptive to harmful material, which facilitates the dissemination of fake news. An increasing number of social media users and readers are now exposed to internet disinformation daily, which has become a global menace (Baptista, Correia, Gradim, & Piñeiro-Naval, 2021).

2.3. Social Media and Voting Awareness

Young people's sense of obligations as voters is also profoundly influenced by the persuasive qualities of social media. The utility of social media in establishing connections with political parties was demonstrated during the Indian election. By doing so, one can enhance their prospects of securing a larger electoral vote. Furthermore, through the dissemination of information and the encouragement to exercise their right to vote, the microblogging platform Twitter enhances individuals' engagement with the political process by imparting knowledge and comprehension of it (Hayat & Ali, 2022). By engaging with political parties on social media, users and voters can acquire crucial information regarding the manifesto, leadership, and background of the individuals running for office. Voter rights and election procedures, among other vital details, are also accessible through internet platforms. Voters would thus be motivated and guided to exercise their right to vote. The Internet has emerged as the primary conduit for political engagement and participation, increasing knowledge and understanding of voting and campaigning (Ahmad, Alvi, & Ittefaq, 2019).

Solely regarding youth voting awareness, researchers concur that social media exerts a substantial impact. Thus, it is demonstrated that social media had a significant impact on the outcomes of general elections in India (2018) and the United States of America, among others, including the Malaysian election (2008). Young voters were significant factor in determining the outcome of every general election in Malaysia between 2008 and 2018. As a result, this transition has had considerable impact on the political landscape in Malaysia (Mohd Nizah & Abu Bakar, 2021).

Young people's comprehension of offline and online political involvement is, in summary, profoundly influenced by social media. This serves to reinforce the children's comprehension of their obligations as participants in the community.

2.4. Psychosocial Factor

In addition to the information-gathering benefits of social media, additional psychological factors profoundly influenced the worldview of young people. Psychosocial factors may originate inside, such as within a religious institution or family. In a similar fashion, external psychosocial elements such as social institutions, educational institutions, and mass media influence the thought processes and character development of young people in the direction of ideological formation. As the younger cohort matures within the context of postmodernism, they are confronted with an extensive array of psychosocial elements referred to as socialization agents, which either perpetuate or alter cultural norms and ideas. Family and societal events contribute to the formation of political views. In addition to familial, peer, and academic influences, youth political socialization can also be attributed to a multitude of mass media outlets (Banerjee, 2021).

Family, educational institutions (universities, colleges, and schools), peer groups, professional organizations, religious organizations, political parties, and the media are the seven most influential socialization agents. Although experts may differ, the quantity of socialization agents does exist. There are experts that advocate for a lower number of five agents, while some propose ten. Scholars have added age, gender, and geography to the list in this context. In the past, numerous scholars have addressed the function of socialization agents. It was mutually accepted that the four principal agents of socialization are media, parents (family), schools (educational institutions), and peer groups (Merkowitz & Gimpel, 2010; Reidy et al., 2015). Additional socialization agents that are regarded as secondary are political parties and religious organizations. These agents are actively engaged in the initial phases of children's upbringing. At the time, empirical socialization research primarily examined young children's political orientations and behaviours, assuming political attitudes developed during this formative period. Subsequent research unveiled the fallacy that early-life preferences and behaviours were indestructibly fixed. Political views developed as a child were modified in adulthood. Therefore, recent studies indicate that it is possible to socialize youngsters into politics throughout their formative years. Social and political problems are taught to children, directly or indirectly, through various socialization agents. Family, peers, the academic environment, the mass media, and even the political climate are all potential influences. Political socialization also possesses a mobilizing component, given that others can influence, encourage, or discourage our conduct in our immediate environment.

Early political scientists, according to McIntosh and Youniss (2010) drew inspiration from developmental theory in an effort to comprehend the origins of citizenship in the experiences of infancy and adolescence. Scholars also discern that learning theory and cognitive theory have been applied to elucidate the impact of parents on children's attitudes and to discern the capacity of young people to generate novel ideas in opposition to established political institutions, respectively, in addition to developmental theory. Miller, Easton, and Chil- (1969) maintained, however, that while developmental theory might be utilized to explain "diffuse support" for the political system, it was incapable of addressing political behavior. As a result, it was necessary to establish a political theory of political socialization to explain how young people can acquire the ability to operate politically.

McIntosh and Youniss (2010) emphasized the application of Situated Learning Theory to the participation and development of youth in the community. It stated that individuals develop identities and habits via significant participation in a community of practice that consists of participants who share activities over an extended period, such as football, school fundraising, or political candidate support. Engaging in political discourse serves as an exemplary instance of contextual learning within the local community. McIntosh and Youniss (2010) further emphasized the significance of youth support systems in the context of societal political socialization. Youth engage in political socialization where they collaborate with others in purposeful endeavors that pursue shared objectives, while also engaging in dialogue over conflicting interests. Youth, however, are typically unprepared to accomplish this on their own. Subsequently, Youniss and Hart (2005) proposed that scaffolding or support from community adults through educational institutions, youth programs, and other social institutions is essential for facilitating adolescent engagement in the realm of actual political conflict. At least three primary components, according to research, comprise scaffolding: training, access to an actual political system, and assistance during participation in that system (McIntosh & Youniss, 2010). The objective of the program is to equip young people with the knowledge necessary and to facilitate their participation in groups that are part of the system.

Based on scholarly research on the socialization process, it is possible to conclude that psychosocial elements, particularly those of the mental processes of young people within their families or communities, influence thought and behaviour. Additionally, it impacts the ideological development and conduct of individuals. As its ultimate goal, it aids in fostering in young people the development of qualities that make them good citizens and well-rounded leaders.

2.5. Ideology as a Belief System

The term "ideology" was originally introduced by Antoine Destutt de Tracy to denote the scientific examination of concepts (Freeden, 2001). In contrast, political ideology is characterized as a system of beliefs that provides rationale and explanation for a desired economic and governmental structure within a society, proposes tactics to ensure or achieve that structure, and imparts significance to public occurrences, individuals, and policies (Political Ideology, 2022). Ideology comprises a collection of concepts, convictions, and attitudes that impact the worldview or behaviour of an individual or group, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Major social institutions, including the media, the family, school, and religion, influence the transmission of the prevailing ideology within a given culture. Communism, socialism, liberalism, conservatism, authoritarianism, democracy, environmentalism, and capitalism are some well-known examples. Political ideology typically centres on how power should be apportioned and utilized. Each ideology has its views regarding the optimal economic system and style of government, such as autocracy or democracy. For example, socialism or capitalism.

Additionally, political ideology is a belief system that provides justifications and explanations for a preferred economic and governmental order for society, strategies for its maintenance or attainment, and aids in attributing significance to public events, personalities, and policies (Freeden, 2001). Consciously or unconsciously, ideology influences the activities of human beings by forming a collection of beliefs, ideas, and attitudes. Critical social institutions such as the media, the family, school, and religion transmit the prevailing ideology of a society. Contemporary society is rife with political beliefs. The same term occasionally refers to an ideology and one of its fundamental tenets. The term "socialism," for instance, can apply to both an economic system and its supporting philosophy. Therefore, political ideology is of the utmost importance for world leaders, as it directs the state's daily operations. It is the foundation upon which the state and its society are built.

2.6. Familial Transmission of Political Ideology

A study was undertaken to establish the correlation between heredity and closely related forms of political behavior, including trust, political opinions, and voting behavior. The heritability of political ideology among families is a similar principle (Baptista et al., 2021). Likewise, an investigation into the impact of parental influence on the verbal skills of children led to the conclusion that children mirror the behavior of their parents. "The size of the children's recorded vocabularies and their IQ scores were highly related with the size of their parents' recorded vocabularies," according to the research. IQ means intelligent quotient and it refers to a measure of the intelligence of an individual determined from findings acquired from specially developed tests. However, this explanation fails to acknowledge the ability for intelligent parents to impart not only a verbally stimulating atmosphere but also a genetic predisposition towards intellectual accomplishments in their offspring (Bouchard & McGue, 2003).

Furthermore, an investigation titled "Childhood Parenting Experiences and Adult Creativity" clearly recognizes the potentiality of a genetic interpretation about their discovery of a correlation within the family unit between parenting and the creativity of one's offspring (Koestner, Walker, & Fichman, 1999). Furthermore, Settle, Dawes, and Fowler (2009) contend that the notion that genes significantly influence political behaviour is supported by consensus. Consequently, it is comprehensible and supported by scholarly research from the past that parental genetic influence on a child's communication capacity is a plausible explanation, in addition to environmental influences.

The premise that behaviour geneticists have on the transmission of voting preferences to their offspring is that it occurs via the genetic material of the parents. Additionally, children are more likely than any other political characteristic to adopt the partisan orientations of their parents, according to Jennings, Stoker, and Bowers (2009). Nevertheless, this assumption was refuted by conventional theories of voting choice, which primarily emphasized the impact of environmental factors and excluded genetic elements from explicit consideration. Furthermore,

additional research analysis demonstrates that there is no distinct genetic factor that influences voting choice (Hatemi, Medland, Morley, Heath, & Martin, 2007).

The consensus among behavioral geneticists is that parents do indeed inherit and pass on hereditary genes of impact to their offspring. Many political scientists, on the other hand, refuted their reasoning on the grounds that disparities in conduct are responses to socialization factors and external stimuli. Consequently, it is plausible that other socialization agents, such as educational institutions and mass media, rather than family or parents, could exert a substantial influence on the psychomotor and psychosocial abilities of young individuals.

Another contention is to prior research about the transmission of political affiliations from parents to their offspring, which primarily examined the parent-child interaction. However, the behavior geneticist does not specify if a similar investigation has been conducted on adolescents. It may provide greater insight into the interaction between parents and children. Furthermore, political philosophy and political allegiance are not traits that can be passed down through the family. Like what occurs with voting choices. It is intricately linked to the socialization process, wherein parents exert an impact on the political ideology of their offspring via an array of means, such as discourse, observation, and reflection. Weiss (2020) asserts that all individuals should see their youth as the critical juncture for the formation of their political ideas. Through childhood, young individuals are heavily exposed to the ideology of their parents; nevertheless, the influence of other socialization elements such as social media, peers, and others may influence their reasoning ability and worldview. In conclusion, it is evident that genetic impact is indeed transmitted from parents to their offspring. Similarly, the ability to complete activities or increase one's knowledge of subjects such as culture, religion, and so on. Considering this, it is possible to deduce that children may inherit political ideologies and behaviors from their parents. In addition, socialization influences have a substantial role in shaping the character and outlook of young individuals.

3. METHODOLOGY

The research method that was used was a questionnaire. A preliminary study of questions about social media usage, psychosocial factors and ideology was distributed among students of three Malaysian universities from July 1 to July 31, 2023. During the period, 128 students between 18 and 30 completed the survey.

Table 1. Gender.

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	38	29.7
Female	90	70.3
Total	128	100

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Demographic Background

Table 1 shows that 29.7 per cent (38) of 128 university students who have answered the questionnaire are male, while 70.3 per cent (90) are female.

Table 2. Ethnicity.

Ethnicity	Frequency	Percent
Malay	87	68.0
Chinese	30	23.4
Indian	8	6.3
Bumiputera Sabah	1	0.8
Bumiputera Sarawak	1	0.8
Others	1	0.8
Total	128	100

Table 2 shows that 68 per cent (87) of the study sample is Malay ethnic, followed by 23.4 per cent (30) Chinese, 6.3 per cent (8) Indian, 0.8 per cent (1) Bumiputera Sabah, 0.8 per cent (1) Bumiputera Sarawak and 0.8 per cent (1) others.

Table 3. Age.

Age	Frequency	Percent
18 – 20 years old	39	30.5
21 – 23 years old	33	25.8
24 – 26 years old	14	10.9
27 – 30 years old	42	32.8
Total	128	100

Table 3 shows that 30.5 per cent (39) of the study sample consists of those aged between 18-20 years old, followed by 25.8 per cent (33) aged between 21-23 years old, 10.9 per cent (14) aged between 24-26 years old, and 32.9 per cent (42) aged between 27-30 years old.

Table 4. Religion.

Religion	Frequency	Percent
Islam	87	68.0
Buddha	26	20.3
Hinduism	7	5.5
Christianity	7	5.5
Others	1	0.8
Total	128	100

In terms of religion, Table 4 shows that 68 per cent (87) of the study sample is Islam, followed by 20.3 per cent (26) Buddha, 5.5 per cent (7) Hinduism, 5.5 per cent (7) Christianity and 0.8 per cent (1) others.

Table 5. Reliability and validity.

Reliability statistics		
Cronbach's alpha	Cronbach's alpha based on standardized items	N of items
0.727	0.758	3

4.2. Reliability and Validity

Table 5 shows that the Cronbach Alpha value for the validity and reliability test is .727 and the items are considered stable and acceptable for further research.

Table 6. Mean.

Items statistic	Mean	Standard deviation	N
Social media	5.33	0.964	128
Ideological influence	5.61	0.772	128
Socialization agents influence	3.94	1.292	128

Table 6 shows that factor of *Ideological Influence* has the highest mean (5.61), followed by *Social Media* factor (5.3300) and *Socialization Agents Influence* factor (3.94).

Table 7. Reliability and validity for social media construct.

Reliability statistics		
Cronbach's alpha	Cronbach's alpha based on standardized items	N of items
0.949	0.952	29

4.3. Reliability and Validity for Social Media Construct

Table 7 shows that the Cronbach Alpha value for the Social Media construct is .949 and the items are considered stable and acceptable for further research.

Table 8. Reliability and validity for ideological influence construct.

Reliability statistics		
Cronbach's alpha	Cronbach's alpha based on standardized items	N of items
0.841	0.899	15

4.4. Reliability and Validity for Ideological Influence Construct

Table 8 shows that the Cronbach Alpha value for the Ideological Influence construct is .841 and the items are considered stable and acceptable for further research.

Table 9. Reliability and validity for socialization agent influence construct.

Reliability statistics		
Cronbach's alpha	Cronbach's alpha based on standardized items	N of items
0.966	0.966	31

4.5. Reliability and Validity for Socialization Agents Influence Construct

Table 9 shows that the Cronbach Alpha value for the Socialization Agents Influence construct is .966 and the items are considered stable and acceptable for further research.

Table 10. Pearson correlation.

Construct	Correlations	Social media	Ideological influence	Socialization agents influence
Social media	Pearson correlation	1	0.621**	0.521**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
	N	128	128	128
Ideological influence	Pearson correlation	0.621**	1	0.391**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
	N	128	128	128
Socialization agents influence	Pearson correlation	0.521**	0.391**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
	N	128	128	128

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.6. Correlations

Table 9 as shows that based on Pearson Correlation 2-tailed, all factors have significant correlation with each others. *Social Media* has significant correlation with *Ideological Influence* (0.621) and *Socialization Agents Influence* (0.521). *Ideological Influence* has significant correlation with *Social Media* (0.621) and *Socialization Agents Influence* (0.391). *Socialization Agents Influence* has significant correlation with *Social Media* (0.521) and *Ideological Influence* (0.391).

5. DISCUSSION

One hundred twenty-eight respondents took part in the pilot study, comprised of 38 (29.7%) male students and 90 (70.3%) female students. On the aspect of ethnicity, Malay recorded the majority with 87 students (68.0%), followed by Chinese (23.4%), Indian 8 (6.3%), Bumiputera Sabah 1 (0.8%), Bumiputera Sarawak 1 (0.8%) and others 1 (0.8%). Regarding age, the study found that 42 students (32.8%) are 27-30 years old. It was followed by 39 students (30.5%) in the group of 18-20 years old, 33 students (25.8%) in the 21-23 years old group age and 14

students (10.9%) belonging to the 24-26 years old group age. On the aspect of religion, there were 87 Muslim (Islam) students (68.0%) followed by 26 students (20.3%) belonged to Buddha, seven students (5.5%) belonging to Hinduism, seven students belonging to Christianity (5.5%), and one student belongs to other religions.

Regarding reliability and validity, Cronbach's Alpha value for three constructs *(Social Media, Ideological Influence, and Socialization Agents Influence)* was 0.727, as in Table 5. Therefore, the items and instruments are considered stable and acceptable for further research. Furthermore, Table 6 also pointed out that among the three constructs, *Ideological Influence* has the highest mean (5.61) with a standard deviation (sd) of 0.96, followed by *Social Media* (mean=5.33, sd=0.77) and *Socialization Agents Influence* (mean=3.94, sd=1.29). It can be concluded that *ideological influence* has the most decisive influence on ideological formation. Additionally, this study also performed reliability and validity tests on subconstructs of each construct, and the result shows that Cronbach's Alpha value for the Social Media construct (29 items) is 0.949, *Ideological Influence* construct (15 items) 0.899, and *for the Socialization Agents Influence* construct (31 items) 0.966.

According to the findings, the most essential and potent factor in forming ideology is *Ideological Influence*. Its mean is the highest among the three constructs tested, followed by *Social Media and Socialization Agents Influence*. It shows that the construct of *Ideological Influence* is the most robust in influencing the formation of a person's ideology. It is also the strongest among the three constructs and demonstrates how a child's ideology develops inside the family based on the parents' ideologies. Table 10 points out that the three constructs have positive correlations towards each other, and correlations are significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Therefore, this study provided an answer to the research question that suggests social media and psychosocial factors impact the way people, particularly younger people, create their ideologies.

Ideology serves as a lens for young people to explore the world from their perspective and develop their worldview. The influence of parents' ideology is also explained in previous studies, which state that young people mainly shape their way of thinking and acceptance of the world around them because of the influence of their parents, who also have certain ideologies they adhere to. It is echoed by earlier and present studies suggesting parents transmit their ideology to children (Van Ditmars, 2023). In a similar vein, the notion that political ideology is inherited within families also applies to political affiliation (Baptista et al., 2021).

Therefore, to produce more future leaders, policies related to the younger generation should be formulated by the government, such as engaging and communicating with youth organisations from all backgrounds to gain insight into the differing viewpoints of youth about ideological matters. Policies aimed at the youth demographic can benefit from this inclusive approach. Implementing educational programs that enhance media literacy among young people is significant regarding social media. Educational programs can empower them to critically evaluate information, reducing susceptibility to ideological manipulation through media. Moreover, adding political education to the school curriculum will encourage students to grasp various viewpoints somewhat. It can support young people's independent and well-informed political thinking. Finally, by encouraging openness, responsibility, and transparency, governments can help young people develop a sense of trust. Thus, ideological differences can be lessened by addressing this issue.

6. CONCLUSION

A complicated interaction between psychosocial factors and social media shape the creation of ideology. Research indicates that people's ideological opinions can be shaped by social media's ubiquitous reach, which exposes users to a variety of viewpoints and content. Emotions and social identity are examples of psychosocial aspects that are important. In terms of belief systems, emotions, for example, can impact whether information is accepted or rejected and cause psychological pain. Furthermore, the uniqueness of an individual's ideology is influenced by their social identity, which is composed of integrated psychological, social, and physical components.

This synthesis highlights the complex interplay that shapes and reinforces ideological perspectives between psychosocial factors and social media exposure.

REFERENCES

Abdullah, N., & Anuar, A. (2018). *Old politics and new media: Social media and Malaysia's 2018 elections*. *The Diplomat*. Retrieved from https://thediplomat.com/2018/05/old-politics-and-new-media-social-media-and-malaysias-2018-elections/

Ahmad, T., Alvi, A., & Ittefaq, M. (2019). The use of social media on political participation among university students: An analysis of survey results from rural Pakistan. *Sage Open*, *9*(3), 2158244019864484. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019864484

Banerjee, N. (2021). *Political socialization: A conceptual and theoretical construction political science module (SEM 5 PLSA CC12)*. Retrieved from https://www.surendranathcollege.ac.in/new/index1.php?id=191

Baptista, J. P., Correia, E., Gradim, A., & Piñeiro-Naval, V. (2021). The influence of political ideology on fake news belief: The Portuguese case. *Publications*, *9*(2), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.3390/publications9020023

Bouchard, T. J., & McGue, M. (2003). Genetic and environmental influences on human psychological differences. *Journal of Neurobiology*, *54*(1), 4-45. https://doi.org/10.1002/neu.10160

Butt, J., Saleem, H., Siddiqui, A., Saleem, S., & Awang, M. (2021). Influence of social media towards e-participation of youth in national political elections. *The International Journal of Management*, *12*(4), 734-748.

Carr, C. T., & Hayes, R. A. (2015). Social media: Defining, developing, and divining. *Atlantic Journal of Communication*, *23*(1), 46-65. https://doi.org/10.1080/15456870.2015.972282

Chinnasamy, S. (2018). *Media sosial mampu pengaruhi pengundi PRU-14*. *Berita Harian*. Retrieved from https://www.bharian.com.my/rencana/muka10/2018/02/393862/media-sosial-mampu-pengaruhi-pengundi-pru-14

Demangeot, C., & Broderick, A. J. (2010). Consumer perceptions of online shopping environments: A gestalt approach. *Psychology & Marketing*, *27*(2), 117-140. https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.20323

Freeden, M. (2001). Ideology: Political aspects. *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, 7174–7177. https://doi.org/10.1016/b0-08-043076-7/01154-2

Hatemi, P. K., Medland, S. E., Morley, K. I., Heath, A. C., & Martin, N. G. (2007). The genetics of voting: An Australian twin study. *Behavior Genetics*, *37*(3), 435-448. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10519-006-9138-8

Hayat, N. D. M. F. Z., & Ali, A. S. (2022). Politics in the digital age: Measuring the impact of Twitter on Pakistani youth. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, *6*(9), 2267-2278.

Ihsan, N. H., Rahmadi, M. A., & Jamal, J. (2022). Spirituality as the foundation of the hierarchy of needs in the humanistic psychology of Abraham Maslow and Sufi Psychology of Said Nursi. *Afkaruna: Indonesian Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Studies*, *18*(1), 1-28. https://doi.org/10.18196/afkaruna.v18i1.14495

Jennings, M. K., Stoker, L., & Bowers, J. (2009). Politics across generations: Family transmission reexamined. *The Journal of Politics*, *71*(3), 782-799. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381609090719

Kahne, J., & Bowyer, B. (2017). Educating for democracy in a partisan age: Confronting the challenges of motivated reasoning and misinformation. *American Educational Research Journal*, *54*(1), 3-34. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831216679817

Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. *Business Horizons, 53*(1), 59-68. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2009.09.003

Kemp, S. (2023). *Digital 2023: Malaysia*. Retrieved from https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2023-malaysia

Koestner, R., Walker, M., & Fichman, L. (1999). Childhood parenting experiences and adult creativity. *Journal of Research in Personality, 33*(1), 92-107. https://doi.org/10.1006/jrpe.1998.2240

McIntosh, H., & Youniss, J. (2010). Toward a political theory of political socialization of youth. *Handbook of Research on Civic Engagement in Youth*, 23-41. https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470767603.ch1

Merkowitz, S. P., & Gimpel, J. G. (2010). *Oxford handbooks online religion and political socialization (Issue January)*. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195326529.003.0006

Miller, S. C., Easton, D., & Chil-, J. D. (1969). Children in the political system: Origins of political legitimacy. *The Annals of American Academy, 388*(1), 178–179.

Mohd Nizah, A. M., & Abu Bakar, A. R. (2021). The use of Whatsapp on political marketing agenda in Malaysia politics. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 11*(8). https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarbss/v11-i8/10626

Omar, B., Ismail, N., & Kee, N. S. (2018). Understanding online consumption of public affairs news in Malaysia: A strategic approach. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication, 28*(1), 172-194. https://doi.org/10.1075/japc.00009.oma

Omotayo, F., & Folorunso, M. B. (2020). Use of social media for political participation by youths. *JeDEM-E-Journal of E-Democracy and Open Government, 12*(1), 132-157. https://doi.org/10.29379/jedem.v12i1.585

Political Ideology. (2022). *General multilingual environmental thesaurus*. Retrieved from https://www.eionet.europa.eu/gemet/en/concept/13335

Reidy, C. M., Taylor, L. K., Merrilees, C. E., Ajduković, D., Biruški, D. Č., & Cummings, E. M. (2015). The political socialization of youth in a post-conflict community. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 45*, 11-23. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2014.12.005

Settle, J. E., Dawes, C. T., & Fowler, J. H. (2009). The heritability of partisan attachment. *Political Research Quarterly, 62*(3), 601-613. https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912908327607

Stafford, T. F., Stafford, M. R., & Schkade, L. L. (2004). Determining uses and gratifications for the Internet. *Decision Sciences, 35*(2), 259-288. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.00117315.2004.02524.x

Van Ditmars, M. M. (2023). Political socialization, political gender gaps and the intergenerational transmission of left-right ideology. *European Journal of Political Research, 62*(1), 3-24. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12517

Weiss, J. (2020). What is youth political participation? Literature review on youth political participation and political attitudes. *Frontiers in Political Science, 2*, 1–13. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2020.00001

Wike, R., Clancy, L., Fetterolf, J., Silver, L., Huang, C., & Austin, S. (2022). *Social media seen as mostly good for democracy across many nations, But U.S. is a Major Outlier. In Pew Research Center*. Retrieved from https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2022/12/06/social-media-seen-as-mostly-good-for-democracy-across-many-nations-but-u-s-is-a-major-outlier/

Youniss, J., & Hart, D. (2005). Intersection of social institutions with civic development. *New Directions for Child and Ddolescent Development, 2005*(109), 73-81. https://doi.org/10.1002/cd.139

Zainon, N., Hashim, R., & Zulkifli, N. (2017). Political voice of young Malaysians: Online political participation among university students. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 7*(8), 2222-6990. https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarbss/v7-i8/3271