Strengthening Political Socialization As A Catalyst for Youth Leadership Development among Students of Universiti Putra Malaysia

Isau Olagoke Rasheed[1,2], Ismi Arif Ismail[1] & Nurul Afiqah Zulkifly[1]

[1]Institute for Social Science Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, [2]Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo, Nigeria
Email: easygoke36@gmail.com, ismi@upm.edu.my, nurulafiqah@upm.edu.my

Abstract
Political socialization process inculcates in young people, values, beliefs and skills which stimulate youth leadership development in the society. This study examined how political socialization process influences youth leadership development among UPM students. The central argument is that the development of political principles improves political literacy of young generations in terms of promoting awareness of their rights and attitudinal dispositions to become change agents in the future. Having internalized politically relevant and socially acceptable orientations through legitimate socialization systems, youth leaders tend to apply those ideals in the effective performance of their leadership responsibilities in social contexts. Data for this study was collected from 17 respondents through semi-structured qualitative interviews conducted at different locations on campus. Findings indicated that youth need to be properly socialized, nurtured, and motivated at the appropriate time so as to enable them demonstrate political competence, sense of patriotism to the nation, undertake civic responsibilities, and perform leadership tasks towards ensuring positive youth development. Besides, policy makers and adults ought to provide supportive structures that foster adolescents' developmental strengths and responsiveness to community engagement which culminate in the transformation of the social environment.
Keywords: Political Socialization, Public Policy, Youth Leadership, Community Service, Nation-Building

Introduction
Political socialisation is vital to the promotion of public enlightenment, civic awareness and leadership development among young people in any modern society. Every nation designs appropriate strategy to ensure sustenance of socially cherished values and relevant orientations that prepare youth for leadership activities across generations. Young citizens are made to undergo learning processes that shape their behavioural orientations; instil sense

of patriotism; and inspire voluntary contributions towards nation building. Gupta (2022) stated that the primary goal of political socialisation is to transmit political values and orientations to emerging members of the society through multiple agents of political socialization that entrenched and molded political attitudes in young adults (Parreira et al., 2023).

Youth leadership development is critically understudied as most empirical works on leadership is adult-centred. Recent studies however show that young people are needed as the driving force for leadership development and progressive society (Tackett et al., 2022). Society offers youth a chance to discover talents, and enable them explore their leadership opportunities (Friales et al., 2023). Within this context, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) provides a number of developmental pathways that enhance youth leadership processes. As students develop their own potential leadership skills, they are particularly sensitive to its development in others (Tackett et al. 2022; p. 3). A study by Friales et al. (2023) indicated that adequate training programme design and intensification of communication skills are recipes for youth leadership development.

In this connection, society expects from youth such virtues as rationality, confidence, commitment, dedication, perseverance, resilience and compassion to be able to positively improve on development agenda of people. Thus, students, in Eminova's (2023) submission, deserve adequate information about what is required of them as they get involved in public decision-making process. As developing adults are being nurtured for national progress in the future, government strives to provide political enlightenment and sensitization programmes that expose young people to political system before they attain the age of official inclusion in electoral processes at all levels (Zavershinskiy & Koryushkin, 2022; p. 39). The fact that youngsters demonstrate potential and capacity that facilitate attainment of shared goals (Tackett et al., 2022), teen leaders need to be integrated into proper training in order to maximize their effectiveness in the future. The inclusion and participation of young people in governance ensure adequate representation of different social groups (Othman et al., 2022; p. 600) in the society. Based on this, the paper explores how political socialisation process underpins youth leadership development among students of the Universiti Putra Malaysia.

Research questions
(i) How does political socialisation process influence youth leadership development?
(ii) To what extent do multiple socialisation agents enhance youth participation in civic duties?
(iii) How does youth political learning promote positive youth development?

Objectives
(i) To identify the impacts of political socialisation process on youth leadership development
(ii) To discuss how agents of socialization stimulate youth development activities
(iii) To explore the extent to which youth leaders applied skills acquired to promote nation building

Review of Related Literature
Political socialization
Political socialization is a learning process involving transmission of ideals and values relating to a political system among members of a particular society. The systematic mode of

instructions to shape disposition of individuals occurs from infancy to adulthood. As Elhadji Bachir (2023) remarks, primary socialization is integral to transfer of ideological beliefs, political choice, and identities to children. As a multidimensional concept from the field of sociology, psychology and political science, political socialization has been viewed from different perspectives by various scholars.

The early perspective considers the political socialisation of youth as politicization of novice citizens that emerges as a consequence of experienced political knowledge of the adult citizens (Zavershinskiy & Koryushkin, 2022). A core assumption of this view is that parents are conversant with the political arrangement of the nation, and transfer such information to their children at the appropriate time. The adults are regarded as exemplars upon whom younger elements seek guidance concerning political directions. As such, children retain in their memories whatever political orientations and cultural values learnt in childhood (Kudrnac, 2015; Nasie et al., 2021) as the early life experiences influence youth political behaviour in adulthood (Jaime-Castillo & Martinez-Cousinou, 2021). Ochango (2023) buttresses this position when he views attitudinal disposition of youth as a reflection of parental socialization at early phase of life.

The classic model of political socialization was however challenged on the grounds that exposure of young people to other agents of socialization influences their political engagement within the nation. Educational institutions, for example design civic curriculum as a medium to impart in students, political ideology, national principles, political mobilization and the conduct of foreign policy with other sovereign states with a view to strengthening spirit of nationalism, sense of loyalty to the nation and strong determination to defend the country when occasion demands. Expectedly, as Wong et al. (2022) reveal, teachers offer civic education which avails student the opportunity to participate in civic engagement, and express their opinions as "good citizens" that contribute to nation building.

Academic environment enables students to interact with different categories of lecturers, staff and fellow students from diverse racial backgrounds, religious beliefs and ideological orientations which help broaden their awareness of political realities across the world. Succinctly, secondary socialization agencies have substantial impact in the shaping of the political behaviour of youngsters. In their socially networked lives, youth engage in relationships that foster critical consciousness and community engagement. Whereas the traditional model of political socialization conceived children as passive, the second wave of political socialization considered youth as a potent group creating social change.

As Veenstra & Laninga-Wijnen (2023) rightly put it, adolescence is a period associated with opportunities and challenges for personal growth, community obligation as well as identity formation and development. Besides, Zong & Batalova (2017) explain that experiences in the 21st century makes top-down approach to political socialisation less adequate due to youth access to social media. The growing relevance of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn and WhatsApp afford young people the opportunities to get news update, and also promote interactivity among friends (Marquart et al., 2020) irrespective of geographical locations. As evident in global technological revolution, digital media has whittled down the predominance of parental control on children socialization.

Though conventional media raise political awareness among adolescents with the exchange of ideas on political issues (Yassen, 2022), young generation are addicted to social media, especially Twitter which they deploy to spread political socialization among cohorts (Khan et al., 2022). Gupta (2022) notes that political socialization enables young people pick up on politically relevant ideas and practices on regular basis. This condition leads contending

candidates in competitive elections to bypass news media gatekeeping and optimize Twitter and Instagram to reach out to Generations Y and Z across Malaysia. A study revealed the desire of young people for authentic information regarding political aspirants through social media rather than traditional media (Manning et al., 2017).

At present, established media lose influence as primary information sources for young citizens owing to the desire to access information from numerous social media platforms unfiltered by journalists. Meanwhile, a study conducted by Turkmenoglu (2023) indicated that both conventional and social media strengthened predisposition of students towards political ideals and political involvement. Mak et al. (2018) conceive socialisation as interactions with peer groups and bidirectional relationship in the community which enhances adolescent growth. The changing landscape of community ties and involvement in youth-driven activities strengthen contribution to societal development. Imbued with adequate public enlightenment, it is naturally expected that youth demonstrate readiness to step in if something jeopardizes the welfare of others (Stattin & Amna, 2022; p. 2205).

Still, a new perspective has emerged regarding the significant contribution of children to political knowledge of the parents within the family. In recognition of the significance of child-to-parent socialization, Reifen-Tagar & Cimpian (2022) posited that existing scholarship on political socialisation underestimated the value of children who are considered to be lacking social competence required for political involvement. In this context, Pedraza & Perry (2019) argue that children can influence adults' learning process in such areas as governance system, party campaigns, electoral process and contemporary issues in politics. In what McDevitt (2002) call "Trickle-up" transmission, children from low socio-economic background and those born of immigrants transfer political information to their parents by virtue of their exposure to civics instruction programmes.

The status of the parents might preclude them from getting access to relevant information on current developments. For example, a poor parent will be preoccupied and more concerned about how to make ends meet on daily basis instead of seeking information on political development in the country. The same applies to an immigrant parent who may not enjoy freedom of expression and association like other citizens in the country. The children may be critical sources of political updates for their parents leading the latter to rely on their children for current information.

Youth Leadership Development

Youth leadership encapsulates a series of processes that influence young individuals, guide them on appropriate steps to take, shape their worldview, put them on the right track, allow them analyze their own strengths and weaknesses with the ultimate aim of achieving common goals. Scholars considered youth leadership as the ability to influence others, and get them to collaborate in meaningful activities towards realizing shared goals. At adolescence, young citizens are made to continuously learn, make mistakes and allowed to improve upon their leadership experience entrenched on a developmental trajectory.

Given present realities, youth development prepares youngsters to have mindset characterized by commitment towards positive change, and avoidance of time wastage on unproductive engagements. Scholars underscore the primacy of cognitive, social, cultural, emotional, mental, moral or intellectual development in every youth to enable them have requisite competence to undertake leadership activities. By implication, youth leadership is both internal and external process of developing adolescents' potential and capability. Youth

leadership development is necessary as a strategy to secure a better future for young generations.

Youth development and youth leadership programme consists of components necessary to build on each youth's capabilities and strengths, and address a full range potential capable of improving national development. Though, a number of youth are encouraged to clarify their goals, this could be enhanced or hindered by the political situation and socio-economic conditions of the country. As Geldhof et al. (2021) rightly put it, social contexts moderate youth development in any country. Hence, youth-driven development activities comprise people, programme, and policies that emanate from the society.

Supportive environment affords youth the chance to be creative and initiate radical changes through positive and constructive actions in the development of their communities and societies. Arnold & Silliman (2017; p. 6) submit that supports and opportunities help youth to engage in useful roles; connect positively with others; and become adaptable young adults. For adolescents to achieve youth leadership development, they need to be immersed in supportive strings of multiple socialization domains that provide opportunities for healthy relationship among young generations of individuals and ultimate development of the entire nation.

Methodology

Methodology involves how research was conducted at a particular point in time. It encapsulates research design, data collection, analysis of data and research findings. The research adopts purposive sampling technique to obtain relevant information from student leaders with adequate knowledge on youth leadership, programmes and activities in UPM. The criterion for inclusion in the exploratory study is membership of the Students' Representative Council (SRC), the supreme decision-making body of UPM students at Serdang Campus. Established as a higher institution of learning that runs undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, UPM provides students with opportunities to get involved in youth development activities, and make positive contributions to youth leadership programmes at various levels.

Youth constitute vital population with untapped potential needed to be discovered, nurtured and refined for positive development. In this context, in-depth interviews were arranged for all the research participants who provided useful ideas on youth political socialisation within the university. In tandem with Case study method that is exploratory in nature, students with practical leadership experiences were interviewed at different locations to elicit information on how political socialization processes impact their leadership engagement.

Qualitative research of this nature adopts semi-structured interview for data collection that was conducted to obtain sufficient information from the respondents who expressed their feelings and opinions on how exposure to family guidance, peer group influence, educational institutions curriculum, and enlightenment from both conventional media and social media shape their involvement in student leadership on campus. The structure of the open-ended questions reinforced supply of relevant and adequate information by the respondents. Since the research participants had the opportunities to express their opinions and feelings about research topic freely, it affords the researcher to gain fresh insights on political socialization and youth leadership activities. Noteworthy that the interview protocol was refined to accommodate fresh insights offered by the responses of the research participants to ensure adequate coverage of the study. Data was analysed using Atlas.ti 23 software to facilitate

interpretation and understanding by any qualitative researcher as well as confirm the credibility of the research.
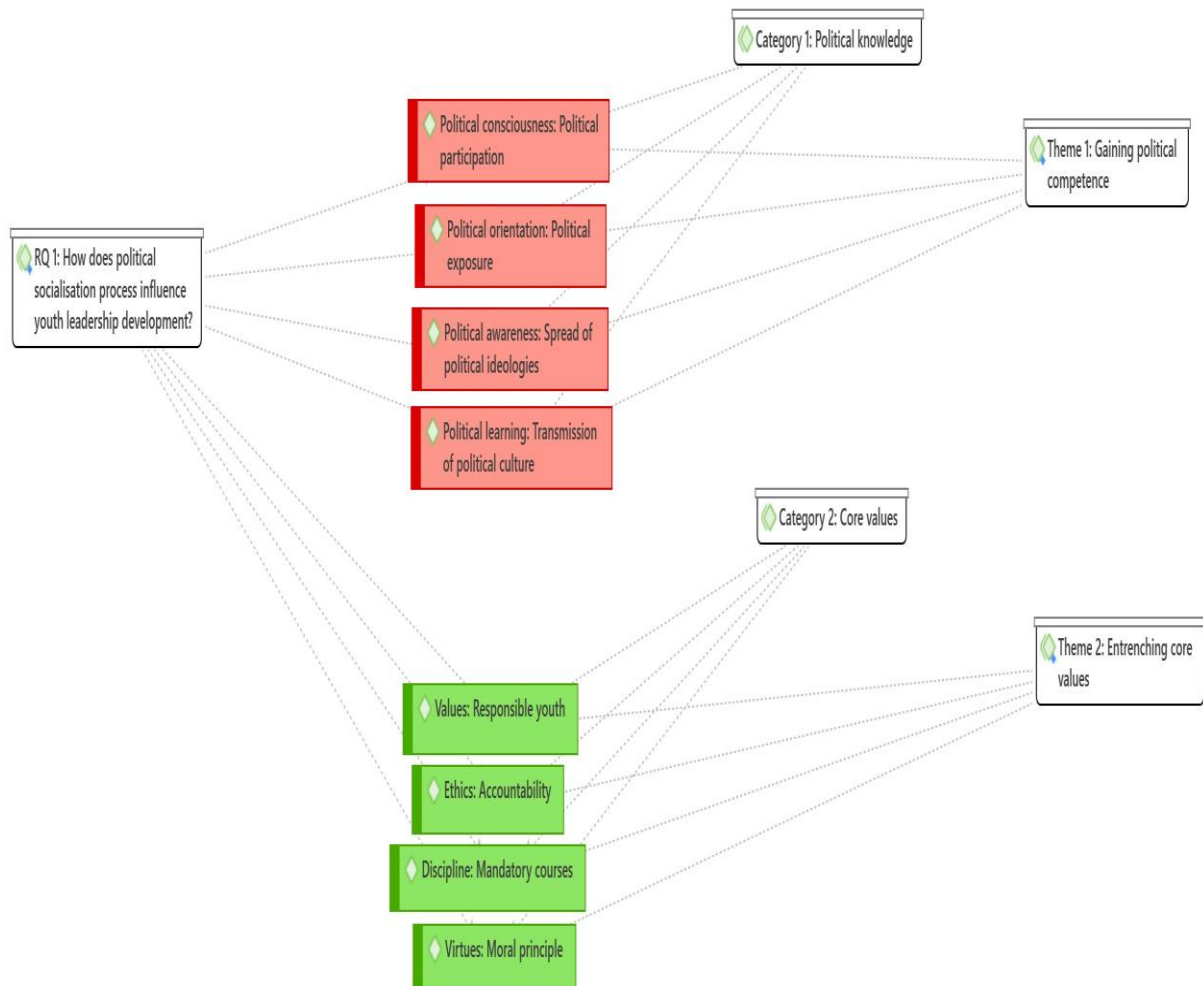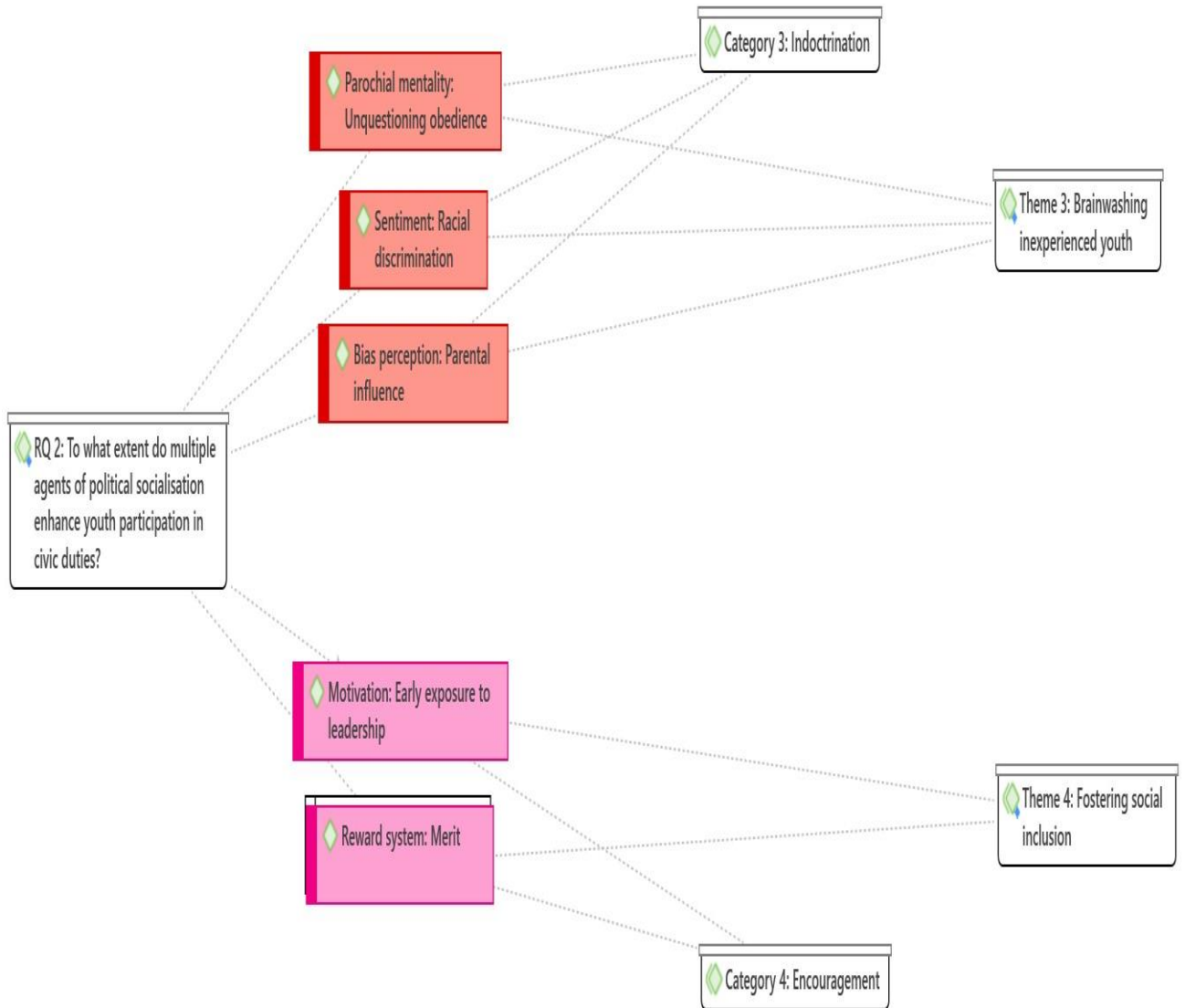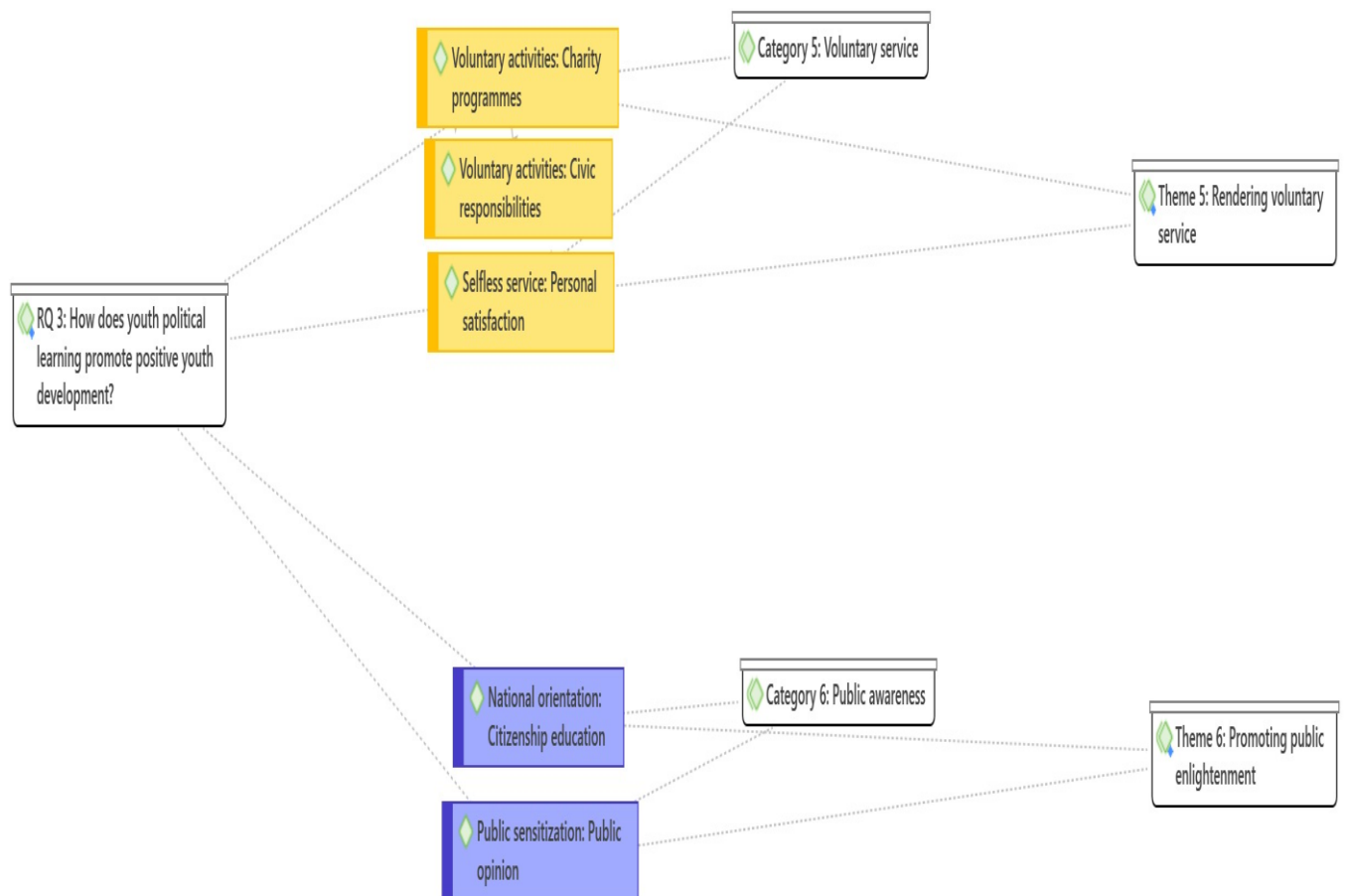
Table 1
Background of respondents

S/N	Participant's ID	Designation	Age
1	SR #1	President	24 years
2	SR #2	Vice-President	23 years
3	SR #3	Secretary	24 years
4	SR #4	Treasurer	23 years
5	SR #5	Spirituality	23 years
6	SR #6	Arts and Culture	21 years
7	SR #7	Academic and Research	22 years
8	SR #8	Welfare and Safety	21 years
9	SR #9	Sports	24 years
10	SR #10	Work	24 years
11	SR #11	Transportation	23 years
12	SR #12	Food Quality	21 years
13	SR #13	Publication	22 years
14	SR #14	Organizational Coordination	23 years
15	SR #15	Entrepreneurship	24 years
16	SR #16	Research	33 years
17	SR #17	Graduate Studies	32 years

Discussion of Findings
This section provides detailed explanation of the responses obtained from the field, and their relevance to political socialization process and youth leadership activities in UPM. Due to their significance, they are categorized into various themes to enable readers have comprehensive understanding of the ideas offered by the research participants in the course of the explorative study.

Theme 1: Gaining political competence

Regardless of their national ideologies, every society strive to develop young citizens intellectually, morally and emotionally through socialization process facilitated by family, schools, religious institutions and mass media. Based on the conviction that politically literate citizens can easily understand public policies, and make useful contributions, young adults are made to get exposed to learning political values right from the households. A young child begins to learn about the values of the society from the family where parents instruct him to be a responsible adult. As one of the respondents commented

> *Political socialization is very important for the young people. It is a learning process that sustains transmission of political culture in the society. From the family, young people have instructions to follow the rules, values and traditions. I was taught to respect elderly people. It makes the young generation to be more knowledgeable and mature about choosing leaders for our country [SR#2].*

Politically active parents discuss governance issues, duties and obligation of citizens which impact on the awareness and disposition of children towards politics. Reflecting on what influenced her interest in political activities, a respondent noted that, *"when I was six, I could remember my parents took me to an open field filled with youth shouting 'Reformation' in support of Anwar Ibrahim. That experience really shaped me into what I am today" [SR#9].* A study conducted by Belay & Tefera (2023) revealed that high parental civic socialization enhanced civic engagement of youth in terms of promoting awareness of their rights.

Interestingly, the advent of information and communication technology improved youth political learning and attendant inclination towards leadership activities in Malaysia. Unfettered access to and use of social media broaden youth political knowledge worldwide. A respondent provided evidence to support this claim

> *"The coming of social media helps students get exposed to raw information which removes bias from the minds of youth… Students used Twitter and Instagram more than any other sites because it makes them awake in critical thinking. The rise of social media usage in Malaysia indicates that youth are prone to influences outside their household. Social media is a crucial tool that makes it convenient to spread ideologies. For example, Khairy Jamaluddin and Syed Saddiq are famous political figures who promote political ideologies on YouTube which impact young people. When you know that sometimes you don't understand the real situation about political trends, these personalities can influence the opinion of people because majority of youth look up to them to make certain claims. Perhaps, a lot of audience will agree with their views. Syed Saddiq used the opportunity of social media to campaign for the decrease in voting age from 21 to 18 years. With good exposure, students know what they need to do or the party to vote for during election"* [SR#6].

Vote 18 was implemented by government to modify age restriction for youth to exercise franchise. *"Undi18 provides a platform for the young generation to exercise leadership responsibilities"* [SR#12]. The policy offers fresh insights into electoral maturity of young individuals as they embark on political sensitization and advocacy on social media sites with a view to incorporating Malaysian youth into the struggle (Weiss, 2022). Gorodova et al (2023) affirmed that digital competence enhances youth political awareness of contemporary political development. The ability to explore different social networking sites to get latest political news inspire young individuals to make political choice. Relatedly, this accounts for the reasons contending candidates in general elections utilize social media platforms to communicate build supports among the electorate (Sahly et al., 2019).

The approval of Vote18 by the Malaysian parliament raises questions and generates debates, especially on matters relating to knowledge, interest, attitude and capability of young people in contemporary Malaysia (Othman et al. 2022; p. 603). Findings indicated that some of the youth possess little knowledge of party structure and appreciation of the socio-economic dynamics of the country. Specifically, *[SR#13]* expressed the view that *"young people have little knowledge about political issues"*. *"If youth lack adequate political knowledge, political party with good manifesto may lose an election"* [SR#14]. This becomes imperative as lack of political awareness has adverse effects on youth engagement in political issues and leadership processes. By implication, it could engender political apathy among young citizens in the future.

To enhance political competence of young adults in the future, some of the respondents expressed their views in the following terms

> *The older generation needs to expose children to political socialization at early age, so they can make rational choice on the party to vote for during election and contribute meaningfully to the society. Young generations should be able to know*

the background of a political aspirant, and the manifesto he has for the country [SR#8].

Government needs to give political awareness to the youth. We have to educate them. We have to prepare the youth to understand the responsibility of becoming a voter. What you do today influences who you are tomorrow. Once youth are involved in earlier stage, they would be much more inclined to be interested to join politics outside of the campus in the future. If youth are interested in politics, there is tendency to become changemakers in the future [SR#5].

Othman et al (2022) substantiated this position that the young voters need to be educated on the importance of their involvement in voting process which might determine government policies in the years to come. This process would improve youth political literacy and enable them exercise their rights with maturity and sense of judgement.

Theme 2: Entrenching core values
Educational institutions constitute a vital medium through which students imbibe philosophical thoughts, political ideas and leadership skills that shape their dispositions towards broader political issues. The UPM curriculum was designed to allow students learn national philosophies, theories and practice of leadership in the society. In support of this development, some of the respondents put it thus

We have courses like Rukun Negaran (National principles) and Kenegara (Statehood) that we are supposed to take. Malaysian Nationhood as well as Malaysian Politics and Society are compulsory subjects for all undergraduates, just as Bahasa Melayu is mandatory for international students [SR#3].

In acknowledgement of the relevance of UPM curriculum to the development of youth leadership skills, a respondent raised the question; *What do the course subjects provide to the youth development programmes? (SR#6)* which elicit appropriate answers thus;

Theatre and Drama teaches you to be patient; prepares you how to assume leadership position; and trains you how to discover talent and potential. Etika Kenegaraan (State Ethics) guides youth to be responsible and responsive when entrusted with positions of authority [SR#6].

Ethics and Civilization inculcates virtues of good conduct and moral discipline in youth. There are some guidelines for students to follow, to ensure quality leadership [SR#7].

Besides, certain youth-driven activities are designed to ingrain core values of discipline, commitment and perseverance in students so that they would adapt to the situations before attaining adulthood.

When you join training session in sports, you have to demonstrate commitment in terms of how you do in your previous training. They expect you to give better performance. This leads to improvement in every individual which develops and

> *promotes co-existence, persistence and patience as well as mental health in oneself (SR#9)*

When higher institutions of learning provide enabling environment for leadership learning, it produces a set of emerging leaders that become socially responsible to the commuity (Komives & Sowcik, 2020; McCarron et al., 2023). Having internalized those cherished values through their academic activities, respondents became committed to apply those principles in the discharge of their leadership responsibilities. As a reminder, some of the respondents stressed that

> *UPM has given us the basic step (start from zero) to climb up the ladder of leadership. To achieve goals, I have to allocate times for studies and leadership. You need to have self-awareness and discipline yourself to be a good leader. I try to wake up early. I don't waste time to plan my activities [SR#1].*

The kind of training received by both undergraduates and postgraduates prepared them for leadership challenges at both micro and macro levels. Noteworthy that student leaders are answerable to designated officers to ensure obedience to rules and regulations of the University, and guidance towards better performance. a respondent affirmed that

> *In UPM, there is Students' Affairs Division. It is the unit responsible for guiding students to become better leaders and managing students' programmes. We have to convey our plans, concerns and financial status to the Unit. It is very helpful to young leaders like me (SR#8)*

Theme 3: Brainwashing inexperienced youth
Quite often, parents cash in on lack of exposure of young members of the family to indoctrinate them on age-long traditions upheld by adults. In some cases, parental socialization shapes the mindset and political behaviour of a number of youth such that they adhere strictly to instructions from elderly members of the family. Some respondents lend credence to this when they note that

> *Youth in Malaysia are affected by bias perception of the family. They agree with their families only on political beliefs. They don't have enough political literacy. Young people just follow the instructions (regarding the party to vote for) from their parents. They are not mentally ready. They have voices from their families and friends telling them that Syed Saddiq is bad. For example, I may not agree with his ideology about how to accommodate nationalities from neighbouring countries in Malaysia so that our economy will develop. However, I agree with his statement that everyone should be given equal chances to vote in elections. He is an idealist. He pursues liberal idea. He stands for equality but majority of Malays are quite conservative. Bias encourages discrimination [SR#11].*

As a result of this tendency, Othman et al (2022; p. 607), posit that false information can engender political apathy as individuals construe electoral process as inconsequential and time-wasting. In their submission, Tyler & Iyengar (2023) posit that parental control reinforced onset of political polarization in childhood which subsequently could limits

potentially democratizing effect of the election (Parreira et al. (2023) in the long run. Indoctrination, in the words of Croce (2019), deprives the youth the capacity to engage in critical thinking and taking independent decisions at the appropriate time. Giving detailed explanation on the competition for political leadership, some of the respondents aver that;

> *Election-related issues were framed on the basis of ethnicity, racism and religion. If you are a Malay, some citizens play narrative that Malay should become the leader. If you are a Chinese, you are bounded to Democratic Action Party and Malaysian Chinese Association. Pakatan Harapan based its campaigns on moral issues while Perikatan Nasional focused on racial issues on the premise that Muslims are being threatened in Malaysia [SR#5].*

Politics based on sentiments is counter-productive to the attainment of nation building owing to adversarial attitudes of political gladiators who prioritize sectional interests above national unity.

Theme 4: Fostering social inclusion
UPM parades systematic mentoring programmes that socializes youth in terms of attaining academic excellence, promoting racial tolerance and leadership training and development. in this regard, respondents agreed that

> *In UPM, students' clubs expose new students to many other clubs (such as sports club, band club and debate club. We see how student leaders of different clubs conduct several activities. Peer groups influence my involvement in youth-driven activities. I influence my friends because I love to do activities that improve my leadership skills. They equally encourage me to join their programmes. If we have gathering, I can give a talk on some kinds of programmes and encourage everyone to join the programmes [SR#17].*

> *A student may invite her roommate to join leadership programme at the Residential circle so that both of them will get the merit. I would just say this leadership activity is good for you, you may join with me. Because of bonding (of being SRC members), she will oblige. I am going to enhance the skills of these future leaders, and develop awareness in students on the importance of contributions to the society [SR#4].*

Young people tend to display what Dolan (2022) described as "sense of attachment and feelings of belongings" when appropriate structures are provided for them to utilize their competence. The willingness to perform leadership tasks informed the submission of a respondent thus

> *Humans are motivated by a lot of incentives such as food and merit system. That's the reason Residential colleges in UPM introduce merit system to motivate the students. If you participate actively, you will receive the merit (that is, 2 marks) which is a requirement for you to stay in the College. This aligns with Iav Pavlov's Operant Conditioning. As student leaders, we should be equipped with the knowledge of Human Psychology in order to attract students to show interests in*

> *youth leadership programmes. We should be able to give them something. We need to think critically to give these students what they want for them to contribute to youth leadership programmes (SR#8).*

Youth leaders have a strong sense of direction, and demonstrate self-confidence which earn them trust from their colleagues. The opinions of the respondents align with Tackett et al. (2022) that some adolescents that demonstrate social sensitivity have tendency to influence the attitudes, behaviours and goals of their friends. Besides, getting social support inspires development of social skills among young citizens (Osmane & Brennan, 2018).

Theme 5: Rendering voluntary service

Gotong Royong and Menggalakkan (voluntary services) engage youth in the process of strengthening relationships with communities to promote societal change. For example, Gotong-royong gives young citizens the chance to provide tangible support to help communities through these programmes. They are positive community-based engagement for youth and the benefits that accrued from such efforts. In these contexts

> *Young people are willing to do voluntary activities as evidenced in righteous deeds. Majority of UPM students love to join civic activities. Sometimes, students know it is important to render voluntary services to less-privileged, but lack the knowledge about how and when to do it. Student leaders have great responsibilities to make sure that UPM students get involved in charity programmes [SR#10].*

> *Voluntary association makes young generation to be more matured and responsible. Gotong-royong promotes harmony and togetherness. We want people to live in a good environment. If you want to help the less privileged, you will be satisfied and those you helped are also satisfied. Once they are satisfied, you are equally satisfied [SR#16].*

The moment youth express willingness to help the communities, they derive personal satisfaction that inspires others to join in the selfless service. Jain et al (2019) argued that enacted social support promotes civic engagement and positive youth development. Osmane et al (2021; p. 184) buttress this position that youth engagement in their communities allows them to build their social support networks.

Theme 6: Promoting Public Enlightenment

Every society committed to bequeathing an enduring legacy to the upcoming generations do not trivialize the idea of socialisation that can be made possible by the mass media and other relevant agencies. It is in this connection that a respondent asserts that;

> *Mass media need to have programmes to educate students so as to let them know about national policies. For example, when we talk about political parties, some youth don't know the history behind it. They don't know how these organisations work, they don't know their agenda, they don't know their manifesto and their plans for the nation [SR#6].*

In a study by Yassen (2022), it was revealed that mass media raise political awareness and shape orientations of youth towards political events. Recently, the traditional media played prominent role in the dissemination of Vote18 among Malaysian youth. Public enlightenment stimulates electoral maturity exhibited by the youth by their conduct and manner of thinking (Othman et al., 2023; p. 80). A respondent put it thus;

> *Politicians know how to provide political orientations to youth. This would enable them have strong purpose, values and appropriate principles to influence other youth. It depends on how political leaders prepare youth to understand the responsibility of making good decisions [SR#11].*

When right decisions are made to enlighten the citizens on the significance of political literacy to dynamics of governance, policy implementation will record appreciable progress.

Conclusion

This paper explored the influence of political socialization process on the leadership development of UPM students. From the study, it was gathered that young people deserve proper education, adequate orientation and training to enable them have awareness of their immediate and external environments. With requisite political knowledge from the various agents of socialization, it is naturally expected that youngsters would behave ethically, act morally and take rational decision without compulsion irrespective of the situation they find themselves.

The responses of the participants confirmed that UPM offers series of educative programmes that encourage students to learn about political ideologies, duties and obligations of citizens to government, and what young people can contribute towards ensuring the maintenance and sustenance of the socio-political milieu. With the right values, student leaders were enthusiastic to make a meaningful impact on leadership programmes and activities.

Deriving from the above, the paper recommends timely inculcation of political education in young citizens, strengthening multiple agents of socialization to perform their functions effectively, training and inclusion of youth in leadership activities, and implementation of public-driven programmes geared towards nation building in the country.

Contribution to The Body of Knowledge

This article discussed the significance of political socialisation in enhancing youth leadership development among UPM students. Different perspectives on political socialization were employed to support the necessity of political orientation for university students with a view to getting them prepared for the challenging leadership situations in future. Even though there exists a vast body of knowledge on youth political socialization and leadership development (Gupta, 2022; Gorodova et al., 2023; Kudrnac, 2015; Tackett et al., 2022), there is need to explore how to make political socialization an integral part of holistic youth leadership development in the universities. Limited research has been conducted on deepening political orientations of undergraduates and postgraduates in higher institutions of learning in Malaysia (Ismail et al., 2021). Deriving from this, the paper adopted an in-depth, semi-structured qualitative interviewing approach to generate data from informants whose knowledge, views, interactions, understandings, and experiences provided useful insights regarding political socialization and youth leadership development in UPM. Adherence to ethical considerations availed the researcher the opportunity to build rapport

and reciprocal relationships with the respondents before, during and after the interviews. Besides, the flexibility and fluidity of the qualitative semi-structured interviews enabled the informants to express freely their feelings and perceptions regarding their engagements, accomplishments and challenges regarding the dynamics of political socialization and youth leadership development in the society.

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Authors' Names and Affiliations
Isau Olagoke Rasheed is a postgraduate student at the Institute for Social Science Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia. Besides, he lectures at the Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo, Nigeria
Ismi Arif Ismail is the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and International), Universiti Putra Malaysia. He has been widely published in scholarly papers in such areas as leadership, youth development, human resource development and extension education
Nurul Afiqah Zulkifly is a Senior Lecturer at the Universiti Putra Malaysia. She specializes in training, development and leadership in the field of human resource development. She has numerous publications in both local and international journals to her credit