

## **FACTOR INFLUENCES CELEBRITY IN POLITICS**

Izzatur Nadhirah Binti Abdul Aziz, Nur Afiqah Izzati Binti Hassan, Serafina Amelia Binti Noor Azmi, Aini Faezah Ramlan

Universiti Teknologi MARA

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Correspondent email: [Afiqah@uitm.edu.my](mailto:Afiqah@uitm.edu.my)

### **ABSTRACT**

Celebrity means a famous person especially in entertainment or sport. This study is made to see whether celebrity makes an impact and influence people into choosing which political parties. The questionnaires were made via Google Docs and spread through social medias. The study involved 400 respondents selected through a purpose sampling method involving 4 different stage of ages in Malaysia. A cross sectional survey and structured questionnaires were used for data collection. All variables were measured through scales previously used by other researchers. No software was used in the analysis. Results shows that people between the age of \_\_\_\_\_ tends to believe that educated celebrities do influence people easily (M = \_\_ ) then popularity ( M = \_\_ ).

Keyword : *celebrity, famous*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Celebrities have been seen active in voicing out their opinions in political issues lately especially during the 14th General Election (GE14) that recently happened in Malaysia. According to Blair, Mark Wahlberg have said that celebrities should keep their political stance to themselves as they are said that they are living in a "bubble" and have no real understanding of the issues faced by others. This survey is mainly done to see the influence of a celebrity given towards a celebrity.

People have this belief that artists are not well versed in saying or speaking about anything serious such as politics. Some may disagree with this statement as even celebrities

nowadays have good education background. Some of the top celebrities have taken hardcore courses like Law, Medical and even Engineering back in the day. They also happen to be one of the top celebrities now. The top celebrities that could be categorised as 'beauty with talent' is definitely Lisa Surihani, Neelofa and so much more. Artists with impressive education background will tend to lure their fans into liking and agreeing with anything they like. There can also be seen that conversations started regarding to what some celebrity did and said. It seems that celebrities have so much influence towards people while they are actually paid to pretend in being someone else (Ignacio Gatti, 2014). Moreover, "But we should not underestimate the impact celebrities can have on our preferences and attitudes which is, of course, why they are so frequently paid millions of dollars by advertisers to move product. Specific examples abound. Angelina Jolie's revelation that genetic testing precipitated her decision to have a preventative mastectomy resulted in an immediate increase in demand for both genetic testing and preventative mastectomies." (Caulfield, 2015)

There are a few factors that makes a celebrity influential in the eyes of nation. The factors listed are social media, education and popularity of the celebrities themselves. However, the main factor that makes a celebrity influential is basically based on their education background. With a firm stance on the education, one can simply influence another. Same goes to celebrities, people will respect the stars' opinion more rather than the uneducated ones. Moreover, celebrities who are much popular compared to other stars tend to influence people easily too whether it is to influence them to do something negative or positive.

The least factor that makes a celebrity influential is social media. For example, there are stars who have their own social media but do not have a strong fanbase. This result will then not be successful in giving a huge impact on other people. Fan base are important in order to keep track of fans, find out major cities where the band is getting most support from and etc. This clearly shows that, to achieve great marketing and increase the amount of supporters, a broad fanbase insight across social media needs to be implemented (Anikdevaughn, 2016).

Surveys have been done by giving out questionnaires to people around Malaysia via social medias such as Instagram, Facebook and even Whatsapp. This is to ensure that large numbers can help us find whether celebrities impact on choosing which side of a party is valid. Surveys have been given out to people around the age of 18 and above through a link shared

online. The amount of surveys and answered shared by the correspondents will then be then calculated.

### **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Celebrities are often criticised once they gave out opinions and comments about politics. As stated by Ilya Somin (2015), chances of any one's vote making a difference in an election is so low, many people don't think carefully and rigorously about political issues. Instead of searching out for information that are accurate and insightful, people tend to choose those that are most likely to be entertaining or to fortify their preexisting views. And if there's one thing professional entertainers are good at doing, it is being entertaining and catering to the crowd. But relying on them as sources of insight on political issues is more likely to misinform than edify. It is not wrong to trust any opinions or statements given out by celebrities but we need to always read a few more articles regarding certain political issues and start making judgements ourselves. Not to just trust celebrities we like straight away. It is most important to make research before making any conclusions.

### **EDUCATED CELEBRITIES**

Most celebrities started becoming stars since there were still a child and were called as "child stars" and tend to put education aside as they were already busy making money. There are pros and cons to being child stars but most research shows that child stars tends to be more rebellious and acts a little odd. Many child actors did not have parents who would actually help them emotionally so it is no surprise that they were all kind of miserable. Kids whose parents pushed them into acting often grow up to resent them. They never had a choice, and worse, they never had the chance to be a kid. Most celebrity parents decided to home-school their children or just focus on acting which results them in becoming *less* educated and becomes more *antisocial*.

There was a quote from Martin Luther King Jr, "Everybody can be great because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love." It shows here that being educated is not necessarily important but what's most important is a soul that's full of love. This quote may be agreed or disagreed by many as most people still do believe that formal education is what makes us complete and educated. Aside from having the cons of being uneducated. Here are some of the names of the uneducated but really successful

celebrities who are Bryan Adams who is a singer, songwriter, and a high school dropout. Second, even if he is not a celebrity but he's one of the famous authors, Charles Dickens, bestselling novelist. Back then when he was still young, he left elementary school to work in a factory after his father was thrown into debtors' prison. Although he had little formal education, his early poverty drove him to succeed. These shows that even without higher education, one can still succeed.

Nevertheless, education is still important in this world. In order to strive higher and to be respected by others, one has to go through formal education procedures and earn the certificate. That is why, some celebrities tend to still go back to school and finish them properly before continuing back into acting. Some of the celebrities that are known to be highly educated are James Franco who got his Master of Fine Arts degree in creative writing from Columbia University. In 2010, was accepted into Yale University to pursue his PhD in English and a year later, he got his master's degree in film making from NYU. Next is, Rowan Atkinson known as Mr Bean who has a Master's Degree in Electrical Engineering from The Queen's College Oxford in 1975. There several names that have not been listed out but these shows that one can entertain but be educated at the same time. People happen to respect these highly educated actors and actresses more without noticing it and will tend to believe in whatever they tend to say or promote once they did their background check.

It shows here that whether you are a celebrity or not, education is still number one. It is in order to gain respect and also the trust of the people out there. Education transforms lives and breaks the cycle of poverty that traps so many children and also helps one to think critically and creatively, helping them to be able to solve problems in their daily lives. Education for celebrities are also as important as an educated star will make help encouraging their young fans to stay in school.

## **FACTORS INFLUENCES CELEBRITY IN POLITICS**

Based on my reading, there 3 factors that influence celebrity in Politics. These factors can show why celebrity influences people in politics. Those factors are based on Social, Education and Popularity.

**Social:**

Social influences occur when a person’s emotion, opinions or behaviours are affected by others. Social influences take many form can be seen in socialization, persuasion, conformity, sales and marketing. According to Asmungi, the phenomenon of political celebrities has actually taken place in every country especially in America we can see the celebrity participate in Politics. In Malaysia, not all celebrities openly participate in politics but we can see a few of the celebrities take part in certain parties.

**Popularity:**

*‘Popularity’* mean the fact that something or someone is liked, enjoyed, or supported by many people. Popularity have two type which defines by how much we are liked by others. The other type of popularity is emerged in adolescence. Popularity begin to reflect by our status more than our likability. The markers of status are visibility, influences, dominance and power. Celebrity gains their popularity with media such as reality TV and social media. According to Hizreen Azleena Kamal (2018, JANUARY 13), “Some local artistes have begun making their stand on pressing issues from politics to high cost of living, among other”.

**RESEARCH FRAMEWORK**

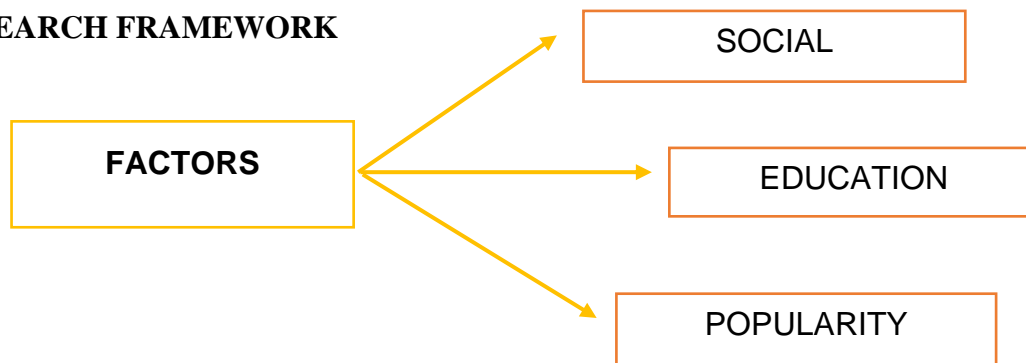


Figure 1.1 Factors That Influence Celebrities In Politics

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The research is the quantitative survey type of research. The link to the online survey was distributed through social media such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and Email. By using the social media platforms, it easy to reach the public as the study is focus on public respond.

### **Sampling Technique**

The study is using convenient sampling technique which is nonprobability sampling. According to Lavrakas (2008), in non-probability sampling, the population may not be well denned, and the non-probability sampling is often divided into three categories which is purposive, convenience and quota sampling. The study uses convenience sampling technique where the target respondents are among the public in various occupation, which is workers in Government and Private sector, self-employed, housewife, retired, students and also unemployed. The total number of respondents for the survey is 270.

### **Research Measurement**

The questionnaire is consisting 59 questions included with the demographic section. The questionnaire is related to the research objectives of the research. The questions are using ordinal, nominal and scale to measure the data. The data are key-in in the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS). The questions are reliable and valid which make the respondents are easy to understand and answer the questions.

### **Data Analysis**

The method used for data analysis are through Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) software version 23. The data analysis procedure is included creating survey stage, Pilot test and data transferring. The survey or questionnaire are created with the questions that are related to the research objectives of the research. The questionnaire is distributing to the first 50 respondents in order to identify the reliability of the research. The survey is continued to complete the data of 440 responses and the data collected transferred to SPSS software for analysis and finding purposes (Ridzuan, Ridzuan and Ridzuan, 2015)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### A) PROFILE RESPONDENT

The profile of the sample is discussed in terms of 6 characteristics which is age, status, ethnic, highest education level, occupation, state and 6 of general questions.

**Table 1: Distribution of the respondents by profile**

PROFILE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
<b>Age</b>		
18 – 25	162	60
26 – 32	51	18.8
33 – 49	53	19.6
50 above	4	1.48
		100
<b>Ethnic</b>		
Malay	255	94
Chinese	7	2.59
Indian	1	0.37
Others	7	2.59
		100
<b>Status</b>		
Single	180	66
Married	70	25.9
Divorcee	1	0.3
In a relationship	18	6.6
		100
<b>Highest Education level</b>		
SPM	26	9.6
Diploma	60	22.2
Degree	134	49.6
Masters	38	14
PHD	12	4.4
		100
<b>Occupation</b>		
Government Sector	39	14.4
Private Sector	67	24.8
Unemployed	9	3.3
Self-employed	16	5.9
Student	139	51.48
		100

State		
Terengganu	36	13.3
Selangor	48	17.7
Perak	21	7.7
Negeri Sembilan	29	10.7
Melaka	24	8.8
Johor	22	8.14
Kuala Lumpur	17	6.29
Kedah	12	4.4
Pahang	9	3.3
Kelantan	11	4.07
Penang	9	3.3
Perlis	3	1.1
Sabah	3	1.1
Sarawak	2	0.7
Not yet eligible to vote	24	8.8
		<u>100</u>

Table 1 above shows the profile of respondents from men and female. Based from the findings, most of the respondents who answered these questionnaires are aged between 18-25 (60%), Malay ethnic (94%), single (66%). Mostly of the respondents are students (51.48%) and from Selangor (17.7%).

## B) RESPONDENTS OPINION TOWARD POLITICS

There are 6 questions that were asked in this section. The reason of asking these questions to the respondents is to know more about their opinions towards politics and General Election.

**Table 2: Respondents opinions toward politics**

QUESTIONS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Residential Area		
Urban	214	79
Rural	55	20.37
Status on Voting		
Qualified and registered	148	54.8
Qualified but not registered	60	22
Not qualified (below 21)	62	22.9
Which Political Party do you prefer the most?		
Barisan Nasional	50	18.5
Pakatan Harapan	113	41.8



Gagasan Sejahtera	44	16.2
No idea	62	22.9
<hr/>		
What do you think about our current government?		
Good and should be maintain	69	25.5
Should be change for trial	198	73
<hr/>		
I believe artist can influence voters?		
Yes	166	61.48
No	103	38.1
<hr/>		
Which celebrity is the most popular in political involvement?		
Dira Abu Zahar	46	17.03
Adi Putra	3	1.1
Neelofa	20	7.4
Caprice	34	12.5
Fathia Latif	19	7.03
Other	52	19.2
None	96	35.5
<hr/>		

Table 2 above shows the respondents opinions toward politics. Based from the findings, most of the respondents who answered the questionnaires are from urban area (79%), mostly are qualified and registered to vote (54.8%), prefer Pakatan Harapan as a political party (41.8%). Respondents also agree that current government should be change for trial (73%), and they believe artist can influence voters (61.48%), respondents stated that celebrity that popular in political involvement are none (35.5%)

### C) SOCIAL FACTORS

From the table 3, respondents think that every individual has a right to participate in politics (M=4.42) and celebrity who smart will influence people to vote certain parties easily (M=3.59). It shows respondents agree that celebrity can gives influence to people in politics (M=3.13). celebrity political activity played an important role (M=3.09). According to Anthony, J Nownes, celebrity political activity indeed can influence some citizens. Overall the average mean for Social Factors is 3.3

**Table 3: Social Factors**

<i>Social Factors</i>	<b>Mean</b>
Every individual has a right to participate in politics	<b>4.42</b>
celebrity who is smart will influence people to vote certain parties easily	<b>3.59</b>
Celebrity gives influence to people in politics	<b>3.13</b>
Celebrity political activity played an important role	<b>3.09</b>
Celebrity opinions towards politics are important	<b>2.91</b>
Celebrity gives impact towards election results	<b>2.85</b>
Overall	<b>3.33</b>

**D) EDUCATION FACTOR**

Based on the table 4, respondents think that celebrity who has higher education tends to speak with factual meaning (M= 4.01) and for people who will believe educated celebrities (M=3.88). This is due to people will look down on uneducated celebrities (M=2.73). It shows that respondents agree to most celebrities are educated (M=2.05). In addition, the celebrity as public individual who participates openly as a marketable commodity serve as a powerful type of legitimization of political economic model of exchange and value. Overall the average mean for Education Factor is M=3.17.

**Table 4: Education Factors**

<i>Education Factor</i>	<b>Mean</b>
Celebrity who has higher education tends to speak with factual meaning	<b>4.01</b>
People will believe educated celebrities	<b>3.88</b>
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Most celebrities are educated	<b>2.05</b>
Overall	<b>3.17</b>

## E) POPULARITY FACTOR

Table 5 shows, respondent who agree with celebrity who is popular on Instagram tends to influence more people (M=3.5). Celebrity who is popular on Twitter tends to influence more people (M=3.41). Furthermore, celebrity who is popular on Facebook tends to influence more people (M=3.34). Respondent agree that, actor or actress who acts more tend to influence people easily (M=3.23). Celebrity who has more fans and followers can gain people trust easily (M=3.47). Moreover, comedian who has more fans and followers can influence people easily (M = 3.0). Overall the average mean for Popularity factors is M=3.32.

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Celebrity who has more fans / followers can gain people trust easily	<b>3.47</b>
Comedian who has more fans and followers can influence people easily	<b>3.0</b>
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.32</b>

## F) CELEBRITY IN POLITICS

Table 6 shows, respondent who agree with artist should remain open when one speaks about politics (M=3.56). Artist should be involved in politics (M=2.97). Artists plays good part in promoting parties (M=2.9). Furthermore, artist should be active on all political parties (M=2.77). Respondent agree that, artist should be involved in politics in order to become popular (M=2.3). Overall the average mean for Popularity factors is M=2.9.

**Table 5: Celebrity in Politics**

<i>Celebrity In Politics</i>	<b>Mean</b>
Artist should remain open when one speaks about politics	<b>3.56</b>
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Artist should be active on all political parties	<b>2.77</b>
Artist should be involved in politics in order to become popular	<b>3.47</b>
<b>Overall</b>	<b>2.9</b>

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