

DETERMINANTS

OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ON GOVERNMENT SOCIAL MEDIA IN MALAYSIA

DETERMINANTES DE LA PARTICIPACIÓN PÚBLICA EN LAS REDES SOCIALES GUBERNAMENTALES EN MALASIA

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Suggested citation (APA, seventh ed.)

Sien, K. L., Ahmad, M. & Lyn, O. S. (2025). Determinants of public engagement on government social media in Malaysia. *Universidad y Sociedad*, 17(5). e5355.

ABSTRACT

The Malaysian government has promoted various initiatives through social media, yet the effort's success hinges on public engagement. Without sufficient engagement, government communication risks failure. This study, guided by the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), examines the relationships between performance expectancy, effort expectancy, perceived content, social influence, and facilitating conditions, and their effects on public engagement. A survey of 600 participants was conducted, and the data were analyzed using Multiple Linear Regression-Ordinary Least Squares (MLR-OLS). The results reveal that performance expectancy, perceived content, and social influence have a significant positive influence on public engagement, while effort expectancy and facilitating conditions do not. These findings underscore the importance of perceived usefulness, content quality, and social factors in promoting public engagement on government social media platforms. The study provides valuable insights for policymakers to enhance public engagement strategies in digital governance.

Keywords: Public engagement, Social media, Government communication, Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT).

RESUMEN

El gobierno de Malasia ha promovido diversas iniciativas a través de las redes sociales; sin embargo, el éxito de estas depende de la participación ciudadana. Sin una participación suficiente, la comunicación gubernamental corre el riesgo de fracasar. Este estudio, basado en la Teoría Unificada de Aceptación y Uso de la Tecnología (UTAUT), examina las relaciones entre la expectativa de rendimiento, la expectativa de esfuerzo, el contenido percibido, la influencia social y las condiciones facilitadoras, y sus efectos en la participación ciudadana. Se realizó una encuesta a 600 participantes, cuyos datos se analizaron mediante Regresión Lineal Múltiple-Mínimos Cuadrados Ordinarios (MLR-OLS). Los resultados revelan que la expectativa de rendimiento, el contenido percibido y la influencia social tienen una influencia positiva significativa en la participación pública, mientras que la expectativa de esfuerzo y las condiciones facilitadoras no la tienen. Estos hallazgos subrayan la importancia de la utilidad percibida, la calidad del contenido y los factores sociales para promover la participación pública en las plataformas gubernamentales de redes sociales. El estudio

proporciona información valiosa a los responsables políticos para mejorar las estrategias de participación pública en la gobernanza digital.

Palabras clave:

Participación pública, Redes sociales, Comunicación gubernamental, Teoría unificada de aceptación y uso de la tecnología (UTAUT).

INTRODUCTION

Public engagement through government social media has emerged as a crucial aspect of modern governance, facilitating communication and interaction between governments and citizens. Previous research has explored various determinants influencing public engagement, such as technology acceptance models, perceived content, and social influence (Dong & Lian, 2022). However, while much of this research has focused on general social media use, limited studies specifically examine government social media platforms and their unique role in fostering public engagement. Moreover, most studies are conducted in Western contexts, leaving a gap in understanding how these dynamics unfold in non-Western countries like Malaysia, where cultural, technological, and governance factors may differ.

The literature highlights a gap in understanding how citizens in developing countries engage with government social media platforms, particularly in Malaysia, where digital governance initiatives have grown significantly (Rahim et al., 2019). Although several studies examine public engagement in Western democracies, the contextual factors influencing public engagement in a diverse and multi-ethnic country like Malaysia remain underexplored. Malaysia's government has made significant strides in digital governance by implementing e-government services and engaging citizens via social media platforms (Rahim et al., 2019; Tang et al., 2021). However, there still needs to be more understanding of the factors driving public engagement with government social media, despite the increasing adoption of these platforms for policy dissemination and public communication.

Moreover, there is a perception that social media platforms are underutilized for engaging with the public. Despite the growing presence of government agencies on these platforms, the level of interaction and engagement with citizens still needs to be improved. This underutilization represents a missed opportunity to leverage social media channels' potential for fostering transparency, participation, and accountability in governance processes (Rahim et al., 2019). Additionally, ineffective communication

strategies further exacerbate the problem. Government agencies may need help to develop content that resonates with citizens or leverage social media features effectively to stimulate engagement. It raises questions about the adequacy of current communication strategies and the need for innovative approaches to enhance public engagement (Dominic & Gisip, 2021; Rahim et al., 2019).

This paper addresses the gap by investigating the specific determinants of public engagement on government social media platforms in Malaysia. The study builds upon the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) framework to examine the influence of key predictors, including performance expectancy, effort expectancy, perceived content, social influence, and facilitating conditions, on public engagement. By focusing on the Malaysian context, this research contributes to the growing body of literature on digital governance and public engagement in non-Western settings, providing new insights into how citizens in Malaysia interact with government social media.

The case of Malaysia is particularly interesting due to its unique socio-political landscape, marked by a diverse population and rapid technological advancements (Dominic & Gisip, 2021; Rahim et al., 2019). Understanding public engagement in Malaysia offers valuable lessons for other developing countries facing similar challenges in promoting digital governance. Moreover, this study provides empirical evidence on the predictors of public engagement in a non-Western context, addressing the lack of region-specific research and contributing to global discussions on e-government and social media. This research will be beneficial for policymakers and government agencies aiming to improve their communication strategies and foster higher levels of public participation through social media.

The need for more effective public engagement on government social media platforms in Malaysia poses a multifaceted problem that warrants thorough investigation. Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing public engagement, including communication strategies, user experience, social influence, and trust. By identifying and addressing these challenges, government agencies can enhance their communication efforts and foster meaningful interactions with the public, ultimately contributing to transparent, participatory, and accountable governance. The purpose of this study is to investigate the determinants of public engagement on Malaysian government social media platforms, examining the contributions of performance expectancy, effort expectancy, perceived content, social influence, and facilitating conditions.

Public engagement describes the activities that the citizens do to solve problems in their communities and pursue shared goals, also the involvement of citizens in public affairs, with the aim of building trusted relationship beyond simple information exchange. Public engagement on social media platforms is influenced by various factors, including performance expectancy, which refers to the perceived utility and effectiveness of using the platform. Effort expectancy, or the perceived ease of use, also significantly shapes individuals' engagement behaviors (Davis, 1989). Moreover, perceived content, social influence, and facilitating conditions are important determinants of public engagement on social media platforms (Guo et al., 2024).

Numerous studies have investigated the determinants of public engagement on government social media platforms, shedding light on the factors influencing citizen interactions and participation. One critical determinant explored in these studies is performance expectancy, which refers to the perceived utility and effectiveness of using social media platforms for engaging with government content. Previous studies have shown that higher levels of performance expectancy are associated with increased engagement behaviours among citizens (Sien et al., 2024; Sawalha et al., 2019). For example, it found that citizens who perceive social media platforms as practical tools for accessing government information are more likely to engage with government content and participate in online discussions.

Public engagement through government social media platforms has gained considerable attention in recent years, particularly following the pandemic (Guo et al., 2024). Governments worldwide, including Malaysia, have increasingly utilized social media to promote initiatives, disseminate information, and engage with the public and also with the trading sector. The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the necessity of digital platforms in bridging communication gaps between governments and citizens, as traditional face-to-face interactions were severely limited (Gómez-Aguilella, & Cardiff, 2019; Guo et al., 2024). Despite the proliferation of government social media platforms, gaps remain in understanding the factors that influence public engagement, especially in non-Western contexts like Malaysia, where social, cultural, and technological factors may significantly differ from those in Western countries.

Several studies have focused on public engagement with government social media, highlighting the importance of various factors such as ease of use, content quality, and social influence (Tang et al., 2021). However, a detailed understanding of how these factors interact in the Malaysian context still needs to be explored. Furthermore,

while significant research exists on social media engagement in general, the literature examining engagement specifically with government content is still evolving, particularly in developing countries where digital literacy and infrastructure vary widely (Yuan et al., 2023). This research aims to fill this gap by examining the determinants of public engagement with government social media in Malaysia, drawing on established theoretical frameworks such as the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT).

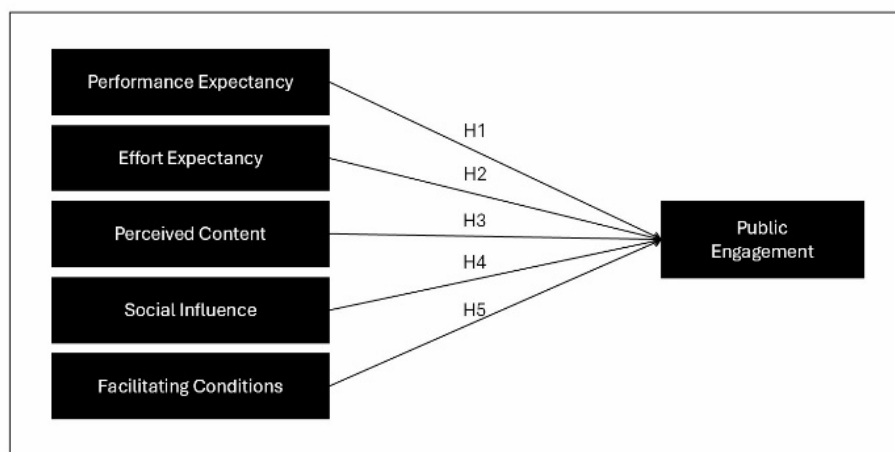
In a robust academic work, a literature review serves multiple purposes: synthesizing existing knowledge, identifying gaps, and framing the research question within a theoretical context. In this case, the UTAUT model, is a widely recognized framework that explains technology acceptance through key constructs such as performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions. While the authors cite this model as a basis for their research, they fall short of thoroughly analyzing how it has been applied in previous studies, particularly in the context of public engagement on social media platforms. For instance, recent studies have extended the UTAUT model to contexts such as e-government adoption (Sawalha et al., 2019), social media communication, and public engagement (Yuan et al., 2023).

These studies explore how UTAUT's constructs perform in digital governance and social media settings, which are relevant to the current research. However, the authors do not adequately review these or similar works, leaving a gap in demonstrating how the UTAUT model can specifically inform public engagement behaviors on government social media platforms in Malaysia. A more profound engagement with literature could have strengthened the argument for applying UTAUT to this particular setting.

This study contributes to the existing body of literature by focusing on the Malaysian context, where digital governance is still evolving, and public engagement behaviors may be influenced by unique socio-political factors. Malaysia's diverse population and rapid technological advancement make it an interesting case for examining public engagement on government social media platforms. By investigating the predictors of public engagement, such as performance expectancy, effort expectancy, perceived content, social influence and facilitating conditions, this research provides valuable insights into how government agencies can enhance their communication strategies on social media. The hypotheses for this study are grounded in the literature on public engagement and the UTAUT framework.

The framework is shown in Figure 1, which comprises five independent variables: performance expectancy, effort expectancy, perceived content, social influence, and facilitating conditions. In addition, the framework has one dependent variable: public engagement, and the five hypotheses are developed in Table 1. By testing these hypotheses, this study aims to provide empirical evidence on the determinants of public engagement with government social media in Malaysia, contributing to academic literature and practical policymaking.

Fig 1. Proposed Research Framework.



Source: own elaboration.

Table 1. List of Hypotheses.

H#	Hypothesis Statement
H1	Performance expectancy significantly influences public engagement
H2	Effort expectancy significantly influences public engagement
H3	Perceived content significantly influences public engagement
H4	Social influence significantly influences public engagement
H5	Facilitating conditions significantly influence public engagement

Source: own elaboration.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants were recruited from various demographic backgrounds to ensure diversity in the sample. The survey instrument included validated scales to measure the predictor variables (performance expectancy, effort expectancy, perceived content, social influence, and facilitating conditions) and public engagement. Data was analyzed using multiple regression analysis to examine the relationships between the predictor variables and public engagement. In conducting the quantitative study focusing on the Cronbach alpha reliability test, the study followed a structured approach to ensure the validity and reliability of the data collected. The methodology encompassed several vital components, including developing a survey questionnaire, data collection procedure, sampling technique, and statistical analysis.

The survey instrument used in this study was designed to assess the determinants of public engagement with government social media platforms in Malaysia. It focused on six key constructs: performance expectancy (PfEx), effort expectancy (EfEx), perceived content quality (PC), social influence (SocInf), facilitating conditions (FacCon), and public engagement (PE). Each construct was measured using established scales from prior research, with items adapted from previous studies. The questionnaire was divided into six sections, each containing multiple items measured on a five-point Likert scale. Performance expectancy gauged participants' views on the usefulness of government social media, while effort expectancy focused on ease of use (Sawalha et al., 2019). Perceived content quality assessed the

informativeness and relevance of the content (Dominic & Gisip, 2021). Social influence captured the impact of peers and networks on engagement (Sawalha et al., 2019). On the other hand, facilitating conditions evaluated external factors like internet access (Venkatesh et al., 2012) to support technology use and the perceptions of the resources and support available to perform a technology (Brown & Venkatesh, 2005), i.e., internet coverage in Malaysia. The facilitating conditions in this study also focuses on how the government leverages Facebook's features and tools to create a supportive and accessible environment for citizens. Public engagement measured participants' level of involvement and interaction with government social media content (Sawalha et al., 2019).

Data was collected through a survey using a questionnaire, which was distributed to 600 Malaysian citizens who actively engage with government social media platforms. The use of the questionnaire allowed for reaching a large population, thereby saving both time and costs. The survey was administered online through Google Forms, allowing easy access and participation. Participants were recruited using a multi-stage sampling technique to ensure a representative sample of the population (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016; Van der Giessen & Bayerl, 2022). The multi-stage sampling process comprised two distinct stages. In the first stage, data on the absolute number of Facebook followers for selected government agencies were collected from January 1, 2023, to August 31, 2023. This data encompassed both states and federal territories of Malaysia. From the total list of 16 states and federal territories, specific locations, including Putrajaya, Kelantan, Pulau Pinang, Malacca, Sabah, and Sarawak, were systematically selected using an interval value of $(3n-2)$. This systematic sampling can reduce the selection bias and work well in large populations.

In the second stage, a simple random sampling method was used to select individual participants from the Facebook follower lists of the six states and federal territories identified in the first stage. Following Krejcie & Morgan's (1970), guidelines, a minimum sample size of 384 was determined, ensuring a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error. This sample size with 600 participants was deemed sufficient to achieve reliable results and to draw meaningful conclusions about the impact of performance expectancy, effort expectancy, perceived content, facilitating conditions and social influences on public engagement. The study successfully collected 600 participants from the selected states. This approach can guarantee that everyone in the population has an equal opportunity to be included in the sample, thus enhancing the generalizability of the findings across diverse

geographical regions and backgrounds in Malaysia (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

To further enhance the response rate and ensure the quality of the collected data, several strategies were implemented. These included providing clear instructions about the survey objectives, ensuring anonymity and confidentiality for participants, and offering incentives for participation. The comprehensive nature of the sampling strategy and data collection procedure not only ensured a robust representation of the population but also facilitated the effective achievement of the study's objectives.

Once the data were collected, statistical analysis was conducted to assess the reliability of the survey instrument using the Cronbach alpha reliability test. Cronbach alpha is a widely used measure of internal consistency reliability, indicating the extent to which items within a scale are correlated with one another (Hair et al., 2021). A Cronbach alpha value above 0.70 is generally considered acceptable, indicating a high level of internal consistency among the items. The statistical analysis involved calculating Cronbach alpha coefficients for each construct in the survey questionnaire. These coefficients were interpreted to determine the reliability of the measurement scales used to assess performance expectancy, effort expectancy, perceived content quality, social influence, facilitating conditions, and public engagement. Additionally, multiple linear regression via ordinary least squares (OLS) was employed to examine the relationships between several predictor variables and the dependent variable, public engagement on Malaysian government social media platforms.

Multiple linear regression is a statistical technique used to understand the linear relationship between one dependent variable and two or more independent variables (Hair et al., 2021). The OLS method estimates the parameters by minimizing the sum of the squared differences between the observed and predicted values of the dependent variable. The regression model was evaluated using various diagnostic measures to ensure the validity and reliability of the results. The assumptions of linearity, independence, homoscedasticity, and normality of residuals were checked to validate the use of OLS regression. The model's goodness-of-fit was assessed using the coefficient of determination (R^2), which indicates the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by the predictor variables.

Informed consent was obtained from all participants before their participation in the study. Researchers have provided detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, benefits, confidentiality

measures, and their rights as participants. Participants were briefed and informed that they could withdraw anytime they wanted. Besides, information obtained from the participants was coded and kept confidential. Participants were asked to provide explicit consent by clicking an online consent button via Google Form after receiving the necessary information. The consent process emphasized transparency and ensured that participants were fully aware of what their participation entailed. Additionally, this study was granted ethics approval by the Multimedia University (MMU) Research Ethics Committee. The ethical approval ensured that the study adhered to ethical guidelines and protected participants' rights and welfare. Researchers complied with the ethical standards set forth by professional organizations and regulatory bodies governing research practices.

The study included a sample of 600 participants, with a gender distribution of 249 males (41.5%) and 351 females (58.5%). The participants were categorized into four age groups: under 20 years old, 20-39 years old, 40-59 years old, and over 60 years old. The distribution is as follows in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographic Profile.

Age	Participant	Gender
Under 20 years old	50 participants (8.3%)	Males: 6 (1%) Females: 44 (7.3%)
20-39 years old	279 participants (46.5%)	Males: 110 (18.3%) Females: 169 (28.2%)
40-59 years old	264 participants (44%)	Males: 129 (21.5%) Females: 135 (22.5%)
Over 60 years old	7 participants (1.2%)	Males: 4 (0.7%) Females: 3 (0.5%)

Source: own elaboration.

These demographic characteristics provided a diverse sample for examining the influences on public engagement with government social media in Malaysia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Reliability analysis is crucial for assessing the consistency and stability of measurement instruments used in research. This study evaluated reliability in Table 3 using three commonly used measures: Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (ρ_a), and average variance extracted (AVE). Cronbach's alpha is a widely used measure of internal consistency reliability, reflecting the extent to which items within a scale are correlated with each other (Hair et al., 2021). Composite reliability and average variance extracted are measures of construct reliability, used to assess the extent to which the items in a scale accurately and consistently measure the underlying construct.

Table 3. Validity and Reliability Analysis Results.

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (ρ_a)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Effort Expectancy	0.916	0.918	0.857
Facilitating Conditions	0.887	0.889	0.816
Public Engagement	0.967	0.968	0.735
Perceived Contents	0.962	0.963	0.670
Performance Expectancy	0.889	0.893	0.819
Social Influence	0.739	0.765	0.654

Source: own elaboration.

The reliability analysis results indicate strong internal consistency and reliability for most of the measurement instruments used in the study. Effort expectancy demonstrated high levels of reliability across all three measures, with Cronbach's alpha of 0.916, composite reliability of 0.918, and average variance extracted of 0.857 (Hair et al., 2021). Similarly, facilitating conditions, public engagement, perceived content, and performance expectancy exhibited high

levels of reliability across all three measures, with Cronbach's alphas ranging from 0.887 to 0.967, composite reliabilities ranging from 0.889 to 0.968, and average variances extracted ranging from 0.670 to 0.819.

However, social influence displayed relatively lower levels of reliability compared to the other variables, with Cronbach's alpha of 0.739, composite reliability of 0.765, and average variance extracted of 0.654 (Hair et al., 2021). While these values indicate acceptable levels of reliability, they are slightly lower than the thresholds typically considered adequate. This may suggest some degree of inconsistency or measurement error within the items comprising the social influence construct. Overall, the reliability analysis demonstrates that the measurement instruments used in the study are reliable and internally consistent, apart from social influence, which exhibited slightly lower levels of reliability. These findings provide confidence in the validity and accuracy of the measurement instruments, enhancing the robustness of the study's findings and conclusions.

The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations is a technique used to assess discriminant validity in multiple linear regression (MLR) studies (Hair et al., 2021). It examines the relationships between constructs by comparing the correlations between different constructs (heterotrait) with correlations within the same construct (monotrait). A value of less than 0.90 is generally considered indicative of good discriminant validity (Rasoolimanesh, 2022). In this HTMT matrix in Table 4, the values in the diagonal represent the correlations between each construct and itself, which are all 1.

The values off the diagonal represent the correlations between different constructs.

Table 4. Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Ratios of Correlations.

	Effort Expectancy	Facilitating Conditions	Perceived Content	Performance Expectancy	Social Influence
Facilitating Conditions	0.867				
Perceived Content	0.837	0.849			
Performance Expectancy	0.846	0.889	0.867		
Social Influence	0.894	0.881	0.879	0.876	
Public Engagement	0.854	0.837	0.769	0.799	0.790

Source: own elaboration.

For instance, the correlation between effort expectancy and facilitating conditions is 0.867, between effort expectancy and public engagement is 0.854, and so forth. Based on the HTMT results, discriminant validity is established as all the values are below the recommended threshold of 0.9 (Rasoolimanesh, 2022). This indicates that the constructs are adequately distinct from one another and are measuring different underlying concepts. For example, the correlation between effort expectancy and facilitating conditions (0.867) is lower than 0.90, suggesting that these constructs have sufficient discriminant validity despite potentially sharing some conceptual overlap.

The Multiple Linear Regression (MLR) analysis via Ordinary Least Square (OLS) aimed to explore the relationship between performance expectancy, effort expectancy, perceived content, social influence, and facilitating conditions toward public engagement. Additionally, it sought to examine the predicting factors of these variables toward public engagement. The model yielded an R-squared value of 0.882, indicating that the predictor variables could explain approximately 88.2% of the variance in public engagement. The coefficients result in Table 5 provides insight into the relationships between the predictor variables and public engagement.

Table 5. Regression Coefficients Result.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
Constant	0.205	-	3.191	0.001
Performance Expectancy	0.564	0.574	15.228	<0.001

Effort Expectancy	0.029	0.028	0.675	0.500
Social Influence	0.119	0.113	2.522	0.012
Facilitating Conditions	-0.027	-0.026	-1.004	0.316
Perceived Content	0.289	0.274	7.651	<0.001

Source: own elaboration.

Performance expectancy emerged as a significant predictor of public engagement, with a Beta coefficient of 0.574 ($t = 15.228$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that individuals who perceive government social media platforms as useful and effective for engaging with public content are more likely to engage actively. This finding aligns with the notion that in environments where citizens face complex and bureaucratic procedures, the perceived utility of social media as a channel for easier access to government services and information enhances public engagement (Sawalha et al., 2019). The government social media platforms serve as vital tools for transparent and efficient communication, where digital governance has accelerated. Therefore, this study provides further validation for performance expectancy as a primary determinant of engagement in government communication.

However, effort expectancy did not show a significant relationship with public engagement (Beta = 0.028, $t = 0.675$, $p = 0.500$), indicating that perceptions of platform ease of use and accessibility may not influence engagement behaviours significantly, this finding contradicts previous studies (Sawalha et al., 2019). As a result, ease of use has become an expected feature, rather than a distinguishing factor that drives engagement. Therefore, for users of government social media, the focus may have shifted from usability to other attributes, such as the relevance and quality of content. This aligns with recent literature that argues modern users, particularly in Malaysia, have developed high digital literacy, making ease of use a less critical factor in determining engagement (Taiwo & Downe, 2013).

Social influence demonstrated a significant positive relationship with public engagement, with a Beta coefficient of 0.113 ($t = 2.522$, $p = 0.012$) (Hair et al., 2021). This finding supports previous study about subjective norms is associated with the behaviors. This finding suggests that individuals are more likely to engage with government social media content when they perceive social cues or endorsements from peers. This finding indicates that in Malaysia, citizens may look to their peers for cues on whether government social media content is worth engaging with. For instance, posts with high engagement may signal relevance or importance, encouraging further participation. This is consistent with the findings of Sawalha et al. (2019), who highlight that social network serve as powerful drivers of engagement, particularly in collectivist cultures where peer opinions and group dynamics hold significant influence.

Conversely, facilitating conditions did not exhibit a significant relationship with public engagement (Beta = -0.026, $t = -1.004$, $p = 0.316$), indicating that factors such as internet access and device compatibility may not strongly influence engagement behaviours. This finding is consistent with earlier study, which indicates that when both performance expectancy and effort expectancy are present in a model, facilitating conditions do not significantly impact on the intention to use (Ahmad, 2014). In this study's context, the lack of a significant relationship suggests that facilitating conditions may no longer be as critical in Malaysia, where internet penetration and access to digital devices are relatively high (Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, 2020). With the widespread availability of smartphones and internet connectivity, the barriers that facilitating conditions once posed have diminished significantly, making them a less relevant factor in predicting engagement on social media platforms. Additionally, this could point to a mature digital ecosystem in Malaysia, where users no longer require extensive external support to engage with government content online. This shift could indicate that future research may need to focus less on the infrastructural and external enablers and more on content quality and relevance as determinants of public engagement in well-connected regions (Tang et al., 2021).

Perceived content quality emerged as a significant predictor of public engagement, with a Beta coefficient of 0.274 ($t = 7.651$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that individuals are more likely to engage with government social media content when they perceive it as relevant, informative, and engaging. In the Malaysian context, where public engagement on government social media platforms is still evolving, content relevant to citizens' needs, such as policy announcements, public services information, and government initiatives, is crucial in keeping users engaged. This aligns with the findings of Tang et al. (2021), who suggest that citizens are more inclined to engage with content that addresses their concerns and provides actionable information. The significance of content quality reinforces the idea that governments need to focus on crafting content that is not only informative but also engaging and accessible to a broad audience (Sien et al., 2021).

2024). This finding also supports a previous study about the content quality influencing public engagement in government social media, especially during crisis times (Guo et al., 2024).

In summary, the results highlight the importance of performance expectancy, social influence, and perceived content quality in driving public engagement on government social media platforms while suggesting that effort expectancy and facilitating conditions may have less influence on engagement behaviours. Thus, the hypotheses testing results in Table 6.

Table 6. The Hypothesis Testing Results.

H#	Hypothesis Statement	Result
H1	Performance expectancy significantly influences public engagement	Supported
H2	Effort expectancy significantly influences public engagement	Not Supported
H3	Perceived content significantly influences public engagement	Supported
H4	Social influence significantly influences public engagement	Supported
H5	Facilitating conditions significantly influence public engagement	Not Supported

Source: own elaboration.

Further research is needed to explore why these external factors may not play a significant role in predicting public engagement on social media platforms, specifically in the context of government communication. It is crucial to interpret these insignificant findings with caution and consider the potential limitations of the study. One limitation may be the measurement of the predictor variables, which could impact their relationship with public engagement. Additionally, the study's sample size and composition may influence the statistical power to detect significant relationships.

Besides, future research could explore alternative measures for effort expectancy and facilitating conditions or investigate additional factors that may influence public engagement on government social media platforms. The findings of the multiple regression analysis provide valuable insights into the determinants of public engagement on government social media platforms in Malaysia. By understanding these factors, policymakers and government agencies can develop more effective communication strategies and foster meaningful interactions with the public. However, further research is needed to explore additional factors that may influence public engagement and to validate the findings across different contexts and populations.

CONCLUSIONS

The discussion section of this study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research objectives, elucidate the findings, and offer insights into their implications for theory and practice in the context of public engagement on government social media platforms in Malaysia. The results highlight the importance of perceived utility, content quality, and social influence in shaping public engagement behaviors on government social media platforms in Malaysia. Enhancing public engagement strategies should address these factors to foster transparency, participation, and accountability in the governance process.

The primary research objectives of this study were twofold. Firstly, to examine the relationship between performance expectancy, effort expectancy, perceived content, social influence, facilitating conditions, and public engagement. Secondly, to explore the predicting factors of these variables towards public engagement. The findings of this study reveal significant relationships between certain determinants and public engagement on government social media platforms. Performance expectancy emerged as a strong predictor of public engagement, indicating that individuals who perceive government social media platforms as useful and effective are more likely to engage actively with public content. It underscores the importance of individuals' perceived utility and effectiveness of government social media platforms in shaping their engagement behaviors (Sawalha et al., 2019).

This finding underscores the importance of perceived utility in driving engagement behaviors on social media platforms. Similarly, perceived content quality exhibited a significant positive relationship with public engagement, highlighting the importance of relevant, informative, and engaging content in fostering user engagement (Dominic & Gisip, 2021; Yuan et al., 2023). Social influence played a significant role in predicting public engagement in this study. Factors such

as peer recommendations, social norms, and online interactions with friends and followers were found to impact citizens' decisions to take part in public engagement activities (Dong & Lian, 2022; Sawalha et al., 2019).

However, the study also revealed some insignificant findings. Effort expectancy and facilitating conditions did not exhibit significant relationships with public engagement. Effort expectancy refers to individuals' perceptions of the ease of use and accessibility of social media platforms while facilitating conditions encompassing external factors that may support engagement behaviors. The lack of significance in these relationships suggests that factors of platform usability may not strongly influence engagement behaviors. This outcome contrasts with previous studies on technology acceptance and usage (Sawalha et al., 2019). On the other hand, the external factors of internet access and Facebook's feature have a minimal impact on public engagement, thereby contradicting previous studies (Puriwat & Tripopsakul, 2021).

These findings challenge previous assumptions about the importance of ease of use and external factors in predicting engagement and call for further investigation into the complexities of these relationships in the context of government social media communication. The findings of this study have several implications for theory and practice in the field of public engagement and government communication. Firstly, the significant relationships identified between performance expectancy, perceived content quality, and social influence highlight the importance of these factors in driving public engagement on social media platforms. Policymakers and government agencies should prioritize efforts to enhance social media platforms' perceived utility and effectiveness, curate high-quality and engaging content, and leverage social influence to foster user engagement.

Moreover, the insignificant findings related to effort expectancy and facilitating conditions underscore the need to reassess the importance of these factors in predicting engagement behaviors. While previous studies have emphasized the role of platform usability and external conditions, these factors may have limited influence on engagement behaviors in the context of government social media communication. Policymakers and practitioners should consider alternative strategies for promoting engagement, such as enhancing content relevance and leveraging social influence dynamics.

In conclusion, the findings of this study shed light on the determinants and predicting factors of public engagement on government social media platforms in Malaysia. Performance expectancy, perceived content quality, and

social influence emerged as significant predictors of public engagement, highlighting the importance of perceived utility, content relevance, and social cues in driving engagement behaviors. However, effort expectancy and facilitating conditions did not exhibit significant relationships with public engagement, suggesting that factors related to platform usability and external conditions may have a limited influence on engagement behaviors in this context.

These findings provide valuable insights for policymakers and government agencies seeking to enhance their communication strategies and foster meaningful interactions with the public on social media platforms. By understanding the factors influencing public engagement, policymakers can develop more effective communication strategies and cultivate a more engaged citizenry. For example, prioritizing enhancements to the usability of government social media platforms and optimizing the quality and relevance of content can bolster users' perceptions of performance expectancy, consequently encouraging increased engagement levels.

While this study provides valuable insights, it is not without limitations. First, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to infer causality. Future research could employ longitudinal designs to better understand the causal relationships among the constructs. Second, the study relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to response biases. Future studies could incorporate objective measures of engagement to validate the findings. Third, the sample was limited to users of government social media platforms in Malaysia, which may limit the generalizability of the results to other contexts and populations. Comparative studies across different countries and cultural settings could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing public engagement with government social media.

Moreover, future research could explore additional variables influencing public engagement, such as trust in government, privacy concerns, and digital literacy. The potential moderating effects of these variables could provide deeper insights into the dynamics of public engagement with government social media platforms. Additionally, qualitative research methods, such as interviews or focus groups, could be used to gain a more nuanced understanding of user motivations and experiences.

This study has demonstrated the critical role of performance expectancy, effort expectancy, perceived content, social influence, and facilitating conditions in influencing public engagement with government social media platforms in Malaysia. The findings underscore the importance of

designing user-friendly platforms, providing high-quality content, leveraging social networks, and ensuring adequate support structures to enhance public engagement. These insights are valuable for policymakers and government agencies aiming to improve digital engagement strategies and foster greater interaction with citizens through social media platforms.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to thank all key informants for consenting to participate in this study, the journal reviewing editor, and anonymous reviewers, whose valuable suggestions improved the substance of this paper.

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