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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Exploring Youth's Knowledge, Attitudes, and Readiness Towards Implementation of Undi18 in Batang Padang District, Perak

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ABSTRACT

The amendment to the Federal Constitution in 2019, lowering the voting age from 21 to 18, sparked discussions on the preparedness and maturity of individuals in this age group to participate in elections. Recognizing the necessity for a comprehensive political communication strategy to effectively engage and prepare youth, a structured framework with a defined objective has been developed. This study aims to assess the level of knowledge, attitude, and readiness among youth in the Batang Padang district regarding voting at age 18, and analyse the factors influencing their participation. Using a quantitative approach, the study employs a questionnaire as its primary instrument, gathering responses from a sample of 462 individuals aged 18 to 20 in the Batang Padang district, Perak. The findings reveal a commendable level of knowledge among youth, albeit with a moderate attitude and readiness towards voting. Furthermore, the study identifies motivating factors for youth participation in voting, including personal responsibility, political party influence, peer interactions, the impact of social media influencers, and family influence. This research aims to provide valuable insights and empirical data to stakeholders, aiding in the development of targeted strategies to engage and prepare youth for active participation in the nation's democratic processes.

Contribution/Originality: This study contributes to the existing literature by assessing the knowledge, attitude, and readiness of youth towards voting at age 18 following the 2019 constitutional amendment. The study documents the factors influencing youth participation in elections, providing empirical data to guide the development of targeted political communication strategies.

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1. Introduction

Malaysia, a nation renowned for its cultural diversity and vibrant democracy, has taken a significant stride towards enhancing its democratic framework with the implementation of Undi18, a legislative amendment lowering the voting age from 21 to 18. The suggestion initiated by Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman was approved on July 16, 2019, and led to revisions in Malaysia's voting age and qualifications for becoming representatives. Following two voting sessions, the proposal garnered the support of 211 out of 222 members of parliament and was approved (Zulkifli et al., 2023). According to Berita Harian (2019), there are several matters brought forth through the Bill that have been presented in Parliament and approved, including:

i. Proposal to amend paragraph (a) of Article 1 of Article 119 of the Federal Constitution to lower the voting age of a qualified citizen from 21 to 18 years.
ii. Proposal to amend paragraph (b) of Article 47 of the Federal Constitution to lower the age of eligibility for membership in the House of Representatives from 21 to 18 years.
iii. Proposal for automatic voter registration and eligibility to vote as soon as they reach the age of 18.

Undi18, which means "Vote at 18" in Malay, represents a big step toward including and empowering young Malaysians by giving them the right to vote and influence their country's future (Ling & Puyok, 2024). According to the Suruhanjaya Pilihan Raya Malaysia (2017), the reason for lowering the voting age is that 18-year-olds are already allowed to make significant decisions under the Age of Majority Act 1971 (Act 21). This includes getting married, working, getting a driving license, joining the military, fire department, or police, and signing contracts or loans. Additionally, if they commit crimes, they are prosecuted as adults.

As expected, the implementation of Undi18 in this nation has elicited inquiries from multiple stakeholders, as anticipated, as stated by Wan Omar (2018), lowering the voting age requirement from 21 to 18 years has not undergone the same level of scrutiny as observed in other nations with representative democracy frameworks overseeing the electoral process. This situation has presented a challenge for the country due to the absence of conclusive data regarding the preparedness of youth to participate in voting activities. Certain parties also argue that granting voting rights to young people through Undi18 may result in the election of leaders with compromised integrity, as this demographic is perceived to lack the maturity and understanding necessary to navigate the complexities of the nation's political landscape (Irma Wani Othman et al., 2022).

Does our younger generation adequately equipped with the necessary knowledge, attitudes, and preparedness to engage in voting at the age of 18? How can political stakeholders and advocates develop effective strategies for imparting political education to individuals as young as 18 years old? Therefore, the outcomes of this study will address this inquiry and serve as a valuable resource and framework to enhance the readiness and strategic planning of entities engaged in political communication, particularly during electoral phases.

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1.1. Research Objectives

This study aimed to explore the level of knowledge, attitudes, and readiness of youth in the Batang Padang district for voting at the age of 18. Besides, this study will also analyse the factors influencing youth to participate in voting.

2. Literature Review

Political engagement, participation, and awareness among youth vary across different countries. According to Gnanasagaran (2018), youth in Indonesia exhibit low levels of political participation. This contrasts with findings by Biney and Yaw (2019), who report high political awareness among Ghanaian youth. Similarly, research by Paula et al. (2022) identifies Canada as one of the leading countries with high levels of political participation among youth. Malaysia is also exploring youth political engagement, participation, and awareness, especially with the recent implementation of the Undi18 initiative.

Ling and Puyok (2024), who employed a mixed-method approach in their study on youth aged 18-20 in Kuching, Sarikei, and Sri Aman, found that the majority of youths in these areas are aware of and willing to engage in voting. Among the factors influencing their participation are parental involvement, political experience, social exposure, educational exposure, and perceptions of relationships with politicians. These findings support Nizah and Bakar (2024), who found that young voters aged 18 to 25 with positive perceptions of the implementation of Undi18 in the country. What is more intriguing is that youths aged 18-25 in this study have negative perceptions towards the recurring 3R issues often played up by a few political parties.

The studies discussed earlier are consistent with research by Mohd Zamirul (2022), who found that political awareness among young voters in Penang, particularly regarding Undi18, is quite high. Their readiness to go out and vote shows that they are eager to make decisions for the future of the country. However, research by Mohd Faizal (2023), which examined the involvement of Malay youths in the implementation of Undi18, found that their level of participation in online politics is low. Results from interviews with 44 respondents indicated that low political knowledge is among the factors contributing to their low political engagement.

There are many factors influencing the level of youth involvement in politics. Alodat et al. (2023) showed that social media significantly enhances political engagement among youth. This finding aligns with the study by Hall (2019), which found that social media, parents, and politicians are agents influencing political identity and awareness among youth. Several studies have demonstrated that factors such as parents, peers, and schools enhance patriotism and citizenship among youth (Mallick & Tamuli, 2023) These factors consistently correlate with the findings discussed earlier by Ling and Puyok (2024), who identified parental involvement, political experience, social exposure, educational exposure, and perception of relationships with politicians as influencing factors on youth participation.

Overall, there have been no studies in the country that examine the Knowledge, Attitude, and Preparedness (KAP) of youth towards Undi18. This study aims to provide insights into these three main components to help various parties prepare youth to be more ready for voting activities in the country.

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3. Research Methods

This research employs a quantitative approach by administering surveys to individuals aged 18-20 within the Batang Padang district, Perak. The researchers utilized several instruments from previous studies that were either similar to or related to this study, with some modifications made to suit the specific objectives. During the modification process, information regarding Malaysia's electoral system from the Election Commission was referenced as a guideline, resulting in adjustments tailored to the needs of this research. Subsequently, the survey instrument underwent a pilot test to assess its reliability, including the survey questions, format, and distribution methods. Two pilot studies were conducted between January 2022 and March 2022: the first involving 20 Form 6 students at SMK Tun Abdul Razak, Sarawak online, and the second involving 50 UPSI diploma students. Data from the pilot study underwent analysis using a reliability test to assess the level of knowledge.

The research encompassed students from secondary schools, various educational institutions, indigenous villages, and other youth populations in Bidor, Tapah, and Temoh. Specifically, educational institutions such as Kolej Tingkatan 6 Tapah, Kolej Vokasional Tapah, and Giatmara Tapah were selected, along with three indigenous villages. The study sample comprised 462 respondents, selected via cluster sampling to ensure representativeness of the population. Cluster sampling was chosen when generating a comprehensive list of the population components proved challenging or impractical, ensuring an equitable chance of selection for all individuals in the population.

Table 1 presents the scoring system used to assess the level of knowledge among youth in the Batang Padang district concerning voting at 18 years old. The knowledge section measured three key variables: knowledge of government policies, political parties, and voting procedures. The items in this section were dichotomous, with options for 'True-1' and 'False-0'. Scores were categorized based on the school's scoring scheme: Not yet Reaching the Minimum Level (0-39), Reaching the Minimum Level (40-49), Satisfactory (50-64), Good (65-79), and Excellent (80-100). Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Science software (SPSS version 26).

Table 1: Knowledge scoring score

Scoring Grade	Frequency	Percentage
Not yet Reaching the Minimum Level (0-39)	9	1.9
Reaching the Minimum Level (40-49)	28	6.1
Satisfactory (50-64)	134	29.0
Good (65-79)	196	42.4
Excellent (80-100)	95	20.6
Total	462	100

Source: obtained from primary data

In assessing youth attitudes and readiness towards voting, two main aspects are considered: their stance on political parties and their approach to voting itself. Readiness is evaluated across three dimensions: readiness to choose leaders, engage in politics, and participate in voting. Researchers calculate scores by summing respondent answers, aiming to classify youth attitudes and preparedness towards voting from age

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18 onward. This method, utilized to gauge political culture in Malaysia by Marshelayanti and Nafisah (2021) untuk divides scores into three levels: low, moderate, and high as shown in Table 2. Scores ranging from 0-11 indicate low readiness, 12-23 moderate, and 24-35 high readiness.

Table 2: The score range for low, moderate, and high levels

The score range value	The level of attitude and readiness among youth
0-11	Low
12-23	Moderate
24-35	High

4. Results

Table 3 presents the demographic details of the respondents, encompassing gender, age, race, employment status, and location. The data indicates that 462 individuals took part in answering this questionnaire. Table 2 illustrates the levels of political understanding among youth across three dimensions: knowledge of political parties, government policies, and voting procedures.

4.1. Respondent demography

Based on the research findings, the demographic profile of the respondents reveals that 65.2 percent (301 respondents) are female, with males comprising only 34.8 percent (161 individuals). In terms of ethnic distribution, the majority of respondents are Malay, constituting 53.9 percent (249 individuals). Orang Asli respondents constitute 20.1 percent (93 individuals), followed by Chinese respondents at 15.8 percent (73 individuals), and Indian respondents at 6.1 percent (28 individuals). Other ethnic groups collectively account for 4.1 percent (19 individuals) of the sample. Regarding age distribution, the study primarily includes young adults aged between 18 and 20 years. Individuals under the age of 20 constitute 44.4 percent (205 individuals) of the sample, while those under 18 years old represent 10.6 percent (49 individuals), and those under 19 years old comprise 45 percent (208 individuals). Residence-wise, the majority of respondents are from rural areas, making up 46.8 percent (216 individuals), followed by urban residents at 39.8 percent (184 individuals), and those residing in suburban areas at 3.2 percent (15 individuals). A small proportion of respondents, 10.2 percent (47 individuals), reside in city areas. In terms of occupation, a significant portion of respondents, 78.4 percent (362 individuals), identify as students. However, 11.3 percent of respondents indicated that they are neither students nor employed. Self-employed individuals constitute 5.6 percent of the sample, while those working in the private sector and public sector represent 2.4 percent and 0.4 percent of respondents, respectively. The remaining 1.9 percent of respondents are employed in other sectors.

Table 3: Respondent Demography

Item	Demographic Characteristics	Statement	Frequency	Percentage
A1	Gender	Male	161	34.8
		Female	301	65.2
A2	Races	Malay	249	53.9

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		Chinese	73	15.8
		Indian	28	6.1
		Orang Asli	93	20.1
		Other	19	4.1
A3	Age	18 years old	49	10.6
		19 years old	208	45.0
		20 years old	205	44.4
A4	Respondent location	City	47	10.2
		Town	216	46.8
		Rural	184	39.8
		Suburbs	15	3.2
A5	Employment sector	Not working	52	11.3
		Student	362	78.4
		Private sector	11	2.4
		Self-employed	26	5.6
		Others	9	1.9

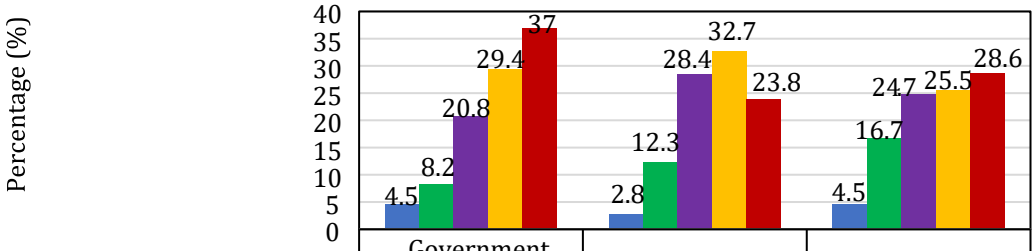
Source: obtained from primary data

4.2. Level of Knowledge

Table 4 illustrates the level of knowledge among youth in the Batang Padang district regarding the eligibility to vote at the age of 18. The findings indicate that the youth in Batang Padang district exhibit a commendable level of understanding regarding government policies, with 37 percent achieving a high level of knowledge. Conversely, only a small fraction of 4.5 percent fell below the minimum proficiency threshold, while 8.2 percent reached the minimum level, and 20.8 percent attained a satisfactory level. Notably, 29.4 percent of respondents demonstrated a strong grasp of government policies, totalling 171 individuals who scored significantly well in this domain.

Table 4: Level of Knowledge

Table 4: Level of Knowledge of Youth in Batang Padang District Regarding Voting as Young as 18 Years Old



	Government policy	Political parties	Voting
Not Reaching Minimum Level (0-39)	4.5	2.8	4.5
Reach Minimum Level (40-49)	8.2	12.3	16.7
Satisfactory (50-64)	20.8	28.4	24.7
Good (65-79)	29.4	32.7	25.5
Excellent (17-21)	37	23.8	28.6

Source: obtained from primary data

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Moreover, the study underscores that the youth's familiarity with political parties is notably substantial, with 32.7 percent displaying a commendable level of knowledge. Among the 171 respondents, a majority showed proficient understanding, indicating a continuous engagement with and awareness of Malaysia's political landscape. Notwithstanding, a notable 23.8 percent of respondents achieved an excellent score. Conversely, a mere 2.8 percent scored below the minimum standard, while 12.3 percent reached the minimum level, and 28.4 percent achieved a satisfactory score.

Furthermore, the youth demonstrate a robust understanding of voting procedures, with 28.6 percent exhibiting an excellent level of knowledge. This is evidenced by 132 respondents who scored impressively well on voting-related questions. Conversely, only 4.5 percent indicated minimal familiarity with voting processes. In this context, 24.7 percent of respondents achieved a satisfactory score, 24.7 percent reached the minimum proficiency level, and 25.5 percent garnered a good score.

These findings are consistent with Faas (2007) study, which observed a high level of political awareness among youth in two German schools. They demonstrated proficiency in correctly identifying ten European countries on a geopolitical map and discussing significant European issues. Varied governmental agendas and policies, both at the governmental level and in educational curricula, significantly influence political awareness and youth engagement with European Union issues.

Likewise, these results correspond with Putri (2017) findings, indicating a high level of political awareness among residents of Kabupaten Solok in Indonesia, along with excellent voter engagement during elections in that region. Factors contributing to this engagement include sufficient political information, comprehensive research into the political process such as campaign funding sources and communication strategies, violations of campaign procedures, and media involvement in publicity processes.

However, contrasting studies, such as Kelana et al. (2022) research, highlight lower levels of youth knowledge in Sarawak, affecting their political awareness and involvement. This underscores the crucial role of education in fostering social change and political consciousness among young individuals.

4.3. Level of Attitude

Based on the data presented in Table 5, the highest mean score concerning youth attitudes toward political parties corresponds to the 4th item, specifically " I think it is crucial to take note on issues regarding political parties.," registering a mean score of 3.71 with a standard deviation of 0.900. Conversely, the lowest average score is associated with the 5th item, namely "I tend to choose a political party that is well known by the people," recording a mean score of 3.10 with a standard deviation of 1.067. These findings suggest that the overall level of youth attitudes toward political parties is moderate, indicated by an aggregate mean score of 3.432 and a standard deviation of 0.694.

This outcome may be rationalized similarly to the level of knowledge about political parties, as youth perceive political parties as organizations primarily concerned with personal interests and involved in practices like corruption and abuse of power (Ting & Wan Ahmad, 2022). It supports Mohd Azmir and Sabri (2020) statement that new or

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young voters are seen as impartial, remaining neutral rather than aligning with any specific party.

Table 5: Level of Attitudes Toward Political Parties

No.	Item	Mean	Standard deviation	Level
1.	I tend to be concerned about political issues that arise in a political party.	3.35	0.951	Moderate
2.*	I am interested to know about the help that is offered by political party.	3.67	0.920	Moderate
3.	I am interested in discussing political parties with friends.	3.16	1.041	Moderate
4.*	I think it is crucial to take note of issues regarding political parties.	3.71	0.900	High
5.	I tend to choose a political party that is well-known to the people.	3.10	1.067	Moderate
6.	I believe in the ability of the political party to take care of the welfare at my area.	3.50	0.990	Moderate
7.*	I am interested in getting information about political parties on social media.	3.55	0.982	Moderate
	Total Mean	3.432	0.694	Moderate

(indicates the items with the top three highest scores)*
Source: obtained from primary data

Based on the data presented in Table 6, it is evident that the highest mean score among youth attitudes toward voting pertains to the 7th item, specifically " I believe I will make the right decision during the electoral day" which achieved a mean score of 3.94 with a standard deviation of 0.882. Conversely, the lowest mean score is associated with the 2nd item, namely " I am interested in getting involved in political campaign before the electoral day" scoring a mean of 3.07 with a standard deviation of 1.005. These findings collectively indicate that the level of youth attitudes toward voting can be classified as moderate, as evidenced by an overall mean score of 3.660 and a standard deviation of 0.678.

Table 6: Level of Attitudes Toward Voting

No.	Item	Mean	Standard deviation	Level
1.	I tend to do additional research before the electoral day.	3.68	0.875	High
2.*	I am interested in getting involved in political campaign before the electoral day.	3.07	1.005	Moderate
3.	I am interested to know the electoral result.	3.87	0.929	High
4.*	I think I am mature enough to join the electoral.	3.69	0.965	Moderate
	Total Mean	3.333	0.815	Moderate

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5.	I think it is reasonable to obligate 18-year-old voters to join during the electoral day.	3.57	1.086	Moderate
6.	I believe in the Electoral Commission of Malaysia's integrity during the electoral day.	3.80	0.908	High
7.*	I believe I will make the right decision on the election day.	3.98	0.882	High
	Total Mean	3.660	0.678	Moderate

(indicates the items with the top three highest scores)*
Source: obtained from primary data

A positive attitude is essential for actions like gathering information before election day and checking voting locations, which also shapes youth's political awareness. According to Kelana et al. (2022), political awareness influences how actively youth participate in elections. Zaller (1992) defines political awareness as the extent to which individuals pay attention to and understand political issues. Awareness is closely tied to attitude because it involves logic, reasoning, planning, learning, thinking, and problem-solving (Chopra & Kanji, 2010). Therefore, it's crucial to pay attention to youth's moderate attitudes towards voting.

4.4. Level of Readiness

Based on the data provided in Table 7, the highest mean score reflecting the level of youth readiness toward electing leaders corresponds to the 4th item, specifically "I am ready to familiarize myself with the political parties contesting," achieving a mean score of 3.63 with a standard deviation of 0.910. Conversely, the lowest mean score is associated with the 7th item, namely "I am ready to ask questions about the candidates to be elected," scoring a mean of 3.35 with a standard deviation of 0.985. These findings collectively suggest that the level of youth readiness in electing leaders can be categorized as moderate, as evidenced by an overall mean score of 3.502 and a standard deviation of 0.767.

This study indicates that young individuals are not entirely prepared for leadership choices, which could stem from various factors such as inadequate familiarity with current leaders, lack of interest in available leaders, disinterest in leadership selection processes via elections, or harbouring negative perceptions toward incumbent leaders or candidates representing them. As highlighted by Nur Hasliza (2023), youth tend to harbour scepticism toward leaders or candidates making promises during elections, viewing such assurances as mere rhetoric aimed at securing votes. Hence, there is a need for an indicator to guide leadership selection from the youth's standpoint.

Furthermore, this readiness for leadership selection aligns with the conclusions drawn in by Ting and Wan Ahmad (2022), which identified that low youth engagement is influenced by a constrained political landscape and negative perceptions among youth regarding political parties, viewing politics as a morally compromised endeavour that primarily benefits politicians. These negative impressions within political factions have cultivated a sense of disillusionment, diminishing youth's interest in delving into the intricacies of political parties in the nation.

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Moreover, the moderate readiness for leadership selection may also be attributed to the negative perceptions youth hold regarding incumbent leaders or representatives, as previously discussed. This aspect mildly impacts their intentions and preparedness to participate in the electoral process. The research by Abdul Hadi and Amaludin (2013) elucidates that youth's trust in political parties has not yet reached significant levels and remains subject to fluctuations. This was evident in the low political involvement of youth in Selangor.

According to Yazid Saleh et al. (2020) youth typically base their choices of leaders or candidates on criteria that resonate with their representation, aspirations, or issue-addressing abilities. For instance, Islamic leadership ethics dictate that contemporary leadership should emanate from individuals possessing intellectual acumen, physical vigour in governance, sagacity in navigating the political landscape, and adeptness in resolving challenges during their tenure (Ibnu Taimiyah, 1995). Additionally, leadership in the Islamic context should be grounded in Shariah principles encompassing faith comprehension, worship, and ethical conduct (Farrah Nuur et al., 2023). This implies that leadership should encompass worldly and spiritual considerations by guiding individuals toward promoting righteousness and deterring wrongdoing based on Quranic teachings and the Prophet's traditions (Halim Mokhtar et al., 2022). By incorporating these criteria, particularly within Malaysia's political milieu, youth's preparedness in selecting their leaders could see improvement.

Table 7: Level of Readiness Toward Electing Leaders

No.	Item	Mean	Standard deviation	Level
1. *	Readiness to give support to the contesting candidate.	3.60	0.883	Moderate
2.	Readiness to discuss with family regarding the contesting candidate.	3.52	0.972	Moderate
3. *	Readiness to find information regarding the contesting candidate.	3.55	0.913	Moderate
4.*	Readiness to get to know the contesting political parties.	3.63	0.910	Moderate
5.	Readiness to share information with friends regarding the candidate that will be chosen.	3.36	0.987	Moderate
6.	Readiness to follow the updates of the candidate that will be chosen.	3.51	0.956	Moderate
7.	Readiness to ask questions regarding the candidate that will be chosen.	3.35	0.985	Moderate
	Total Mean	3.502	0.767	Moderate

(indicates the items with the top three highest scores)*
Source: obtained from primary data

In Table 8, the item reflecting the highest mean score for youth readiness in political engagement is the 6th item, specifically “Readiness to know about the current political issues”, scoring a mean of 3.64 with a standard deviation of 0.953. Besides, the item with the lowest mean score, found in the 2nd item, pertains to the readiness to participate in political meetings, showing a mean of 2.99 with a standard deviation of 1.042. These findings indicate that the level of youth readiness in political engagement can be

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characterized as moderate, as evidenced by an overall mean score of 3.333 and a standard deviation of 0.815.

Despite previous studies by Moten (2011), Saad and Salman (2013), and Nurhazilah et al. (2022) showing an increase in political involvement among Malaysians, initially at a moderate level and progressing to a higher level, this study reveals that the preparedness of youth in the Batang Padang district remains at a moderate level. Suni and Mietola (2023) suggest that in addition to providing young individuals with knowledge and avenues for political engagement, creating a comfortable and engaging political atmosphere is essential. Such positive environments can foster their interest and enhance their comfort level during participation in political discussions.

Table 8: Level of Readiness for Political Engagement

No.	Item	Mean	Standard deviation	Level
1.	Readiness to discuss political issues with friends.	3.18	1.055	Moderate
2.	Readiness to attend political meetings.	2.99	1.042	Moderate
3.	Readiness to participate in the electoral campaign for my supported political party.	3.12	1.041	Moderate
4.	Readiness to join programs held by a political party.	3.18	0.992	Moderate
5. *	Readiness to do further research before crossing out a candidate.	3.59	0.96	Moderate
6. *	Readiness to know about the current political issues.	3.64	0.953	Moderate
7.*	Readiness to follow the latest updates of a political party through social media.	3.63	0.977	Moderate
	Total Mean	3.333	0.815	Moderate

(indicates the items with the top three highest scores)*
Source: obtained from primary data

Based on Table 9, the highest mean score for the level of youth readiness toward voting is observed in the 7th item, specifically " Readiness to discuss electoral with family," with a mean score of 3.46 and a standard deviation of 1.015. Conversely, the lowest mean score is associated with the 2nd item, namely " Readiness to find information regarding the voting process," which scored a mean of 2.61 with a standard deviation of 0.987. These findings suggest that the level of youth readiness toward voting can be classified as moderate, as indicated by an overall mean score of 3.419 and a standard deviation of 0.813.

This study aligns with Mohd Zamirul (2022), who observed a notable level of political awareness among young voters in Penang, particularly those engaged in Undi18. Their readiness to participate in voting activities demonstrates a strong inclination to cast their votes.

Table 9: Level of Readiness towards Voting

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No.	Item	Mean	Standard deviation	Level
1. *	Readiness to vote.	3.45	1.093	Moderate
2.	Readiness to find information regarding the voting process.	2.61	0.987	Moderate
3.	Readiness to join the Electoral Academy by the Electoral Commission of Malaysia.	3.28	0.991	Moderate
4.	Readiness to be the committee of the electoral process.	3.34	1.035	Moderate
5. *	Readiness to channel information regarding the voting process to friends.	3.45	0.980	Moderate
6.	Readiness to join programs regarding the preparation to vote.	3.30	1.010	Moderate
7.*	Readiness to discuss electoral with family.	3.46	1.015	Moderate
	Total Mean	3.419	0.813	Moderate

(indicates the items with the top three highest scores)*
Source: obtained from primary data

4.5. Factors influencing youth to participate in voting

Table 10 indicates significant factors influencing youth voting in the Batang Padang district: voting responsibility, political parties, peer influence, social media influence, and family influence. Factors such as religious organizations, life status changes, and civic education do not significantly contribute to youth voting behavior.

This study supports findings from Balqis and Junaidi (2022), indicating that youth in the DUN Peramu Jaya, Pekan Pahang area are motivated to participate in political activities such as lectures, courses, local meetings, and opposition campaigns. Similar patterns were observed in research by Cross and Young (2008), showing that Canadian youth involved in political parties are more likely to engage politically compared to non-members.

Peer influence, as studied by Martyn and Dimitra (2019), shows that young people with peers actively involved in politics and who discuss political issues are more likely to influence each other to participate in civic and political activities. This echoes findings from previous studies like Wentzel and McNamara (1999), where American teenagers involved in volunteer work were influenced by peers engaged in similar activities.

Furthermore, social media emerges as a significant factor influencing youth voting in Batang Padang, aligning with studies highlighting its role in shaping civic and political engagement. Ohme (2019) notes that social media platforms are crucial in fostering political participation by providing information and stimulating political discussions among young people.

Peter and Muth (2023) research supports social media's impact on youth voting behaviour, emphasizing how influencers with shared interests influence voting decisions based on the youth's existing knowledge. This aligns with Ohme (2019) findings that increased social media usage among youth prompts them to seek additional election-related information beyond traditional news sources.

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Lastly, family influence is recognized as another significant factor shaping youth voting tendencies, supported by studies indicating that parental political interest and frequent political discussions at home positively impact youth civic engagement (Martyn & Dimitra, 2019; Schulz et al., 2010).

Table 10: Factors influencing youth to participate in voting

Predictor	Youth readiness		t	*p*	Contribution (%)
	B	*B*			
Constant	1.053		5.949	.000	
Voting responsibility	.295	.352	6.852	.000	26.2
Political parties	.145	.159	3.087	.002	4.7
Peer influence	.165	.204	3.478	.001	2.3
Social media influencer	.129	.151	3.027	.003	1.1
Family influence	-.079	-.097	-1.803	.072	0.7
News (mass media)	-.004	-.004	-.077	.938	No Contribution
Religious organizations	-.046	-.057	-1.206	.228	
Life status changes	.024	.028	.532	.595	
Civic education	-.007	-.009	-.165	.869	
F=27.321	R=.594				
Sig F= *p<.05*	R^2=.352				

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the descriptive analysis reveals that young individuals aged 18-20 in the Batang Padang district, Perak, demonstrate a commendable level of knowledge about voting, coupled with a balanced attitude and readiness. These findings challenge the misconception propagated by some quarters that youth lack maturity and enthusiasm for electoral engagement.

Moreover, the study highlights several influential factors driving youth participation in voting within the Batang Padang district. These include personal accountability for voting, the sway of political parties, peer interactions, the impact of social media, and familial influence. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for fostering informed and active citizenship among young voters in the region.

Understanding these factors is crucial for shaping effective strategies to engage and empower young voters. By recognizing their informed awareness and nuanced attitudes toward civic duties, stakeholders can foster a more inclusive and participatory electoral landscape in Batang Padang and beyond.

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

The researchers adhered to the research ethics guidelines set forth by the Research Ethics Committee of Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI). All procedures involving human participants were conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the

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institutional research committee. Informed consent was obtained from all participants in alignment with the principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors reported no conflicts of interest for this work and declare that there is no potential conflict of interest with respect to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

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