Mediating Role of Civic Talk on the Relationship of News Consumption and Sense of Civic Responsibility among Youth

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Abstract

A sense of civic responsibility is fostered and developed through frequent involvement in sharing civic knowledge and solving social problems, individually and collectively. In other words, a citizen with a sense of civic responsibility would be more responsive and supportive of developmental efforts at all levels (i.e., social and political). Hence, this sense of civic responsibility is widely recognised as an essential stepping-stone towards becoming a productive citizen in the future. Past studies have shown that various factors impact the youth's willingness to inculcate a sense of civic responsibility. This research attempts to clarify the influence of news consumption from a variety of media and civic talk on the sense of civic responsibility. Descriptive analysis and the Structural Equation Modelling Partial Least Squares were employed for data analysis. One significant contribution of the study findings is that it has clarified the role of civic talk in the relationship between news consumption and sense of civic responsibility. A respondent with a low level of news consumption seemed to benefit from civic talk involvement and this influenced the development of his sense of civic responsibility. This result is a pertinent input that could be used to ensure a good educational outcome for students, particularly to develop a sense of civic responsibility in them.

Keywords: *Sense of Civic Responsibility, News Consumption, Civic Talk, Youth*

Peranan Komunikasi Sivik Sebagai Mediator dalam Hubungan Antara Penggunaan Berita dan Rasa Tanggungjawab Sivik dikalangan Belia

Abstrak

Rasa tanggungjawab sivik dipupuk dan dikembangkan melalui penglibatan yang kerap dalam berkongsi pengetahuan sivik dan menyelesaikan masalah sosial, secara individu dan berkumpulan. Dengan kata lain, seorang warganegara yang telah mencapai rasa tanggungjawab sivik akan lebih responsif dan menyokong usaha pembangunan di semua peringkat (iaitu sosial dan politik). Oleh itu, rasa tanggungjawab sivik ini diakukan secara meluas sebagai batu loncatan penting untuk menjadi warganegara yang produktif pada masa akan datang. Kajian lepas menunjukkan bahawa pelbagai faktor mempengaruhi kesediaan remaja untuk menanamkan rasa tanggungjawab sivik. Penyelidikan ini cuba menjelaskan pengaruh penggunaan berita dari pelbagai media dan komunikasi sivik terhadap rasa tanggungjawab sivik. Analisis deskriptif dan Pemodelan Persamaan Berstruktur berdasarkan varians digunakan untuk menganalisis data. Satu sumbangan penting dari hasil kajian menjelaskan peranan komunikasi sivik dalam hubungan antara penggunaan berita dan rasa tanggungjawab sivik. Seseorang responden dengan tahap penggunaan berita yang rendah nampaknya mendapat manfaat daripada penglibatan komunikasi sivik dan ini mempengaruhi perkembangan rasa tanggungjawab siviknya. Hasil kajian ini merupakan input yang relevan yang dapat digunakan untuk memastikan hasil pendidikan yang baik bagi siswa, terutama untuk mengembangkan rasa tanggungjawab sivik pada mereka.

Kata Kunci: *Rasa tanggungjawab sivik ,Penggunaan berita, Komunikasi sivik, Belia*

Introduction

Students who graduate from a university should have gained meaningful experiences, including a sense of civic responsibility. Civic responsibility is a vital social element that ensures a properly functioning democracy and a healthy pluralistic society. According to Bowyer et al. (2020), there are two dimensions to educational outcomes: learning and democracy. Learning outcomes focus mainly on academic-related outcomes such as active thinking skills whereas democratic outcomes focus on the characteristics that students should have as members of a pluralistic world.

Scholars have argued that a sense of civic responsibility contributes to improving life quality (Nurhadi & Muchtarom, 2020; Halberstadt et al., 2019; Huda et al., 2018). They also consider this value as one of the essential elements of a democratic society. It is widely assumed that a sense of civic responsibility is fostered and developed through frequent involvement in sharing civic knowledge and solving social problems, individually and collectively (Hadjichambis & Paraskeva, 2020). The term "civic" refers to public life in general (Brady et al., 2020). If a person actively takes action to address community issues and problems, such as attending a community meeting, volunteering, or raising money for charity, he or she is considered to be a good citizen. Sense of civic responsibility could also be perceived as a personal investment in the wellbeing of others and society as a whole (Nishma et al., 2023). In other words, a citizen who has attained a sense of civic responsibility would be more responsive and supportive of developmental efforts at all levels (i.e., social and political). Hence, this sense of civic responsibility is widely recognised as an important stepping-stone towards becoming a productive citizen in the future.

Despite the importance of inculcating a sense of civic responsibility as a possible educational outcome in the now-globalised world, empirical evidence on the link between frequent news consumption and sense of civic responsibility is scant, particularly within the Malaysian context. The news in the media is regarded as a salient source of information (Reese & Shoemaker,2016). News is also a socialising agent and a resource for development, with a major influence on attitude and behaviour. Furthermore, the key roles of news media are to impart the right knowledge, attitude, and behaviour, in line with the notion of responsible citizenship, civility, and harmonious multi-ethnic society. A few local studies have focused on news consumption, but most focused on studying social outcomes such as political participation (Alivi et al., 2018; Willnat et al., 2013), civic engagement (Amirfarhangi et al., 2015), national pride (Tamam, 2011), ethnic tolerance (Tamam, Tien, Idris, & Hamzah, 2006), and volunteerism (Rabun et al., 2017; Raja-yusof et al., 2016). Nevertheless, Western countries have begun to conceptualise the effect of youth engagement with news media on political and civic engagement (Zhang et al., 2017; Beam et al., 2016; Ha et al., 2016), with findings showing a significant positive association between news consumption with civic and political engagement.

The contribution that news consumption has on the quality of university graduates i.e. their sense of civic responsibility has not been studied extensively (ProQuest journals, Scopus, Sciencedirect, Taylor & Francis

online, and SAGE Journals 2015 – 2020). Indeed, a few studies in western countries (Molyneux, 2019; Ku et al., 2019; Moore & Hatcher, 2019) have stated news consumption equips a person to participate in civic life. In general, previous local studies placed more focus on media use (Alshuaibi et al., 2018; Ting et al., 2018). However, these studies were conducted in mutual exclusion and did not attempt to narrow down on the relationship between news consumption and sense of civic responsibility, particularly in the context of a multicultural and multi-religious society such as in Malaysia. Hence, to help fill this gap in literature, this research is aimed at investigating these two variables and their subsequent inter-relationship. By doing this, this study will help current literature by shedding light on the nature of the relationship between news consumption and sense of civic responsibility among university graduates.

 Higher education institutions are the best places to raise awareness and educate the youth on their role in society and community development (Lu et al., 2017). Higher education institutions are entrusted to facilitate the development of a sense of civic responsibility among students. The higher education sector's main goals are not limited to grooming students for successful careers but to help shape and fit them into a citizenry with the public good in mind as well. Malaysia's Minister of Higher Education has continuously demanded universities and colleges to produce highly qualified graduates that can serve society therefore, prompting institutions of higher learning to reconsider fostering a deeper sense of civic consciousness among university graduates. Developing civic responsibility among students allows higher education institutions to fulfil their basic mission, which is to prepare the students to become good citizens upon graduation.

Nevertheless, the National Indicators of Malaysia indicate that community engagement among the youth has declined. Many studies (Galiberti, 2019; Alias & Balakrishnan, 2016) have demonstrated that plenty of youth are less engaged in social issues and have become passive spectators. Maher (2016) showed that 60 percent of the youth in Malaysia are not interested in joining any civic activities and would declare that they had participated in these activities for assignment or credit requirement purposes only. Lack of awareness and consent about society is reason youth are not engaged in community activities (Yahya, 2020). Generally, the participation of university students in community engagement is still low although they have been exposed to theoretical and practical community courses. According to Rozumah et al., (2015),

Tamam (2016), and Tamam and Waheed (2019), little is known about the extent to which civic responsibility is instilled within the youth.

The fact that the education system has succeeded in producing youth who are knowledgeable of and are experts in technology, but less involved in the community, is quite telling (Huda et al., 2018). According to Shaari et al., (2018), lack of involvement in the quality of life in the community foster university students to become less empathetic and immoral. Hence, this sense of civic responsibility is yet to gain traction in higher education students, the pioneers of society's future, thus creating a gap in the literature. Thus, this study aspires to help fill this void by identifying the level of civic responsibility among students in higher education.

An assumed mediating variable, civic talk, was integrated into this relationship to deepen our understanding of the relationship between news consumption and civic responsibility. Tamam (2016) found that university students preferred getting news from interpersonal sources. Past studies in Western countries have indicated that the effect that news consumption has yielded on several democratic outcomes is not as straightforward as assuming that it can potentially be mediated by civic talk, yet not many studies have looked into the role of civic talk to mediate this relationship. Findings from past studies have also indicated the potential role of civic talk as a mediator in civic engagement; however, it has not particularly been tested for the above relationship. Ibrahim (2017) argued that civic talk helped individuals deepen their attachment to the community, which then extended to more active civic participation. However, past studies have yet to integrate news consumption and civic talk in one cohesive analysis that aims to predict civic responsibility among the youth, inclusive of the ones in tertiary education, so this case is another remarkable gap that requires to be addressed. Thus, the current research is aimed to empirically test civic talk as a mediating variable in the relationship between news consumption and sense of civic responsibility.

University students are of particular relevance to this study because university life is an important time to foster student connections with civic life in the communities surrounding them (Shaari et al., 2018). Besides, the news media is full of opportunities for university students to explore and develop their connection to society. Moreover, tertiary education students are the best representation of young people's accessibility to news media and news consumption's effects has on their voluntary sense of civic responsibility.

Therefore, this present study shed a better light on news consumption, sense of civic responsibility, and civic talk among graduate students. Understanding the potential influences of the above factors on the youth's sense of civic responsibility could be useful for educators, the community, and policymakers. As argued, it is important to instil a sense of civic responsibility in the youth to ensure they become good citizens. Also, emerging adults need to become involved in community activities, so they can nurture positive social skills while still in university.

This research is aimed at examining the relationship between news consumption and sense of civic responsibility among youth in three public universities in Malaysia, as well as exploring the role of civic talk, an assumed mediating variable, in the aforementioned relationship.

1. To identify the level of news consumption among youth.
2. To identify the level of sense of civic responsibility among youth.
3. To identify the level of civic talk among youth.
4. To determine the relationship between news consumption and a sense of civic responsibility among youth.
5. To examine the relationship between news consumption and civic talk among youth.
6. To determine the relationship of civic talk with a sense of civic responsibility among youth.

Literature Review

News Consumption and Sense of Civic Responsibility

Numerous studies (Drok, 2017; Hashim et al., 2016; Mushtaq, Baig, & Muhammad Bin Suleman, 2018; Salman et al., 2017; Sparks et al., 2016) have investigated news consumption as part of their framework. News consumption from a variety of media is often associated with a sense of civic responsibility. However, research and theories concerning the relationship, lend their support to one of two diametrically opposed views (Groshek & Krongard, 2016; Peer et al. 2003).

The first postulates a negative relationship where media consumption is related inversely to sense of civic responsibility. This negative relationship can be driven by time, among other factors (Putnam, 1995, 2000; Wilkins, 2000). The second zooms into news media and posits a positive relationship; one that is reciprocal in nature, which involves people attending to the news while the news, in turn, spurs participation (e.g., Eveland & Hively, 2000; Moeller & Vreese, 2015). Unfortunately,

empirical tests of these competing hypotheses have produced incongruous findings that are often fragmented into specific media.

According to Shoemaker (1996), as cited in Park (2014), human beings want to learn from the news to keep updated on the environment surrounding them. Broadly, people with strong inclinations for surveillance tend to look for news to fulfil their information needs (Jimah, 2015). News consumption can cause people to view themselves as being knowledgeable of civic affairs (Homero & et al, 2012). The relationship between media use and sense of civic responsibility has long been the focus of many scholars, although the extent of the relationship between sense of civic responsibility and mass media use has not been concluded. Several studies have given evidence that paying attention to the news has a cascading effect on better community integration and increased interest, knowledge and participation in public affairs (Pasek et al., 2009; Thorson et al., 2019). Media forms that need higher levels of cognitive engagement (News programs on the television, newspapers, and the Internet for example) are of special interest when analysing media pathways to civic engagement (Putnam, 2000).

It has been argued that different types of media that are functionally different also have different influences on civic activities (Boulianne, 2015). The positive impact that reading the newspaper has on civic participation was found in an array of studies (Kunihiko Nakona et al., 2014, Condeza et al., 2014; and The Pew Research Center, 2016) and were marked as significant across all generations, including the youth (Chu, 2020). Yamamoto (2011) analysed survey data collected from the North-Western region of the United States and found that community newspaper reading promoted social cohesion and community engagement. Lowrey et al., (2008) suggested that community news media, including daily community newspapers, spurred meaning-making in the community and helped its readers have a better understanding of the community structure. This understanding led to increased community participation, Paek et al., (2005) demonstrated that regular daily newspaper readers were more likely to be actively engaged with their communities than non-newspaper readers.

However, news through television tends to inform and mobilise; exposure to general television has a weak association with indicators of civic engagement. For example, Putnam (2000;1995) argued that exposure to newspapers may increase social capital and the civic activities of the citizen, in contrast with the negative consequences of watching television programs meant to entertain. According to Putnam

(1995), the downturn of civic activism in North America is partially caused by the increase in the number of hours individuals watch television, reducing their time spent interacting with others. Shah et al., (2001) found that while some entertainment content may cause a decline in civic involvement, the usage of news media has brought opposite impacts. Selecting television programs is also important in cultivating a sense of civic responsibility. Different programs foster different public spheres and create different levels of involvement. Nevertheless, recent research drives the assertion that television news positively affects the levels of civic engagement. For instance, Curran et al., (2014) found that being exposed to the news on television promoted civic engagement among citizens.

The Internet provides an even more extensive set of choices than newspapers, radio, or broadcast. With the genesis of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) tools like computer, tablets, the iPad, mobile phones, and Internet connectivity, the youth now have the option to source news online instead of relying on traditional media. ICT has also provided better avenues for regular people to discuss, express themselves, and participate directly in civic activities, perhaps spurring greater levels of participation.

The research finding on news consumption and sense of civic responsibility paint a more complex picture. There is little consensus on the general direction and inner workings of how news consumption impacts civic participation. Various studies have investigated the impact of news consumption on civic engagement across different age groups such as youths and adolescents. These studies have examined at both the positive and negative outcomes of news consumption and civic engagement. For example, Hao et al. (2014) found strong corroboration for the effect that news consumption has on civic engagement among university students in Singapore. Hao et al. (2014) claimed that young Singaporeans' capacity for news consumption and their active role in political and civic participation was increased by the Internet and various Internet-based social media. Similar to TV and print, positive civic outcomes would also come into fruition if the Internet is utilised for news and gathering information, but would produce an adverse effect when it is used for entertainment (Amirfarhangi et al., 2015; Atkins, 2016; Boulianne, 2015). Informational media use, via traditional or online sources, has been repeatedly highlighted as contributing to civic outcomes (e.g., personal values and civic responsibility).

Livingstone and Markham (2008) also found that media use influenced civic participation (e.g. general interest in political affairs, voting, and actions taken to respond to a public issue) to a moderate degree. While this influence plays differently for different media and participation, increasing evidence shows that media usage enhances rather than impairs participation. Media use is viewed as important in maintaining political interest, whether the consumers perceive it to be irrelevant or harmful to taking action. Leod (2000) believed that individuals aged 15 to 25 who kept abreast of the news disregarding the channel (radio, television, newspaper, magazine, and the Internet), tended to be more active citizens in their society. This group displayed a higher likelihood of joining groups (e.g., political groups), vote in elections, and lend their hand in community problem-solving.

Supporting the findings of other researchers on media use and civic participation, Hall (2014) put forth that media consumption and social capital affected civic participation. Despite several studies exploring the issue of media effects on social capital, predominantly in the area of political participation, lesser studies have looked at the impact of the media on civic participation. In Hall's (2014) study, Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression was used to analyse data from the 2008 American National Election Survey to examine past civic participation and future civic participation separately. The results clearly demonstrated that individuals who were more community-oriented and engaged in civic activities were more inclined to take part in future civic activities as they have already done so in the past.

News Consumption and Civic Talk

From a normative democratic perspective, news use is viewed as beneficial as it spurs an informed and active citizenry capable of governing themselves sensibly (Brites et al., 2016). Similarly, news consumption may fuel a heavy amount of content for a person's daily interactions, with one of its functions being to facilitate interpersonal communication. Thus, individuals who participate in greater discussions of political issues are more inclined to having access to a greater variety of news media channels (Homero Gil de Zu´n˜iga at al,, 2012).

A study by Edgerly et al. (2018) revealed that parents, peers, education institutions, and digital devices offered chances to obtain new information about current affairs and discuss news content. For example, a husband and wife might sit down to dinner together and end up discussing the issues that were covered in the news that day, or a group

of friends socialising at a party might end up talking about the root cause of poverty and poor education, or co-workers might end up discussing some creative ways for helping to uplift the lives of those who are disadvantaged socioeconomically. Nevertheless, what the person sees and reads on the news media influences the content and extent of their interpersonal discussions (Ksiazek et al., 2010).

To explain why news media exposure might lead to civic talk, communication scholars say that the audience's sense of understanding of the subject matter increases with the information gained from their news media exposure, As a result, they would feel more competent in talking about a certain topic (Ekström & Östman, 2013). People would garner information from the news in anticipation of future communication with others. The news gives the individual a sense of awareness about a topic that he or she presumes to mention in a future conversation. Eveland and Hively (2009) explained that if an individual expected to participate in political discussion, they would invest more heavily in processing information during their first exposure so that they are able to prepare themselves for a later discussion. This action would bring about more thorough information processing and reinforce the effects of traditional media use (Scheufele, 2002). As a result, this type of use will spark audiences to be more careful of their media consumption, besides increasing chances to extract meaningful information (Hardy & Scheufele, 2005).

Patterns of interpersonal discussion are differently affected by different news media. Using and depending on different media may lend to differences in knowledge about, and subsequent attitudes toward social issues and civic engagement. News consumption and civic talk can create opportunities to explore ideas, process information, and ponder on public affairs. Additionally, media content may aid in shaping the landscape of discussion and provide a wider pool of information.

For instance, youth who are civically engaged could more likely seek out news content compared to their less civically motivated peers. Similarly, exposure to some news-related content could also spur civic action. Plus, there may be mutually reinforcing relationships among the forms of media use and civic engagement.

Civic Talk and Sense of Civic Responsibility

Civic talk is as important as mass communication when it comes to discussing community ties. Notably, media use provides topics for subsequent discussions and arguments that lead to more enduring factors such as sense of community. Civic talk is highly imperative for people to understand the larger world's values. It also enhances the sense of community and the inclination to act. Besides, civic talk enables information sharing and opinion formation about community involvement, which subsequently shapes a sense of civic responsibility. Therefore, civic talk supports a better understanding of the community and may provide the basis for civic engagement.

However, studies on civic talk and sense of civic responsibility contend that talking about community issues and political discussion with those in one's immediate social circle would in turn spur one to partake in civic activities. There are also studies that have found a strong positive relationship between political and current event discussions with social development and civic participation (Mascheroni & Murru, 2017; Hayat et al., 2015; Kligler-vilenchik, 2015; Hsieh & Li, 2013; Ahmed, 2010; Klofstad, 2010).

According to Klofstad (2010), the volume of discussion that happens in a person's circle of friends is associated with his participation in society. Reinforcing this point, Hsieh and Li (2013) contended that there exists a substantial causal relationship between civic talk and participation in civic issues and that an individual would be more open and able to participate after being exposed to civic talk. Research has been done to aptly determine the mechanisms that would initiate individuals into transforming the discussions into action (Ahmed, 2010).

This study suggests that civic talk provides people with the motivation and resources that are required for one to engage in societal welfare, thereby causing civic participation. Young people who know each other and participate in civic talk may voice their opinion and consent in public settings as well. Thus, civic talk is positively associated with sense of civic responsibility.

Conceptual Framework

The present conceptual framework as displayed in Figure 1 was devised after reviewing the literature regarding sense of civic responsibility, news consumption and civic talk in Malaysia. Despite the importance the value of sense of civic responsibility in society, there are still significant knowledge gaps relating to civic responsibility in Malaysia setting.
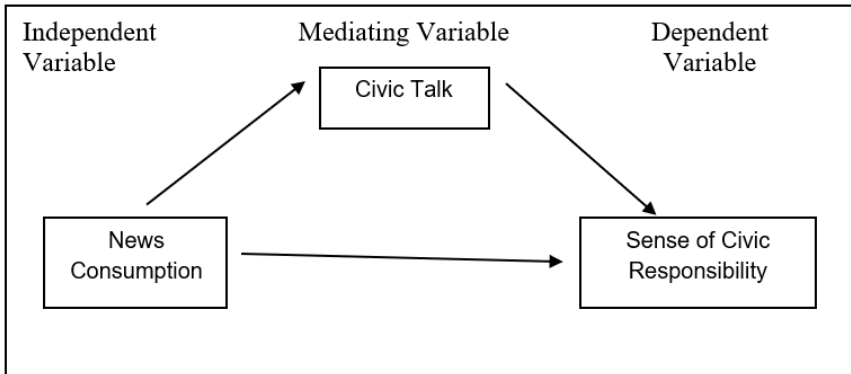

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework of this research. More accurately, it shows the position of the intervening variable (civic talk), the independent variable (news consumption), and the relationship of both with sense of civic responsibility. These variables are positioned in a way that is aligned with the research objectives. These variables were chosen referring to studies done in the past and supported by past empirical findings with the objective of making clear the influence of the two selected variables on the sense of civic responsibility among youth in selected universities.

Methodology

A quantitative research design using a survey questionnaire was employed to address the research objectives. The survey research design was deemed appropriate because this study's purpose is to examine the relationship among the variables under study, in specific terms, the relationship between news consumption and sense of civic responsibility and the role of civic talk as a mediating variable. The

population consisted of undergraduate students in their final year of study. Three public universities were selected from Klang Valley as the study location.

To determine the sample size, the stratified random sampling technique was used together with the analysis proposed by Hair et al. (2010) and Israel (1992), which was to calculate the appropriate sample size for the study. The target sample for this research was 300 samples from selected universities. This number ensures reliable data and an increased degree of confidence is obtained. The number of respondents was stratified according to the size of the population of local undergraduate students at each public university.

The stratum used in this study comprised the ethnic makeup of the population within UKM, UPM, and UM themselves. The participant's ethnic identity was classified as Malay, Chinese, Indian, and others. The researcher then determined the number of respondents falling under each category. According to the population in UKM, UPM, and UM, the ratio of the four ethnic groups was 5:2:2:1. Thus, the sample size should be 50 percent Malay, 20 percent Chinese, 20 percent Indian, and 10 percent others to portray the different ethnic distribution in the three universities. Therefore, out of the 300 respondents, 150 students were Malays, 60 students were Chinese and Indians, and 30 respondents were from other ethnicities.

The data was analysed using PLS-SEM, based on a measurement and a structural model. The validation of the measurement model was conducted by testing internal consistency, convergent validity, indicator reliability, and discriminant validity. Overall, the validity and reliability tests conducted for the measurement model yielded good results. The validity and reliability were confirmed, thereby determining that the measurement model used in this study is fit to be used in estimating the parameters of the structural model.

The structural model examines the relationship between latent variables. The structural model can be validated by testing collinearity, path coefficient, effect size, model predictiveness, and model validity. The bootstrapping analysis was used to test the mediation effect in this study.
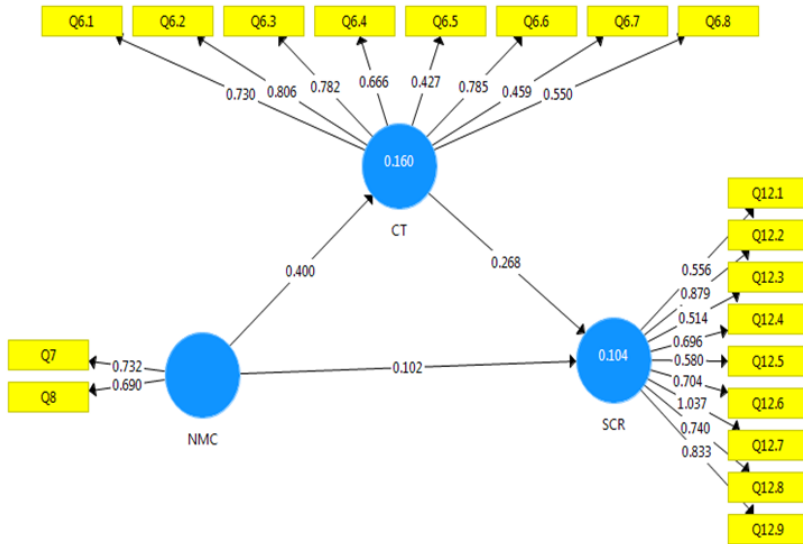
Note: Exogenous construct (NC = News Consumption), mediator (CT = Civic Talk), and endogenous construct (SCR = Sense of Civic Responsibility)

Figure 2: The Measurement Model for the Mediation of Sense of Civic Responsibility and News Consumption

Findings

The demographic makeup of the respondents showed that there were more female than male respondents. A majority of the respondents were Malay while the rest comprised other ethnicities in Malaysia, namely Chinese, Indian, and others. All ethnicities in Malaysia were well represented in the sample. A majority of the respondents were 20 to 23 years old out of the 300 respondents, 175 were enrolled in Science and Technology courses, followed by 125 taking Social Sciences and Humanities.

The first research objective aimed to identify the level of news consumption among the respondents. The findings showed that the majority of the respondents had a low level of news consumption. They spent less than 30 minutes a day consuming news on mainstream and non-mainstream media. The second objective aimed to identify the level
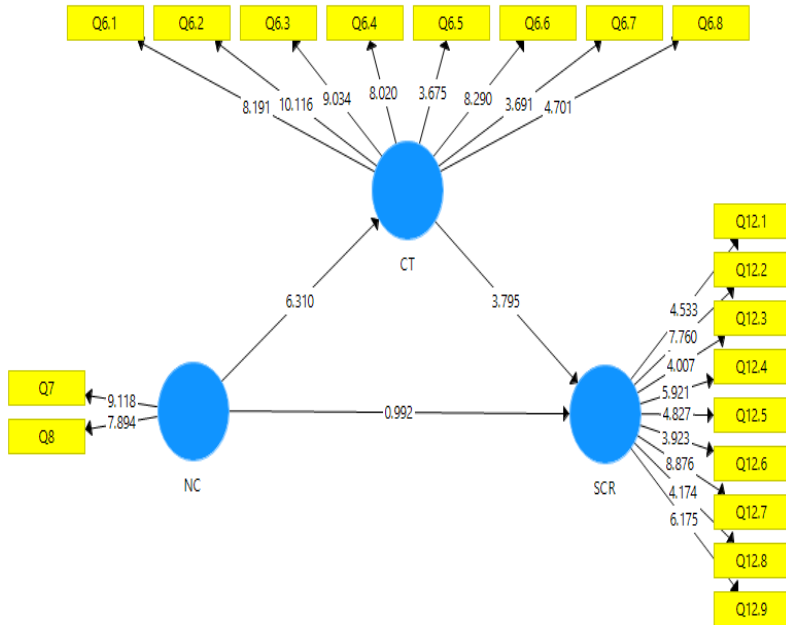
of sense of civic responsibility among the respondent. As for the sense of civic responsibility, the findings revealed that a majority of the respondents had a high sense of civic responsibility. The findings also indicated that the respondents were concerned and aware of community issues.

The third research objective aimed to identify the level of civic talk among the respondent. With regard to the level of civic talk, more than half of the respondents indicated engagement in a high level of civic talk. A breakdown of the level of civic talk by institution provides details of the level of civic talk among the respondents. At Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) and Universiti Malaya (UM), the respondents indicated a moderate level of civic talk. On the other hand, at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), more than half of the respondents indicated a high level of civic talk. This finding reveals that the respondents are indeed involved in communicating and discussing current social issues with family and friends. These results also demonstrate that the youth tend to build a strong connection with their community and have the ability to understand societal problems reflected by the environment in which they live.

The findings of the fourth research objective indicate that news consumption has a statistically non-significant link with sense of civic responsibility. Besides, the effect size of news consumption on the sense of civic responsibility was very small. This result implies that the respondents' news consumption level does not lead to a sense of civic responsibility.

The fifth and sixth research objectives aimed to determine the relationship between news consumption and civic talk and the relationship between civic talk and sense of civic responsibility. News consumption had a significant positive correlation with civic talk. Nonetheless, civic talk showed a positive significant correlation with a sense of civic responsibility.

The final research objective was to test the mediating effect of civic talk on the relationship between news consumption and sense of civic responsibility. The hypothesis was found to be supported, and that civic talk fully mediates this relationship. News consumption had no significant positive correlation with sense of civic responsibility. However, this mediating variable showed a significant and positive effect on news consumption and sense of civic responsibility.

Note: Exogenous construct (NC = News Consumption), mediator (CT = Civic Talk), and endogenous construct (SCR = Sense of Civic Responsibility)

Figure 3: The Structural Model for the Mediation of Sense Civic Responsibility and News Consumption

The variance value explains an adequate sense of civic responsibility and civic talk in this study. The predictive power (Q^2) of the hypothesised relationship was strong, as it was above the cut-off point (zero) for sense of civic responsibility and civic talk. Therefore, the current study has predictive relevance values for its endogenous constructs. From a predictive viewpoint, the model in this study could be considered beneficial for the youth to cultivate an enhanced sense of civic responsibility.

Discussion and Conclusions

This research was done to identify the role of civic talk as a mediator in the relationship between news consumption and sense of civic responsibility among final year undergraduates in the three selected research universities in Malaysia. Based on the findings and the discussions, the following conclusions are derived:

First, the level of news consumption on mainstream and non-mainstream media among local undergraduate students was still needs to be improved and should be further improved. Surprisingly, most of the respondents had a high sense of civic responsibility. Moreover, the results of this study provided the impression that final year undergraduates are more mature and could better understand the purpose and goals of community involvement. Besides, this study proved that many university students had little interest in consuming news. Despite the limited news consumption level among the respondents, this variable was found to not impact the students' sense of civic responsibility. Second, a high level of civic talk was found among the respondents, showing that the students were more prone to getting news from civic talk involvement with their friends and family members.

Next, news consumption does not contribute to the development of a sense of civic responsibility in the youth. Furthermore, news consumption is not a strong predictor of the sense of civic responsibility. One significant contribution of the study findings is that it has clarified the role of civic talk in the relationship between news consumption and sense of civic responsibility. The study found that the level of civic talk involvement gave a varying impact on the news consumption and sense of civic responsibility. A respondent with a low level of news consumption seemed to benefit from civic talk involvement and this influenced the development of his sense of civic responsibility. This result is a pertinent input that could be used to ensure a good educational outcome for students, particularly to develop a sense of civic responsibility in them.

The findings of this study revealed that students indeed have a sense of responsibility to help others, and are willing to serve the community. They are also eager to contribute to building a good society and would prefer doing something worthwhile for the people in their environment. First and foremost, higher education institutions are responsible to develop and mould students with high commitment and contributions to society. This is in line with the aspiration of the Malaysian Government to produce well-rounded and holistic graduates as part of Shift 1 laid out in

the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015–2025 (Higher Education). Thereby, educational institutions not only play a role to raise job-ready students but also have the responsibility to produce students as a social medium to unite the community and engage them in civic issues. In doing so, the Government will provide an opportunity for students to foster and nurture authentic partnerships with the people in their community. In short, this sense of civic responsibility will develop and contribute to good citizenship behaviour.

Nonetheless, the findings imply that civic talk may be used as a mediator in analysing outcomes of news consumption and sense of civic responsibility within new and novel environments. The results of the analysis shows that the following is the fittest model (Figure 4):
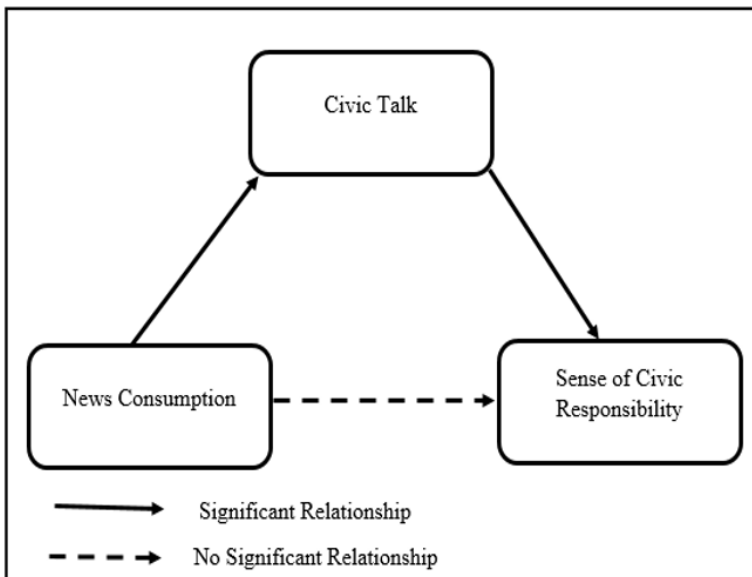

Figure 4: Model Fit

In conclusion, universities play an important role in cultivating and monitoring students' sense of civic responsibility. In this fast-evolving world, the nation requires able citizens, as well as dynamic and excellent leaders. The university bench is where the act of shaping society should start — cementing the value of student involvement in civic activities, which has been shown to produce better and successful students who subsequently emerge to become future leaders and responsible citizens. Hence, more research should be done to shed more light on this area.

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