IPS Working Papers

MEDIA AND INTERNET USE DURING GENERAL ELECTION 2025

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January 2026

IPS Working Papers No. 70

Institute of Policy Studies

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MEDIA AND INTERNET USE DURING GENERAL ELECTION 2025

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Executive Summary

This report presents findings from the Media and Internet Use During General Election 2025 study conducted by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) and Department of Communications and New Media in the National University of Singapore. It examines voters' media use and trust, social media behaviours, encounters with and attitudes towards AI-manipulated content, and how media use varies across partisanship, voter loyalty and the timing of voting decisions. The study was conducted between 5 May and 20 May 2025, on a nationally representative sample of 2,071 Singapore citizens who were eligible to vote during GE2025.

The study found an increase in media use from GE2020 to GE2025. The most frequently used media were digital formats of Singapore legacy media, followed by television (TV), then Singapore digital-only news sites. Across age groups, youth voters (aged 34 years old and below) used TikTok more frequently while older voters (aged 35 years old and above) used TV more frequently. Across income groups, respondents with no household income used media less frequently than income-earning respondents.

The study also reflected an increase in media trust during GE2025 from GE2020. The top three most trusted media were the digital formats of Singapore legacy media, in the following order: radio stations, newspapers and TV stations. Across age groups, older respondents (aged 60 years old and above) displayed higher levels of trust in personal communication channels as sources of election information compared with younger and middle-aged respondents. Across income groups, respondents with no household income expressed notably low trust across media platforms. Across education levels, respondents with secondary education and below expressed higher trust across most media compared with respondents with secondary education and above.

The study also examined how respondents engaged politically through media. In general, respondents used social media more frequently than traditional party channels to learn about or interact with political parties and candidates. Among social media platforms, YouTube and Social Networking Sites (SNS) were most frequently used. Across age groups, older respondents (aged 60 years old and above) used traditional party channels more frequently than social media platforms for political engagement. Respondents with no household income were the least politically engaged across all platforms. Across education levels, degree holders used YouTube most frequently while non-degree holders used TikTok most frequently for political engagement.

To understand how voters engaged with the election on social media, our study focused on three types of social media use, namely, informational, relational and expressive use. The mean scores for all three social media types increased in GE2025 from GE2015 and GE2020, and the most notable increase was observed was for expressive use. Across age and income groups, informational use was the most frequent type of social media use. In terms of education, respondents with post-secondary education and above accessed social media most for informational use while those with secondary education and below accessed social media most for relational use.

Given that the adoption of generative artificial intelligence (AI) has raised concerns worldwide about its abuse and its threats to information integrity during elections, our study surveyed respondents' encounters with and attitudes towards AI-manipulated content. Majority of respondents reported that they rarely or never encountered AI-manipulated content during GE2025, with only about one-third of them having encountered such content sometimes to very often. When asked about their attitudes towards AI-manipulated content, respondents were cognisant of the risks that AI use posed for information integrity in an election context. For instance, about two-thirds of respondents demonstrated distrust towards online information given the prevalence of "deepfake" technology.

Finally, the study also analysed how media use differed by partisanship, voter loyalty and the timing of voting decisions. Legacy media was used more frequently by both People's Action Party (PAP) voters, opposition voters and loyal voters (voters who voted for the same political party during GE2020 and GE2025). In contrast, swing voters displayed a more balanced use of both types of media. Across all the timing of voting decision, voters generally used legacy media more frequently than non-legacy media.

Overall, this working paper highlights an election information landscape that is increasingly fragmented and segmented across demographic groups. Though digital formats of Singapore legacy media still make up the bulk of respondents' information diets, political communicators will need to remain responsive to developing platform-specific preferences (e.g., youths' growing reliance on TikTok) and adapt their strategies accordingly. The increasing fragmentation of the media landscape, taken together with rising expressive social media use and growing prevalence of AI-manipulated content, underscore the need to strengthen digital literacy, safeguard information integrity and refine political communication strategies for future elections.

MEDIA AND INTERNET USE
DURING GENERAL ELECTION 2025

1. BACKGROUND

Singapore's General Election was held on 3 May 2025, against the backdrop of a shifting media landscape and growing adoption of technologies like artificial intelligence (AI). These developments held implications for how the electorate engaged with political parties, candidates and election issues.

1.1 Fragmentation of the media landscape

Compared to elections in the past, voters were seeking out information using a wider range of platforms, including podcasts and TikTok. Within a span of four years, podcasts and short-form video platform TikTok have gained prominence among Singaporeans (Yeo & Sng, 2025). The increasing popularity was attributed to several factors.

First, podcasts offer politicians a platform to express themselves as individuals beyond the role they hold in office and their official communications, bridging relatability between politicians and voters. Essentially, they allow politicians to showcase their more personal side that is often hidden behind their polished facade. For instance, through the podcast episode released by *The Daily Ketchup* that featured Prime Minister Lawrence Wong as the guest, citizens learned that he practises public speaking by examining past recordings of himself. Such sharing humanised his journey as a politician and increased his relatability to voters (Lim, 2025).

Second, podcasts provide a medium for unfiltered and typically unscripted discourse which is often absent from traditional media. Podcasts have evolved from being merely an alternative to traditional media channels into a platform with its unique function in political communication (Dwivedi & Sen, 2025). Some of the more popular podcast shows in Singapore include *The Daily Ketchup*, *Yah Lah BUT*, *Teh Tarik With Walid*, *Zyrup Media* and *Political Prude*. These podcast outlets share a commonality in terms of their attempts to push boundaries when it comes to discussing issues like the

Income-Allianz saga, Ridout Road saga and income inequality. Audiences of these podcasts have an added platform to hear what different well-known personalities had to say about these issues.

Third, when podcasts are repackaged into shorter videos and shared on popular video-sharing platforms like TikTok and YouTube, they cut through an attention-scarce media environment. For instance, in the lead up to GE2025, podcasts such as *The Daily Ketchup* and *Yah Lah BUT* posted shorter edited clips from their longer full episodes on YouTube.

1.2 Political parties and candidates are more social media savvy

Globally, social media has become an indispensable tool used by political parties and candidates to engage with voters. In Singapore where close to 90 per cent of the population use social media as of early 2025 (Statista, 2025), political parties and candidates have been leveraging various social media platforms to engage with their constituents and voters at large.

During the campaigning period for GE2025 (24 April to 1 May 2025), all the political parties used social media to increase their candidates' visibility and familiarity among voters, especially for candidates fielded for the first time. On 17 April 2025, Prime Minister Lawrence Wong announced that the PAP would field 32 new faces, the highest number of new candidates since GE2011 when 24 new candidates were introduced (CNA, 2025; Yeap & Lau, 2024). On the following day, leader of the Workers' Party (WP), Mr Pritam Singh, introduced four new candidates — Andre Low, Ong Lue Ping, Alexis Dang and Jimmy Tan — at a press conference (Yong & Hamzah, 2025). Besides the new faces contesting under the 11 political parties, two independent candidates, Darryl Lo (a 28-year-old former Trust and Safety associate at a tech company) and Jeremy Tan (a 34-year-old retired business owner), threw their hats into the ring when they contested for the single-member constituencies of Radin Mas and Mountbatten, respectively.

Social media helped to level the playing field and enabled voters to learn more about candidates who might be less well-resourced when it comes to political campaigning.

For instance, Senior Counsel Harpreet Singh, a candidate running with WP, created an Instagram account nearing the election and published his first post on 24 March 2025.

1.3 Traditional media expanding their digital formats

In addition to political parties and candidates adopting a wider range of social media for political communication and voter engagement, traditional media platforms have also adapted the way that they report by adopting new digital formats.

One example is *The Straits Times*, which has been experimenting with multiple new digital formats in its reporting and analysis of current affairs in recent years. They launched a podcast, *The Usual Place*, in April 2024. Ms Indranee Rajah, Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, Second Minister for Finance and Second Minister for National Development, was among the first few political figures to appear on the podcast in September 2024 where she discussed Singapore's total fertility rate. As the election approached, *The Usual Place* featured candidates from PAP and opposition parties as guests to discuss hot button issues.

Meanwhile, Channel News Asia (CNA) has been using TikTok to reach audiences with its short-form news content. For example, during GE2025, CNA (@channelnewsasia) uploaded one-minute snippets featuring candidates' speeches from election rallies. These summary clips provided audiences with quick rundowns of candidates' policy positions.

1.4 Concerns over digitally manipulated content

The widespread adoption of generative AI has raised concerns worldwide about its abuse and its threats to information integrity during elections.

One of the key concerns is the proliferation of election disinformation in the form of AI-generated or manipulated audio. Notable cases include an audio clip of Mexico's head of government appearing to endorse a mayoral candidate, a fabricated recording of US President Joe Biden discouraging voters from voting in the New Hampshire primaries, and an AI-generated message of a Pakistani electoral candidate urging voters to boycott their vote (Adami, 2024). In these instances, perpetrators leveraged AI to mislead voters and manipulate electoral outcomes.

Singapore was not exempt from threats posed by AI. CNA identified 73 AI-generated or manipulated GE-related videos on TikTok between 15 and 19 April 2025. These videos featured Prime Minister Lawrence Wong, various ministers (e.g., Chee Hong Tat) and opposition politicians (e.g., Pritam Singh) dressed in unlikely attire including football uniforms and imperial court robes. The most prominent AI-generated video, uploaded on April 15 by TikTok account @sparkupdate, exceeded two minutes in length and featured an image of Mr Lawrence Wong with a Thai text-to-speech voiceover with the caption “Singapore’s parliament dissolved, paving the way for the general elections” (Tham, 2025).

1.5 Objectives of the study

In light of these developments, this study was guided by the following research questions:

> Research Question 1: What role did media play during GE2025? How did different groups of voters use media during the election?
>
> Research Question 2: What role did different media play in people’s voting behaviour? What media did voters use to engage with political parties and candidates?
>
> Research Question 3: What were voters’ experiences with AI-manipulated content during the election?

2. METHODOLOGY

In this section, we discuss the study methodology and survey questionnaire design, present key demographics of the respondents and categorisation of media types, and explain the data analyses that were conducted.

2.1 Data collection

We engaged IPS Social Lab to conduct an online survey with a sample that was representative of the Singapore population. Hard quotas were applied for age, gender and race. These quotas were set based on national statistics from *Population in Brief 2024* (Prime Minister's Office, 2024). Prior to the launch of the study, we conducted a pilot survey with 50 respondents to test the flow of the entire survey (from seeking consent to completion of the interview); gather feedback on the flow of the questionnaire, phrasing of questions, and response options and translations; and identify potential operational and logistical difficulties.

Data collection for the actual survey was conducted after Polling Day, from 5 May to 20 May 2025. IPS Social Lab disseminated invitation emails to invite prospective respondents to participate in the study. Given that the objective of the study was to determine Singaporean voters' media usage during GE2025, prospective study participants had to fulfil these criteria: they had to be eligible Singapore voters aged 21 years old and above, reside in Singapore and be literate in English, Mandarin or Malay. The survey was administered online, and respondents used either their smartphone or tablet/PC to complete the survey.

The final sample size comprised 2,071 respondents. Upon completion of data collection, IPS Social Lab conducted data validation and screened out 1,142 respondents (17.0 per cent) based on quality checks. In total, 31.0 per cent of the initial dataset was validated. The median time taken by respondents to complete the survey was 18 minutes.

2.2 Profile of respondents

We present the demographic profile of the respondents who participated in the survey in Table 1. The data collected was weighted by interlocking age, gender and ethnicity based on *Population in Brief 2024* (Prime Minister's Office, 2024).

About a quarter (24.0 per cent) of the sample were youths aged 21 to 34 years old. Respondents aged 35 to 59 years old made up slightly less than half of the sample (42.0 per cent). Seniors aged above 60 years old made up about one-third of the respondents (33.9 per cent). Male respondents and female respondents made up 49.0 per cent and 51.0 per cent of the sample, respectively. Chinese respondents made up 75.6 per cent of the sample, followed by Malays (15.1 per cent), Indian (7.6 per cent) and Others (1.7 per cent).

In terms of education, about half of the respondents (50.8 per cent) attained a diploma education or above (i.e., tertiary educated). About two-thirds of the respondents (61.3 per cent) lived in HDB 4-room, 5-room or Executive flats.

The largest group of respondents had a monthly household income of $10,000 and above (10.5 per cent). About two-thirds of the respondents (56.3 per cent) earned a monthly household income of $8,000 or more. Households which earned a monthly household income of below $1,000 formed the smallest group (1.1 per cent).

Table 1: Percentage of respondents by age, gender, ethnicity, education, housing type and income

Demographic of respondents		**Percentage (%) respondents**
Age	21-24 years old	7.0
	25-29 years old	8.0
	30-34 years old	9.0
	35-39 years old	8.0
	40-44 years old	8.0
	45-49 years old	8.0
	50-54 years old	9.0
	55-59 years old	9.0
	60-64 years old	16.0
	65-69 years old	12.0
	70-74 years old	4.2
	75-79 years old	1.5
	80-84 years old	0.1
	85-89 years old	0.1
Gender	Male	49.0
	Female	51.0
Ethnicity	Chinese	75.6
	Malay	15.1
	Indian	7.6
	Others	1.7
Education	Below Primary	2.6
	Primary	2.8
	Lower Secondary	6.7
	Secondary	13.5

	Post-Secondary (i.e., ITE, Junior College, International Baccalaureate)	12.4
	Professional and WSQ Diploma	11.2
	Polytechnic Diploma	13.5
	Degree and above	37.3
	Others	0
Housing type	HDB 1- or 2-room flat	4.4
	HDB 3-room flat	22.2
	HDB 4-room flat	37.6
	HDB 5-room flat or Executive flat	23.7
	Executive condominium, condominium, or other private apartment	8.6
	Landed property	3.5
	Others, please specify	0
Monthly household income	No working person/Retiree households	1.5
	Below $1,000	1.1
	$1,000-$1,999	2.1
	$2,000-$2,999	5.1
	$3,000-$3,999	6.7
	$4,000-$4,999	7.0
	$5,000-$5,999	5.2
	$6,000-$6,999	8.2
	$7,000-$7,999	6.8
	$8,000-$8,999	7.9
	$9,000-$9,999	6.9
	$10,000-$10,999	10.5
	$11,000-$11,999	5.1
	$12,000-$12,999	6.9
	$13,000-$13,999	4.6
	$14,000-$14,999	4.0
	$15,000-$17,499	3.8
	$17,500-$19,999	3.2
	$20,000 & over	3.4

2.3 Survey questionnaire design

In addition to questions on demographics (age, gender, ethnicity, education level, housing type and monthly household income), respondents had to answer questions on the following:

1. Media use for information seeking and sharing (see Section 3.1).

2. Media use for political engagement (see Section 3.3).

3. Social media use (see Section 3.4).

4. Media trust in different sources of election information (see Section 3.2).

5. AI-manipulated content (see Section 3.5).

6. Voting behaviour — When they made up their mind on whom to vote for, whom they voted for in GE2025, whom they voted for in GE2020, whom they identify as (i.e., PAP supporter, opposition supporter or do not support any party) (see Section 3.6).

2.4 Media categorisation

Our study classified existing media into two categories: legacy media and non-legacy media. In our study, legacy media comprised traditional mass media that is characterised by one-way communication. In Singapore, this includes print newspapers (e.g., *The Straits Times*, *Lianhe Zaobao*, and CNA), TV and radio. The digital formats of legacy media (both Singapore and foreign mass media) such as websites, apps and podcasts also fall into this category.

On the other hand, non-legacy media included interactive digital platforms like social media, podcasts, and online forums. Such media allows user-generated content, multi-way communication and user participation. Non-legacy media included digital-only news platforms in Singapore (e.g., *Rice Media, Mothership.sg, The Online Citizen*), podcasts by online content creators (e.g., *Political Prude, Yah Lah BUT, The Daily*

Ketchup), online discussion forums (e.g., Reddit, HardwareZone), and YouTube accounts of individuals or groups (e.g., *Inconvenient Questions, Teh Tarik With Walid, mrbrown, SGAG*). See Table 2 for a list of different media in each category.

Table 2: Media categorisation

No.	Media Type	Media Platforms
1	Legacy Media	1. Print newspapers 2. TV 3. Radio 4. Websites, apps or podcasts of Singapore mass media 5. Websites, apps or podcasts of foreign mass media
2	Non-Legacy Media	1. Websites, apps or podcasts of digital-only news platforms in Singapore 2. Podcasts of online content creators 3. Online discussion forums 4. YouTube accounts of individuals or groups

2.5 Data analyses

The IBM SPSS Statistics software (version 29) was used to analyse the survey data. The following data analyses were conducted and presented in this report:

1. Descriptive statistics to provide quantitative summaries of each variable and to highlight emerging patterns in the data.
2. T-test (independent/paired) and ANOVA to test for significant differences between groups.

3. FINDINGS

This section presents the findings on respondents' media use for information seeking and sharing during the election period, their media trust in different sources of election information, political engagement, social media use, encounters with and attitudes towards AI-manipulated content, and the influence of media use on voter type and voting decision (whom they voted, when they decided whom to vote).

3.1 Media use for information seeking and sharing

To measure respondents' media use for information seeking and sharing during GE2025, we asked them to indicate their frequency of use of 12 media types during the election using a five-point frequency scale (from 1 being "never" to 5 being "several times a day").

The study showed that digital formats of Singapore mass media (e.g., websites, applications or podcasts of *The Straits Times*, *The New Paper*, CNA) were used most frequently by respondents as source of election information, with 49.0 per cent using them at least once a day ($\bar{x}$ = 3.42). TV ranked second (at 43.5 per cent, $\bar{x}$ = 3.18), followed by digital formats of digital-only news platforms in Singapore (e.g., websites, applications or podcasts of *Rice Media*, *Mothership.sg*, *The Online Citizen*, at 39.0 per cent, $\bar{x}$ = 3.11).

The findings from our study are aligned with those of the 2025 Reuters Institute Digital News Report (Newman et al., 2025). According to the report, CNA online was the most used online news source in Singapore (47.0 per cent), followed by *Mothership.sg* (46.0 per cent) and *The Straits Times* online (41.0 per cent). Digital-only news platforms in Singapore like *The Online Citizen* (10.0 per cent) and *The Independent* (8.0 per cent) were used much less frequently. See Figures 1 to 3 for respondents' use of media for information seeking and sharing during GE2025.

Figure 1: Mean scores of media use for information seeking and sharing

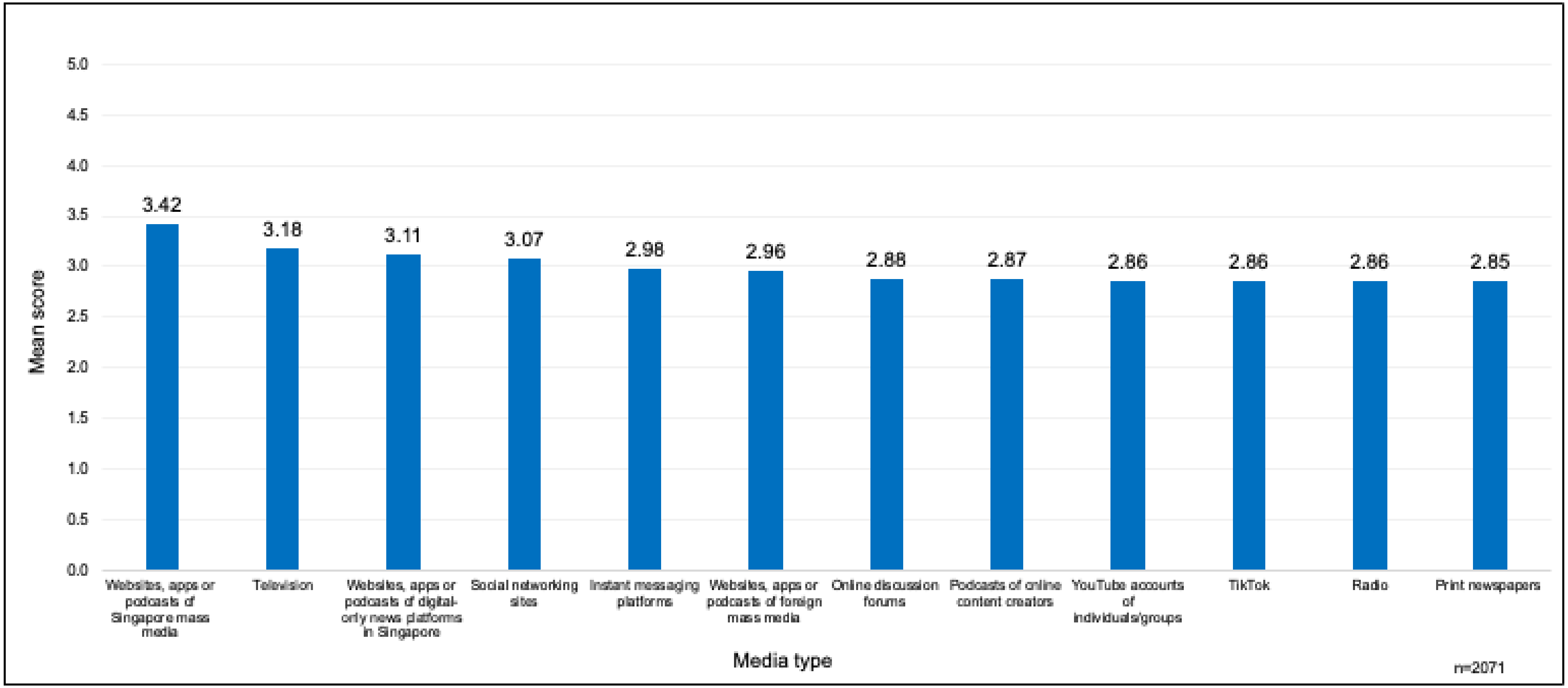


Figure 2: Media use for information seeking (Q20)

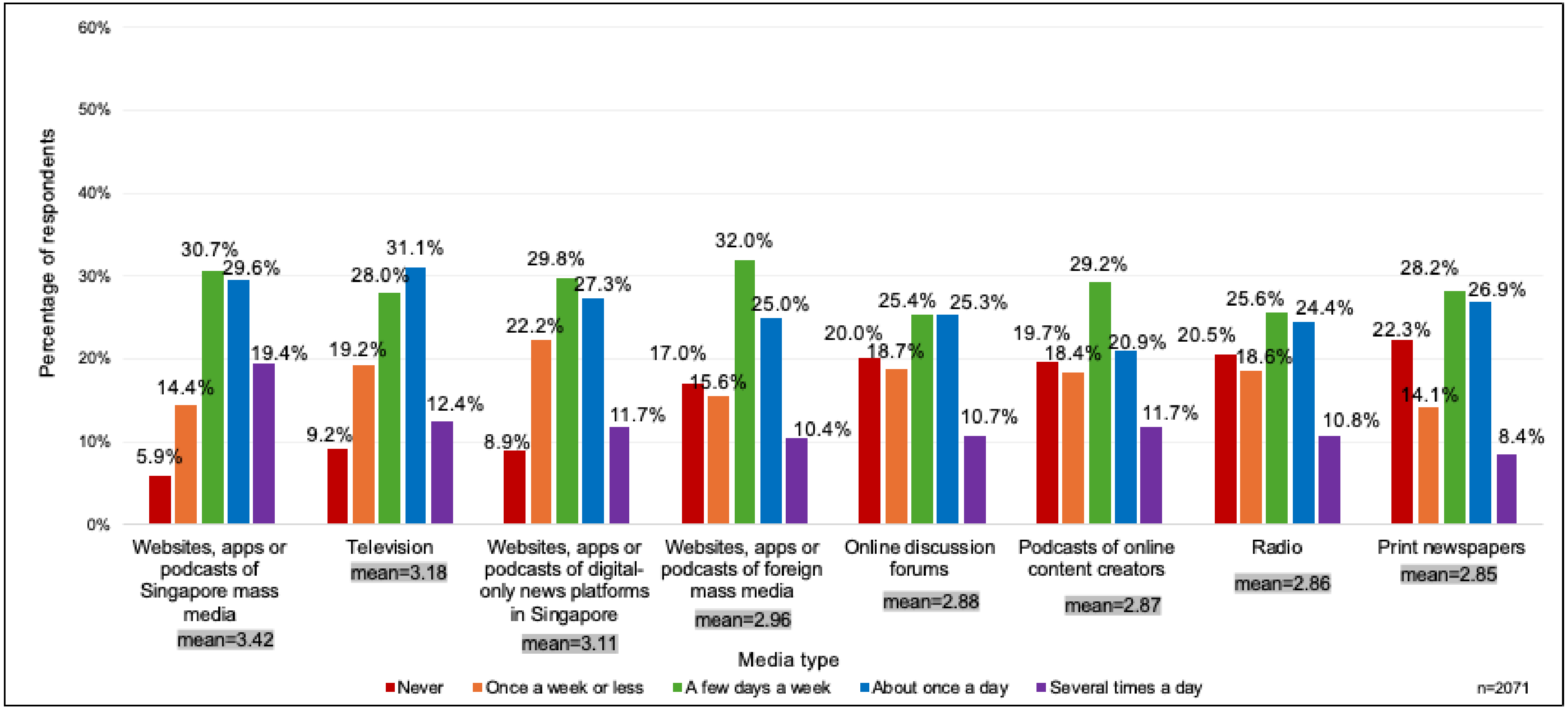
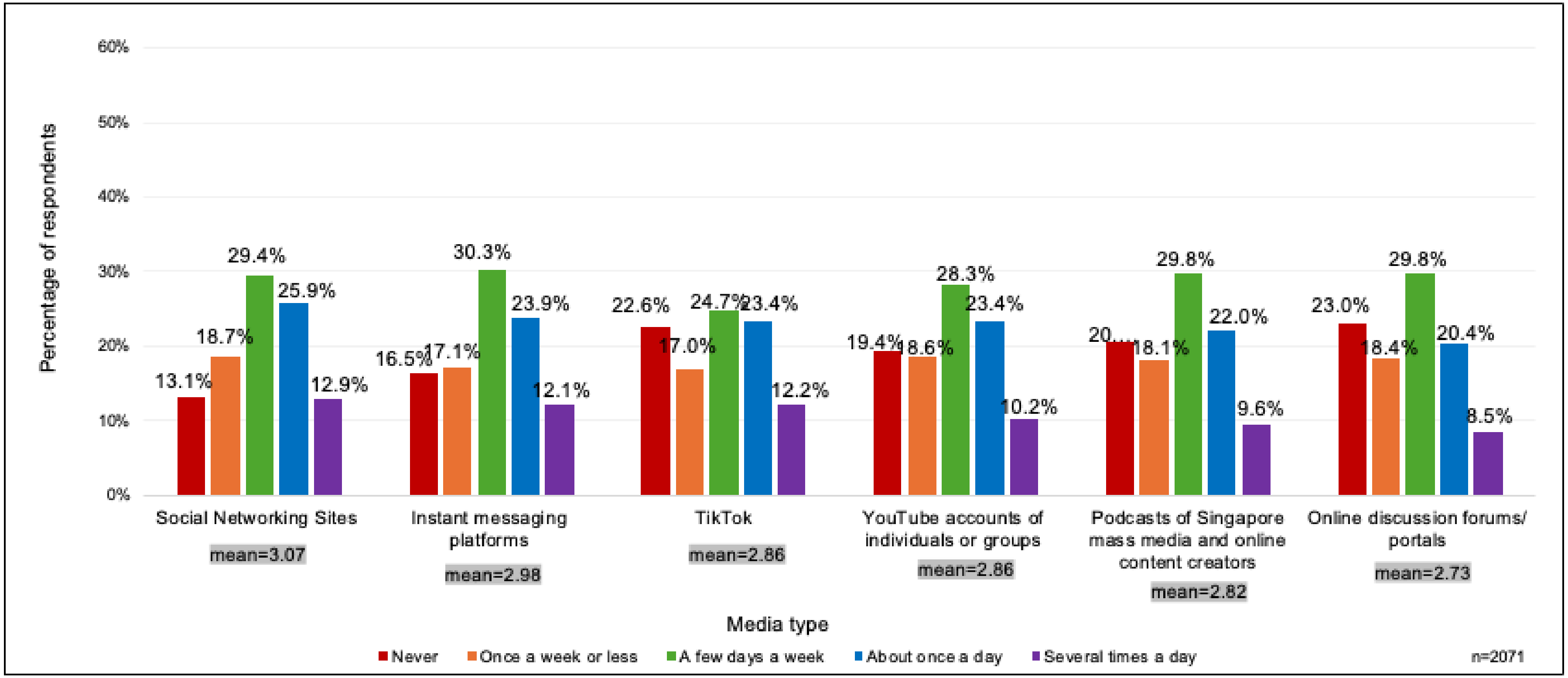


Figure 3: Media use for information seeking and sharing (Q22)



Comparison between media use for GE2020 and GE2025

We compared between media use for GE2020 and media use for GE2025 to reflect the evolving media landscape. Overall, usage of all media increased from GE2020.

The top three most frequently used media platforms were the same for GE2020 and GE2025. Online websites of Singapore mass media was used the most frequently ($\bar{x}$ = 3.17 in GE2020 and $\bar{x}$ = 3.42 in GE2025), followed by TV ($\bar{x}$ = 3.07 in GE2020 and $\bar{x}$ = 3.18 in GE2025), and Singapore online-only news and information websites ($\bar{x}$ = 2.92 in GE2020 and $\bar{x}$ = 3.11 in GE2025).

Our findings suggested that despite notable political engagements through podcasts (e.g., *Yah Lah But*, *The Daily Ketchup*, *Plan B*) in the run-up to GE2025, and many expecting GE2025 to be Singapore's first "podcast election" (Tan, 2025), podcast ranked eighth. This meant that podcast use has not gained traction in Singapore yet, and Singaporeans still rely primarily on traditional forms of media for information seeking. See Figure 4 for comparison between media use for GE2020 and GE2025.

Figure 4: Comparison between media use for GE2020 and GE2025

Media Use for GE2020

1. Online websites of SG mass media (3.17)
2. Television (3.07)
3. SG online-only news and information websites (2.92)
4. Social networking sites (2.84)
5. Instant messaging platforms (2.79)
6. Online websites of foreign mass media (2.43)
7. Print newspapers (2.35)
8. YouTube sites of individuals/groups (2.21)
9. Radio (2.19)
10. *Party and candidate websites (1.94)
11. *Printed party brochures and newsletters (1.87)
12. Online forums (1.81)

** removed options for GE2025*

n=2018

Media Use for GE2025

1. Online websites of SG mass media (3.42)
2. Television (3.18)
3. SG online-only news and information websites (3.11)
4. Social networking sites (3.07)
5. Instant messaging platforms (2.98)
6. Online websites of foreign mass media (2.96)
7. Online forums (2.88)
8. **Podcasts of online content creators (2.87)
9. YouTube accounts of individuals/groups (2.86)
10. **TikTok (2.86)
11. Radio (2.86)
12. Print newspapers (2.85)

*** New items for GE2025*

n=2071

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate mean frequency scores

Media use by age, income and education

We analysed media use to seek information across demographic variables such as age, income and education.

Our study showed that the digital formats of Singapore legacy media were most frequently used across all age groups. The second most frequently used media differed between youth voters (aged 34 years old and below) and adult voters (aged 35 years old and above). For youth voters, TikTok was the second most frequently used media; for adult voters, TV was the second most frequently used media.

Youth voters used TikTok more frequently to seek out election information (41.1 per cent indicated TikTok use of “about once a day” or “several times a day”) compared with adult voters (32.6 per cent for those aged 35 to 59 years old, and 35.6 per cent for those aged 60 years old and above). The findings from our study echo findings from We Are Social’s Digital 2025 report, which showed that the majority of TikTok’s user base was aged 18 to 34 years old (30.7 per cent of TikTok’s advertising audience were aged 18 to 24 years old, and 35.3 per cent were aged 25 to 34 years old) (We Are Social, 2025).

The third most frequently used media differed across the age groups. SNS were the third most frequently used media by those aged 21 to 34 years old (39.3 per cent), while digital formats of online-only news platforms in Singapore were the third most frequently used media by voters aged 35 to 59 years old (42.8 per cent). Voters aged 60 years old and above used online discussion forums third most frequently (39.4 per cent) to seek information on the election and election issues. See Figure 5 for media use to seek information by age group.

Figure 5: Media use to seek information by age group

Media use to seek information (by age group)												
	MEDIA PLATFORMS											
	Websites, apps or podcasts of Singapore mass media	Television	Websites, apps or podcasts of digital-only news platforms in Singapore	Social networking sites	Instant messaging platforms	Websites, apps or podcasts of foreign mass media	Online discussion forums	Podcasts of online content creators	YouTube accounts of individuals / groups	TikTok	Radio	Print newspapers
Overall	49.0%	43.5%	39.0%	38.8%	36.0%	35.4%	36.0%	32.7%	33.6%	35.7%	35.2%	35.3%
21-34 yo	46.5%	36.8%	36.6%	39.3%	35.6%	36.6%	35.1%	28.7%	28.3%	41.1%	23.6%	32.3%
35-59 yo	54.7%	48.6%	42.8%	40.0%	36.2%	35.8%	33.7%	34.5%	36.0%	32.6%	40.0%	36.4%
Above 60 yo	43.8%	41.9%	36.1%	36.9%	36.1%	33.9%	39.4%	33.2%	34.5%	35.6%	37.5%	36.1%

% indicated "About once a day" or "Several times a day"
Green boxes: top three most frequently accessed media platform per age group
n=2071

The digital formats of Singapore legacy media were used most frequently by all income earning groups (48.8 per cent of those earning between $1 and $3,999; 44.3 per cent of those earning between $4,000 and $7,999; and 51.8 per cent of those earning $8,000 and above indicated "about once a day" or "several times a day").

The media which was used second most frequently by income earning groups was TV (46.6 per cent of those earning between $1 and $3,999; 38.4 per cent of those earning between $4,000 and $7,999; and 45.1 per cent of those earning $8,000 and above).

The third most frequently used media differed among income earning groups. Among respondents earning between $1 and $3,999, radio was used third most frequently (42.3 per cent). Among those earning between $4,000 and $7,999, SNS was the third most frequently used (36.4 per cent). Among respondents earning $8,000 and above, the digital formats of digital-only Singapore news sites were the third most frequently used (41.8 per cent).

Lastly, households with no income used all media least frequently compared with other income groups. Among those with no household income, the most frequently used media was TV (46.3 per cent), followed by the digital formats of Singapore legacy media (34.7 per cent), then the digital formats of digital-only Singapore news sites (30.3 per cent). See Figure 6 for media use to seek information by household income.

Figure 6: Media use to seek information by household income

Media use to seek information (by household income)												
	MEDIA PLATFORMS											
	Websites, apps or podcasts of Singapore mass media	Television	Websites, apps or podcasts of digital-only news platforms in Singapore	Social networking sites	Instant messaging platforms	Websites, apps or podcasts of foreign mass media	Online discussion forums	Podcasts of online content creators	YouTube accounts of individuals / groups	TikTok	Radio	Print newspaper
Overall	49.0%	43.5%	39.0%	38.8%	36.0%	35.4%	36.0%	32.7%	33.6%	35.7%	35.2%	35.3%
No household income	34.7%	46.3%	30.3%	27.2%	14.1%	10.5%	11.1%	19.8%	6.7%	13.1%	21.0%	24.7%
$1-$3,999	48.8%	46.6%	37.9%	40.1%	36.9%	36.6%	33.2%	35.5%	36.1%	37.0%	42.3%	35.0%
$4,000-$7,999	44.3%	38.4%	34.4%	36.4%	30.2%	34.0%	31.0%	28.4%	31.2%	34.2%	28.4%	30.9%
$8,000 and above	51.8%	45.1%	41.8%	40.0%	39.2%	36.4%	39.7%	34.3%	34.9%	36.6%	37.1%	37.9%

% indicated "About once a day" or "Several times a day" n=2071
Green boxes: top three most frequently accessed media platform per income group

Across all education groups, the digital formats of Singapore legacy media were most frequently used (41.9 per cent of those with secondary education and below, 49.2 per cent of those with post-secondary education, and 53.6 per cent of those with degree and above indicated "about once a day" or "several times a day"), followed by TV (39.0 per cent of those with secondary education and below, 44.3 per cent of those with post-secondary education, and 45.7 per cent of those with degree and above).

Differences were observed across education levels for the third most frequently used media type. SNS were the third most used platform among respondents with secondary education and below (37.0 per cent) while TikTok was third most frequently used by voters with post-secondary education (42.7 per cent). Respondents with a degree and above used digital formats of online-only news platforms in Singapore third most frequently (40.6 per cent). See Figure 7 for media use to seek information by education level.

Figure 7: Media use to seek information by education level

Media use to seek information (by education level)	MEDIA PLATFORMS											
	Websites, apps or podcasts of Singapore mass media	Television	Websites, apps or podcasts of digital-only news platforms in Singapore	Social networking sites	Instant messaging platforms	Websites, apps or podcasts of foreign mass media	Online discussion forums	Podcasts of online content creators	YouTube accounts of individuals / groups	TikTok	Radio	Print newspaper
Overall	49.0%	43.5%	39.0%	38.8%	36.0%	35.4%	36.0%	32.7%	33.6%	35.7%	35.2%	35.3%
Secondary and below	41.9%	39.0%	34.7%	37.0%	34.1%	34.6%	36.4%	34.4%	34.2%	31.8%	36.0%	32.8%
Post-secondary	49.2%	44.3%	40.4%	41.9%	38.2%	38.9%	37.9%	34.2%	35.5%	42.7%	36.8%	36.4%
Degree and above	53.6%	45.7%	40.6%	36.9%	35.1%	32.4%	33.8%	30.0%	31.4%	31.3%	33.2%	36.1%

% indicated "About once a day" or "Several times a day"
Green boxes: top three most frequently accessed media platform per education level
n=2071

3.2 Media trust in different sources of election information

To assess the level of trust they had in media platforms as sources of election information, we asked respondents to indicate their trust in each platform using a five-point frequency scale (from 1 being "very untrustworthy" to 5 being "very trustworthy").

The digital formats of legacy media (radio, newspapers and TV) were ranked by respondents as the top three most trusted in terms of mean scores sources of election-related information. Singapore radio stations and their websites and social media pages were most trusted by Singapore voters, with 57.0 per cent of them saying that the medium was "trustworthy" or "very trustworthy" ($\bar{x}$ = 3.62). Singapore newspapers and their websites and social media pages were second most trusted (59.0 per cent, $\bar{x}$ = 3.60), followed by Singapore TV stations and their websites and social media pages that were third most trusted (53.1 per cent, $\bar{x}$ = 3.51).

The insights from our study are consistent with those of 2025 Reuters Institute Digital News Report (Newman et al., 2025). The Reuters Institute measured public trust in news brands using a 10-point frequency. According to the Reuters Institute report, Singaporean respondents had higher trust in legacy media as news sources, than in foreign media news sites (e.g., BBC News, CNN) and online-only Singapore news site (e.g., *The Online Citizen*, and *Mustsharenews.com*). See Figures 8 to 10 for respondents' trust in different sources of election information.

Figure 8: Mean scores of trust in different sources of election information

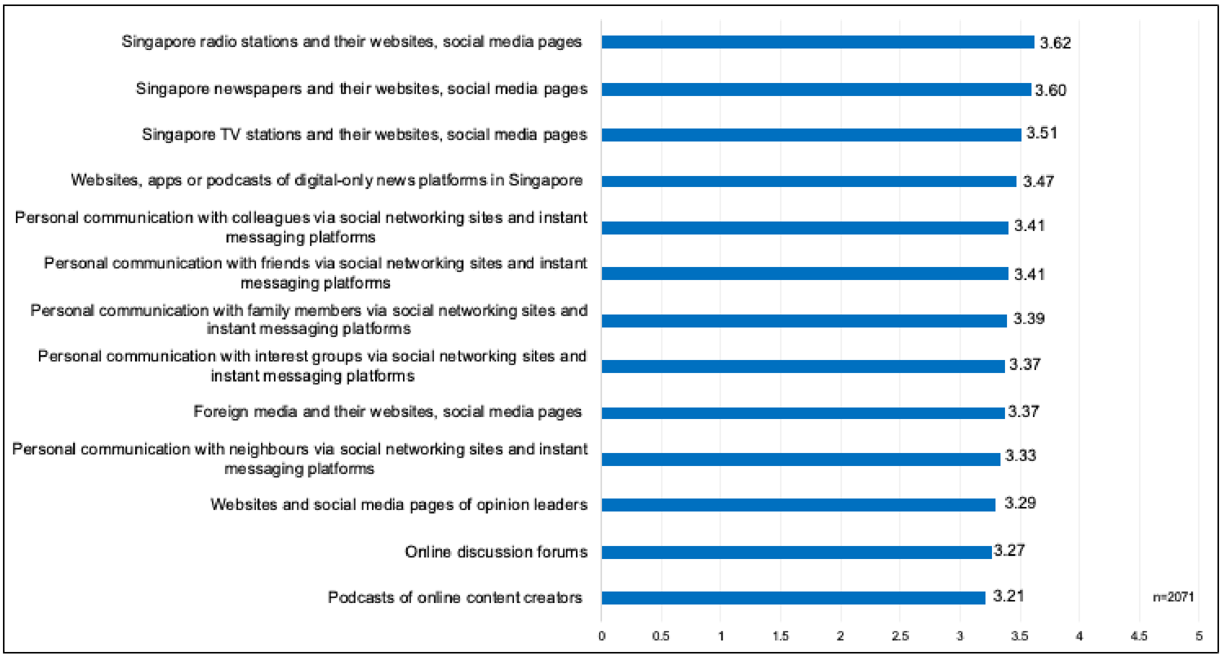


Figure 9: Media trust by media types

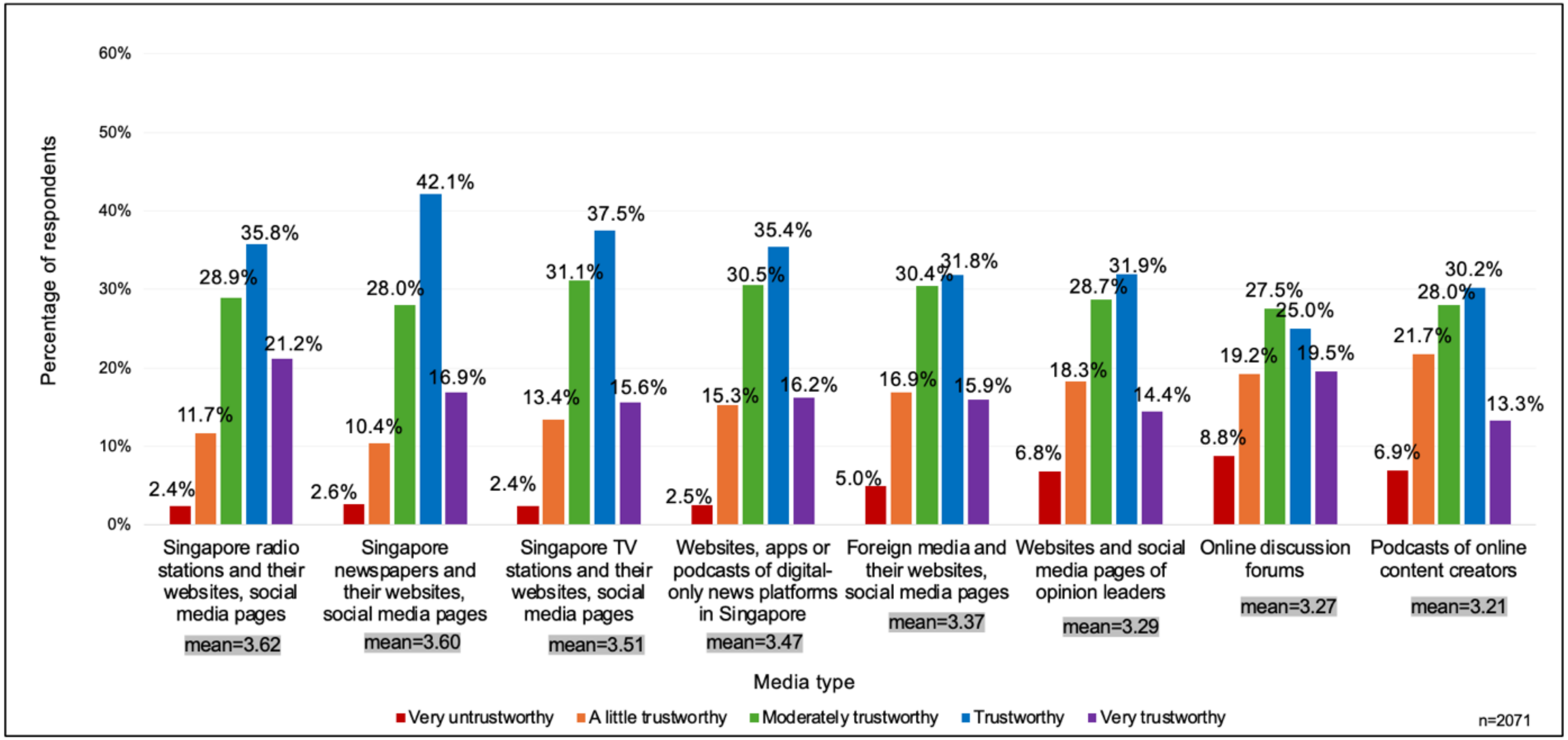
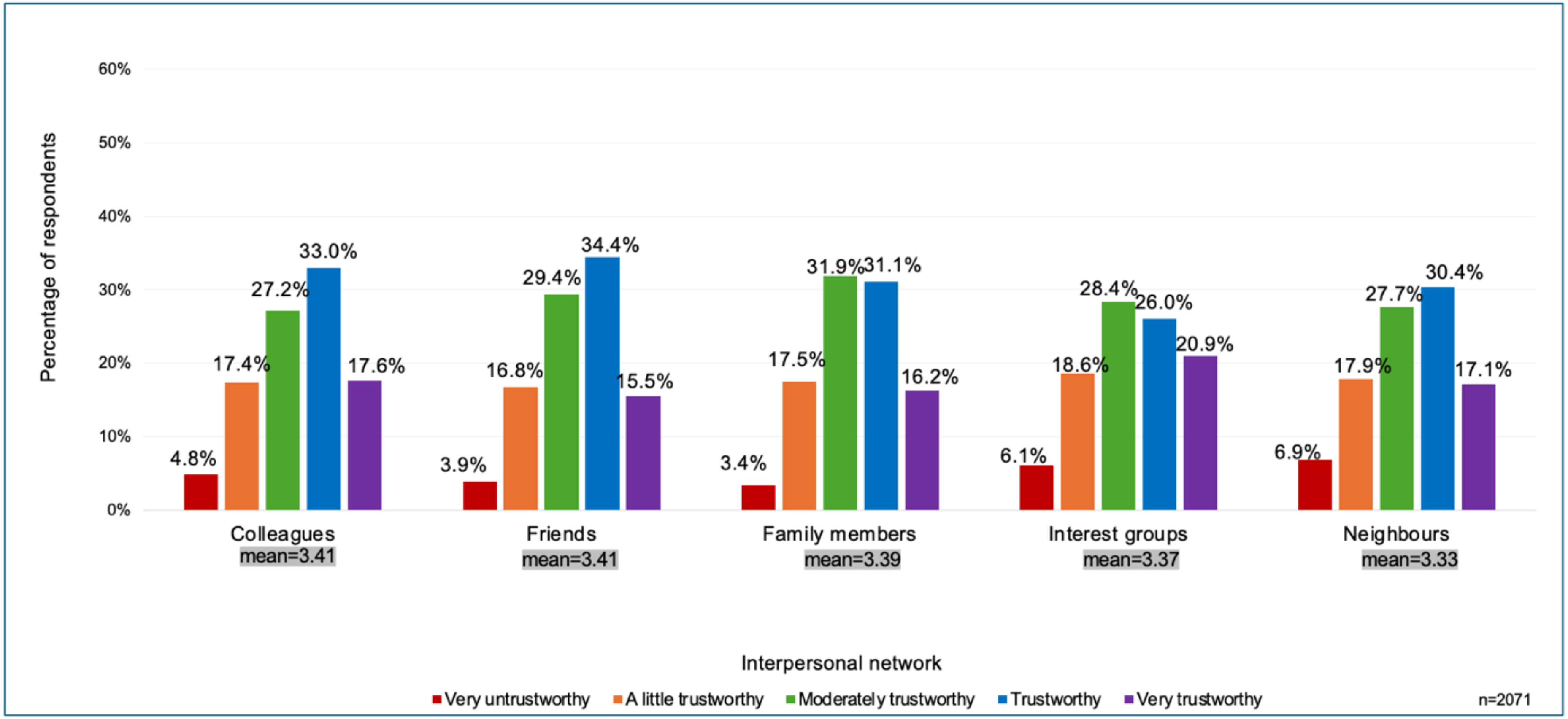


Figure 10: Media trust by interpersonal networks



Comparison between media trust for GE2020 and GE2025

For the GE2025 study, we made three additions to the list of media platforms: 1) the digital formats of digital-only Singapore news sites; 2) online discussion forums; and 3) podcasts of online content creators. Overall, trust in all media and communication channels increased in GE2025 from GE2020, but the top three most trusted platforms differed between GE2020 and GE2025.

For GE2025, the top three most trusted media platforms were the digital formats of Singapore radio stations ($\bar{x}$ = 3.62), followed by the digital formats of Singapore newspapers ($\bar{x}$ = 3.60), and the digital formats of Singapore TV stations ($\bar{x}$ = 3.51). In contrast, for GE2020, the top three most trusted media platforms were the digital formats of Singapore TV stations ($\bar{x}$ = 3.29), followed by personal communication with family members ($\bar{x}$ = 3.26) and the digital formats of Singapore radio stations ($\bar{x}$ = 3.20). See Figure 11 for comparison between media trust for GE2020 and GE2025.

Figure 11: Comparison between media trust for GE2020 and GE2025

Media Trust for GE2020

1. SG TV stations and their websites, social media pages (3.29)
2. Personal communication via IM with family (3.26)
3. SG radio stations and their websites, social media pages (3.20)
4. SG newspapers and their websites, social media pages (3.16)
5. Personal communication via IM with friends (3.08)
6. Foreign mass media, websites, social media pages (3.02)
7. Personal communication via IM with colleagues (2.94)
8. Personal communication via IM with interest groups (2.86)
9. Websites and social media pages of opinion leaders (2.80)
10. Personal communication via IM with neighbours (2.76)

n=2018

Media Trust for GE2025

1. SG radio stations and their websites, social media pages (3.62)
2. SG newspapers and their websites, social media pages (3.60)
3. SG TV stations and their websites, social media pages (3.51)
4. **Websites, apps or podcasts of digital-only news platforms in SG (3.47)
5. Personal communication via SNS and IM with colleagues (3.41)
6. Personal communication via SNS and IM with friends (3.41)
7. Personal communication via SNS and IM with family (3.39)
8. Personal communication via SNS and IM with interest groups (3.37)
9. Foreign mass media, websites and social media pages (3.37)
10. Personal communication via SNS and IM with neighbours (3.33)
11. Websites and social media pages of opinion leaders (3.29)
12. **Online discussion forums (3.27)
13. **Podcasts of online content creators (3.21)

*** New items for GE2025*

n=2071

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate mean frequency scores

Media trust by age, income and education

We analysed media trust in the platforms as sources of election information by age, income and education.

Media trust varied across age groups. Older respondents consistently reported higher levels of trust in personal communication channels as sources of election information compared with younger and middle-aged respondents. This reflected the tendency among older voters to view information as more trustworthy when it comes through socially and physically proximate connections (e.g., colleagues) (Shiroma et al., 2023).

The most trusted media differed between younger and older voters. Across respondents aged 21 to 59 years old, the digital formats of Singapore newspapers were the most trusted media for election information (53.8 per cent of those aged 21 to 34 years old, and 61.0 per cent of those aged 35 to 59 years old indicated "trustworthy" or "very trustworthy"). On the other hand, among respondents aged 60 and above, the most trusted media was personal communication with colleagues via SNS and instant messaging platforms (62.2 per cent).

The second most trusted media, consistent across all three age groups, were the digital formats of Singapore radio stations (51.7 per cent of those aged 21 to 34 years old; 56.8 per cent of those aged 35 to 59 years old; and 61.0 per cent of those aged 60 and above). Among respondents aged 35 to 59 years old, trust in the digital formats of Singapore TV stations were the same as in the digital formats of Singapore radio stations (56.8 per cent), resulting in both being the second most trusted media.

The third most trusted media differed across all age groups. Among youth voters aged 21 to 34 years old, personal communication with friends via SNS and instant messaging was the third most trusted (48.8 per cent). For middle-aged respondents aged 35 to 59 years old, the digital formats of digital-only Singapore news sites were their third most trusted media (49.3 per cent). Among those aged 60 and above, the digital formats of Singapore newspapers were the third most trusted (60.3 per cent). See Figure 12 for media trust by age group.

Figure 12: Media trust by age group

Media trust (by age group)	MEDIA PLATFORMS												
	Singapore radio stations and their websites, social media pages	Singapore newspapers and their websites, social media pages	Singapore TV stations and their websites, social media pages	Websites, apps or podcasts of digital-only news platforms in Singapore	Personal communication via SNS/IM with colleagues	Personal communication via SNS/IM with friends	Personal communication via SNS/IM with family	Personal communication via SNS/IM with interest groups	Foreign media and their websites, social media pages	Personal communication via SNS/IM with neighbours	Websites and social media pages of opinion leaders	Online discussion forums	Podcasts of online content creators
Overall	57.0%	59.0%	53.1%	51.6%	50.6%	49.9%	47.3%	46.9%	47.7%	47.5%	46.3%	44.5%	43.4%
21-34 yo	51.7%	53.8%	47.4%	46.5%	45.3%	48.8%	43.2%	39.5%	42.9%	41.7%	44.9%	39.9%	37.8%
35-59 yo	56.8%	61.0%	56.8%	49.3%	44.2%	45.2%	44.2%	43.0%	43.0%	42.6%	42.4%	39.4%	39.9%
Above 60 yo	61.0%	60.3%	52.6%	58.1%	62.2%	56.4%	53.9%	56.8%	56.8%	57.7%	52.0%	54.2%	51.8%

% indicated "Trustworthy" or "Very trustworthy" n=2071

Green boxes: top three most trusted media platforms per age group

Media trust also differed across income groups. A consistent pattern was observed, where respondents with no household income expressed notably low trust across most media, with the exception of the digital formats of Singapore radio stations, newspapers and TV stations. For example, only 6.8 per cent of those with no household income indicated that personal communication with interest groups or neighbours via SNS and instant messaging were "trustworthy" or "very trustworthy". This aligns with findings in Section 3.1 showing that respondents with no household income also report notably low levels of media use.

Across almost all income groups, the most trusted media were the digital formats of Singapore newspapers (66.1 per cent of those with no household income; 57.4 per cent of those earning between $4,000 and $7,999; and 59.0 per cent of those earning $8,000 and above indicated "trustworthy" or "very trustworthy"). The exception was respondents earning between $1 and $3,999 who trusted the digital formats of Singapore radio stations the most (65.2 per cent).

The second most trusted media differed across income groups. Among respondents with no household income, the digital formats of Singapore TV stations were second most trusted (61.8 per cent). Among those earning between $1 and $3,999, the digital formats of Singapore newspapers were second most trusted (61.3 per cent). Among respondents earning between $4,000 and $7,999, and $8,000 and above, the digital formats of Singapore radio stations were second most trusted (54.9 per cent and 55.9 per cent, respectively).

The third most trusted media also varied across income groups. Among respondents with no household income, the digital formats of Singapore radio stations were third most trusted (56.3 per cent). For respondents earning between $1 and $3,999, the digital formats of Singapore TV stations were third most trusted (57.2 per cent), similarly for those earning $8,000 and above (54.8 per cent). For middle-income earners earning between $4,000 and $7,999, the digital formats of digital-only Singapore news sites to be their third most trusted (49.4 per cent). See Figure 13 for media trust by income group.

Figure 13: Media trust by income group

Media trust (by household income)

MEDIA PLATFORMS

	Singapore radio stations and their websites, social media pages	Singapore newspapers and their websites, social media pages	Singapore TV stations and their websites, social media pages	Websites, apps or podcasts of digital-only news platforms in Singapore	Personal communication via SNS/IM with colleagues	Personal communication via SNS/IM with friends	Personal communication via SNS/IM with family	Personal communication via SNS/IM with interest groups	Foreign media and their websites, social media pages	Personal communication via SNS/IM with neighbours	Websites and social media pages of opinion leaders	Online discussion forums	Podcasts of online content creators
Overall	57.0%	59.0%	53.1%	51.6%	50.6%	49.9%	47.3%	46.9%	47.7%	47.5%	46.3%	44.5%	43.4%
No household income	56.3%	66.1%	61.8%	24.1%	17.3%	19.7%	30.7%	6.8%	14.7%	6.8%	17.0%	11.0%	9.7%
$1-$3,999	65.2%	61.3%	57.2%	56.1%	48.8%	52.6%	48.2%	46.6%	50.0%	49.0%	49.2%	46.3%	44.3%
$4,000-$7,999	54.9%	57.4%	47.0%	49.4%	47.4%	48.7%	42.7%	43.1%	45.5%	45.2%	45.4%	42.5%	39.9%
$8,000 and above	55.9%	59.0%	54.8%	52.2%	53.5%	50.6%	49.7%	49.8%	49.0%	49.4%	46.7%	45.9%	45.8%

% indicated "Trustworthy" or "Very trustworthy"
Green boxes: top three most trusted media platforms per income group
n=2071

Media trust differed across education levels. Respondents with secondary education and below generally expressed higher trust across most media compared with those from the other two education categories.

The most trusted media differed between respondents with secondary education and below and those with secondary education and above. Respondents with secondary education and above trusted the digital formats of Singapore newspapers the most (59.7 per cent of those with post-secondary education and 56.2 per cent of those with a degree and above indicated "trustworthy" or "very trustworthy"). Those with secondary education and below trusted the digital formats of Singapore radio stations the most (64.1 per cent).

The second most trusted media differed across education levels. Among respondents with secondary education and below, personal communication with colleagues was the second most trusted (63.5 per cent). For those with post-secondary education, the digital formats of Singapore radio stations were the second most trusted (55.1 per cent). Those with a degree and above reported the digital formats of Singapore TV stations to be the second most trusted (54.8 per cent).

The third most trusted media also differed across education levels. Among respondents with secondary education and below, the digital formats of Singapore newspapers were third most trusted (62.1 per cent). For those with post-secondary education, the digital formats of digital-only Singapore news sites were third most trusted (54.2 per cent). Among respondents with a degree and above, the digital formats of Singapore radio stations were the third most trusted (54.0 per cent). See Figure 14 for media trust by education level.

Figure 14: Media trust by education level

Media trust (by education level)

MEDIA PLATFORMS

	Singapore radio stations and their websites, social media pages	Singapore newspapers and their websites, social media pages	Singapore TV stations and their websites, social media pages	Websites, apps or podcasts of digital-only news platforms in Singapore	Personal communication via SNS/IM with colleagues	Personal communication via SNS/IM with friends	Personal communication via SNS/IM with family	Personal communication via SNS/IM with interest groups	Foreign media and their websites, social media pages	Personal communication via SNS/IM with neighbours	Websites and social media pages of opinion leaders	Online discussion forums	Podcasts of online content creators
Overall	57.0%	59.0%	53.1%	51.6%	50.6%	49.9%	47.3%	46.9%	47.7%	47.5%	46.3%	44.5%	43.4%
Secondary and below	64.1%	62.1%	57.3%	60.9%	63.5%	59.8%	58.0%	58.0%	57.7%	60.9%	57.4%	56.9%	53.3%
Post-secondary	55.1%	59.7%	48.5%	54.2%	51.4%	50.7%	46.2%	45.9%	47.2%	47.4%	45.3%	44.0%	45.0%
Degree and above	54.0%	56.2%	54.8%	42.7%	40.9%	42.2%	40.9%	40.1%	41.2%	38.4%	39.5%	36.5%	35.1%

% indicated "Trustworthy" or "Very trustworthy" n=2071

Green boxes: top three most trusted media platforms per education level

3.3 Political engagement

To measure respondents' political engagement, we asked them to report their use of 10 media types to learn about or interact with political candidates or parties using a five-point frequency scale (from 1 being "never" to 5 being "several times a day"). The question assessed engagement through both social media platforms (i.e., SNS, YouTube, TikTok, podcasts and instant messaging platforms) and traditional party channels (i.e., email, online meeting platforms, political parties and candidates TV and radio broadcasts, websites and newsletters).

Our findings revealed that respondents used social media more frequently than traditional party channels to learn about or interact with political parties and candidates. The media used most frequently were social media platforms, namely, YouTube (40.9 per cent indicated "about once a day" or "several times a day", $\bar{x}$ = 3.19), SNS (39.9 per cent, $\bar{x}$ = 3.19), instant messaging platforms (37.3 per cent, $\bar{x}$ = 3.08), TikTok (37.9 per cent, $\bar{x}$ = 2.94), and podcasts of Singapore mass media and online content creators (33.9 per cent, $\bar{x}$ = 2.92). In comparison, traditional party channels were used less frequently (e.g., only 29.0. per cent of respondents used printed or electronic party brochures and newsletters "about once a day" or "several times a day", $\bar{x}$ = 2.78).

Among social media platforms, YouTube and SNS were the most frequently used ($\bar{x}$ = 3.19). One reason for the reliance on social media platforms may be the significant online presence established by both the incumbent and opposition parties during GE2020 when pandemic restrictions constrained in-person campaigning (Ewe, 2025). For YouTube, its prominence as a political channel reflects its earlier evolution into a space for political communication. Lin (2015) noted that bloggers had already begun using YouTube during the 2006 elections to circulate videos of opposition parties' rally speeches. See Figures 15 and 16 for respondents' use of media types to learn about or interact with political parties and candidates.

Figure 15: Mean scores of media use for political engagement

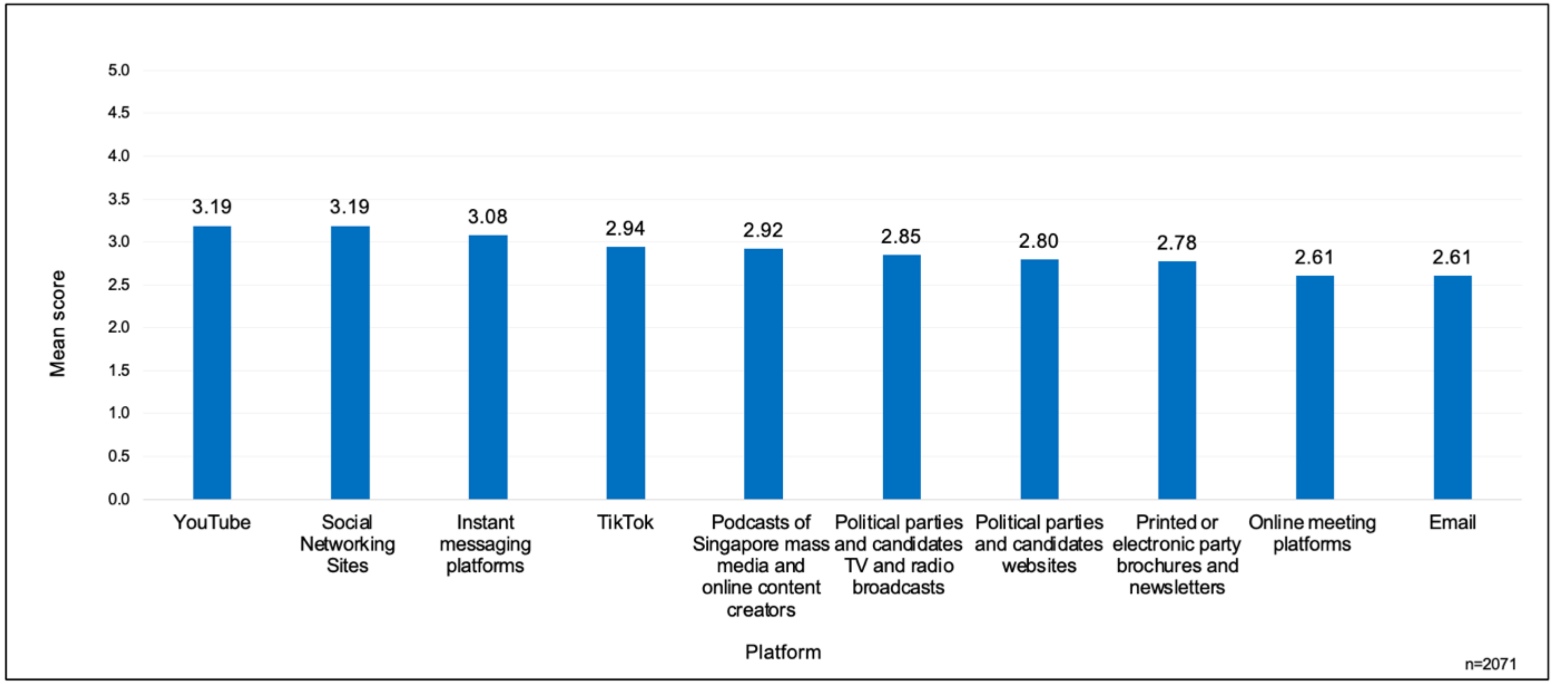
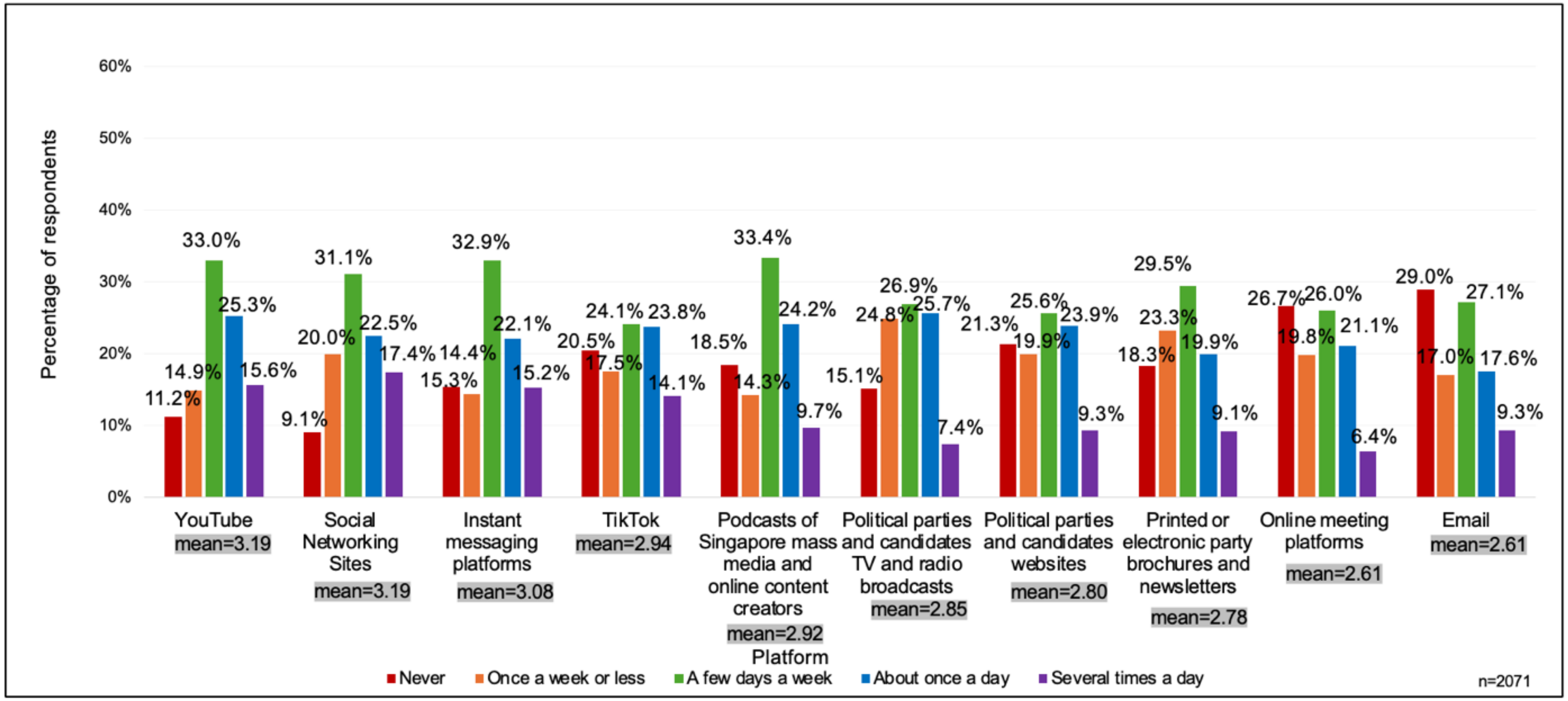


Figure 16: Media use for political engagement



Media use for political engagement by age, income and education

We examined media use for political engagement by key demographic variables, namely, age, income and education.

Media use for political engagement differed across age groups. Older respondents (aged 60 and above) used traditional party channels more frequently than social media platforms for political engagement. Their most frequently used media was political parties and candidates websites (38.2 per cent indicated “about once a day” or “several times a day”), followed by YouTube (37.7 per cent), then SNS (37.6 per cent).

In contrast, younger respondents (aged 21 to 59 years old) used social media platforms more frequently than traditional party channels. Among both younger age groups, YouTube was used most frequently (40.7 per cent of those aged 21 to 34 years old and 43.5 per cent of those aged 35 to 59 years old), followed by SNS (38.5 per cent and 42.5 per cent, respectively), then instant messaging platforms (35.5 per cent and 40.1 per cent, respectively). Additionally, among respondents aged 21 to 34 years old, TikTok was used as frequently as YouTube (40.7 per cent). See Figure 17 for media use to learn about or interact with political candidates and parties by age group.

Figure 17: Media use for political engagement by age group

Media use to for political engagement (by age group)										
	MEDIA PLATFORMS									
	YouTube	Social networking sites	Instant messaging platforms	TikTok	Podcasts of Singapore mass media and online content creators	Political parties and candidates TV and radio broadcasts	Political parties and candidates websites	Printed or electronic party brochures and newsletters	Online meeting platforms	Email
Overall	40.9%	39.9%	37.3%	37.9%	33.8%	33.1%	33.2%	29.0%	27.5%	26.9%
21-34 yo	40.7%	38.5%	35.5%	40.7%	31.6%	27.1%	27.7%	28.5%	24.0%	24.8%
35-59 yo	43.5%	42.5%	40.1%	37.3%	34.6%	33.6%	32.3%	26.5%	27.4%	26.4%
60 yo and above	37.7%	37.6%	35.3%	36.8%	34.4%	36.6%	38.2%	32.4%	30.1%	28.9%

% indicated "About once a day" or "Several times a day"
Green boxes: top three most frequently accessed media platform per age group
n=2071

Media use for political engagement varied across income groups. A broad observation was that respondents with no household income were the least politically engaged across all platforms.

The most frequently used media differed across income groups. For respondents with no household income, instant messaging platforms were used most frequently (20.3 per cent indicated "about once a day" or "several times a day"). Among respondents earning between $1 and $3,999, SNS was used most frequently (43.6 per cent). For respondents earning $4,000 and above, YouTube was the most frequently used (39.9 per cent of those earning between $4,000 and $7,999 and 42.3 per cent of those earning $8,000 and above).

The second most frequently used media also varied across income groups. Among respondents with no household income and those earning $8,000 and above, SNS was used second most frequently (17.2 per cent and 42.1 per cent, respectively). Among middle-income earners (respondents earning between $1 and $3,999, and $4,000 and $7,999), TikTok was used second most frequently (42.4 per cent and 35.6 per cent, respectively).

The third most frequently used media also differed across income groups. For respondents with no household income, YouTube was used third most frequently (16.5

per cent). Among middle-income earners (respondents earning between $1 and $3,999, and between $4,000 and $7,999), instant messaging platforms were used third most frequently (40.1 per cent and 34.8 per cent, respectively). For respondents earning $8,000 and above, TikTok was used third most frequently (38.6 per cent). See Figure 18 for respondents' media use to learn about or interact with political candidates and parties by income group.

Figure 18: Media use for political engagement by income group

Media use to for political engagement (by household income)

MEDIA PLATFORMS

	YouTube	Social networking sites	Instant messaging platforms	TikTok	Podcasts of Singapore mass media and online content creators	Political parties and candidates TV and radio broadcasts	Political parties and candidates websites	Printed or electronic party brochures and newsletters	Online meeting platforms	Email
Overall	40.9%	39.9%	37.3%	37.9%	33.8%	33.1%	33.2%	29.0%	27.5%	26.9%
No household income	16.5%	17.2%	20.3%	10.0%	10.4%	11.0%	11.0%	7.3%	3.0%	0.0%
$1-$3,999	39.8%	43.6%	40.1%	42.4%	33.8%	35.5%	36.3%	30.9%	26.1%	32.4%
$4,000-$7,999	39.9%	34.5%	34.8%	35.6%	31.6%	27.0%	30.1%	24.1%	24.2%	23.2%
$8,000 and above	42.3%	42.1%	38.3%	38.6%	35.6%	36.0%	34.5%	31.5%	30.2%	27.9%

% indicated "About once a day" or "Several times a day"

n=2071

Green boxes: top three most frequently accessed media platform per income group

Media use for political engagement differed across education levels. The most frequently used media differed between degree holders and non-degree holders. The most frequently used media by degree holders was YouTube (44.0 per cent indicated "about once a day" and "several times a day"), whereas non-degree holders used TikTok most frequently (36.3 per cent of those with secondary education and below, and 42.9 per cent of those with post-secondary education).

The second most frequently used media was the same across education levels. Among all education groups, respondents used SNS second most frequently (35.7 per cent of those with secondary education and below, 41.6 per cent of those with post-secondary education, and 41.0 per cent of those with degree and above).

The third most frequently used media also differed between degree holders and non-degree holders. The third most frequently used media by degree holders was instant messaging platforms (37.4 per cent) whereas non-degree holders used YouTube third most frequently (35.6 per cent of those with secondary education and below, and 41.3 per cent of those with post-secondary education). See Figure 19 for media use to learn about or interact with political candidates and parties by education level.

Figure 19: Media use for political engagement by education level

Media use to for political engagement (by education level)										
	MEDIA PLATFORMS									
	YouTube	Social networking sites	Instant messaging platforms	TikTok	Podcasts of Singapore mass media and online content creators	Political parties and candidates TV and radio broadcasts	Political parties and candidates websites	Printed or electronic party brochures and newsletters	Online meeting platforms	Email
Overall	40.9%	39.9%	37.3%	37.9%	33.8%	33.1%	33.2%	29.0%	27.5%	26.9%
Secondary and below	35.6%	35.7%	33.7%	36.3%	33.5%	34.2%	36.5%	31.1%	30.9%	26.6%
Post-secondary	41.3%	41.6%	39.7%	42.9%	36.7%	34.7%	36.5%	31.0%	27.8%	29.4%
Degree and above	44.0%	41.0%	37.4%	34.0%	31.2%	30.8%	27.8%	25.6%	24.8%	24.5%

% indicated "About once a day" or "Several times a day"
Green boxes: top three most frequently accessed media platform per education level
n=2071

3.4 Social media use

Skoric et al. (2015) listed five types of social media use, namely, informational, relational, expressive, identity building and entertainment. Our study focused on the first three types of social media use informational, relational and expressive use — given the positive effects that these three types of social media use have on political and civic participation (Pang & Woo, 2022).

To measure expressive engagement, we asked respondents to report their use of six social media platforms to express their opinions on a five-point frequency scale (from 1 being "never" to 5 being "several times a day").

For informational engagement, we asked respondents to indicate their use of six social media platforms to seek and share information about the election on a five-point frequency scale (from 1 being "never" to 5 being "several times a day").

To examine relational engagement, we asked respondents to report their use of six social media platforms to follow or connect to someone on a five-point frequency scale (from 1 being “never” to 5 being “several times a day”).

Comparison between social media use for GE2015, GE2020 and GE2025

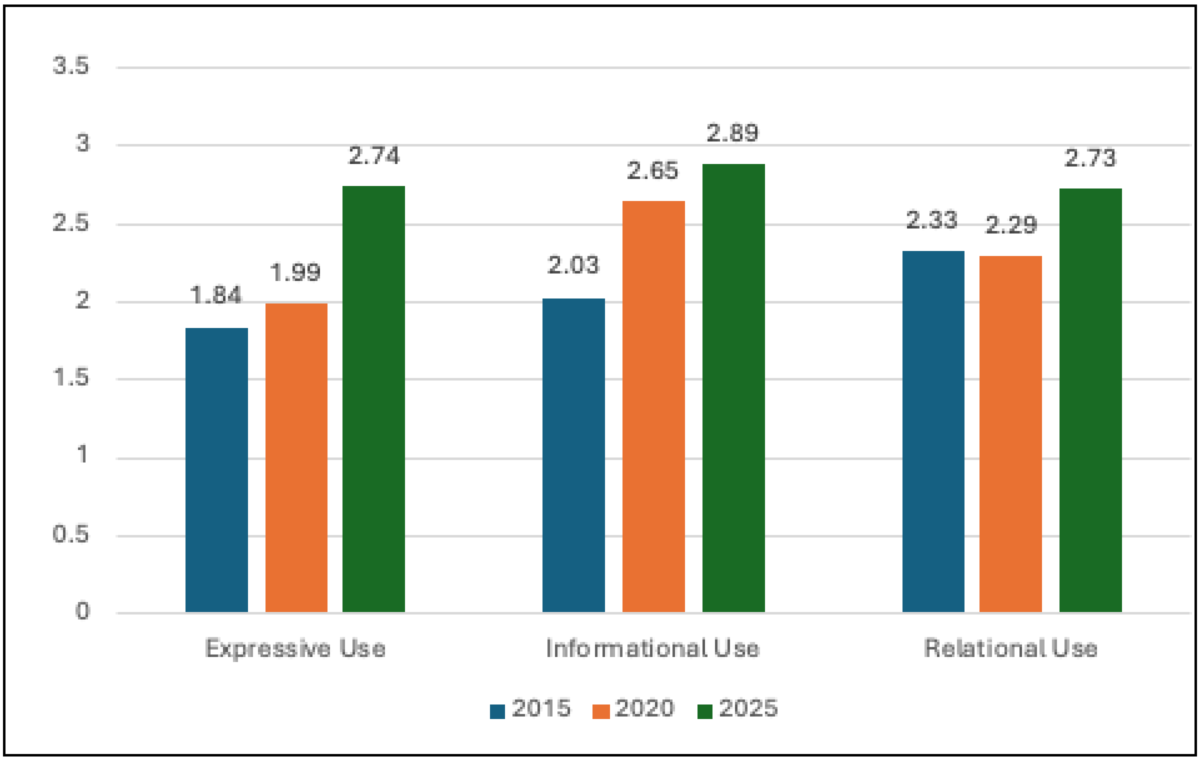
We then aggregated the mean scores across the six social media platforms for each type of use (informational, relational, and expressive) to obtain an overall mean score for each category.

We compared social media use across GE2015, GE2020 and GE2025. Overall, mean scores for all three types of social media use increased. The most notable increase was observed in expressive use, which increased by 0.75 points, from $\bar{x}$ = 1.99 in GE2020 to $\bar{x}$ = 2.74 in GE2025.

One reason for the notable increase in expressive use of social media is the Covid-19 pandemic. Research on youth behaviour during crises suggests that social media expression often rises because individuals use social media platforms to improve their well-being (Kwan, 2021). Grievance theory provides a similar lens, for example, Kern et al. (2015) found that higher unemployment in Europe between 2008 and 2010 coincided with increased non-institutionalised political participation. In the Singapore context, Kwan (2022) observed heightened expressive use during GE2020, which he attributed to the growing attention on the experiences of marginalised communities such as migrant workers during the pandemic. Building on this, the continued increase reflected in GE2025 suggests that Covid-19 may have catalysed a broader shift in Singapore’s political culture, contributing to a public that is more willing to express political views on social media platforms.

Another factor that contributed to the shift towards greater expressive use is the increase of communicative features on social media platforms, which increased visibility and persistence of the opinions expressed by users (Ronzhyn et al., 2023). In other words, while platforms such as TikTok make it easy for Singaporeans to post and respond to news articles and/or other posts during the election, the interconnectedness and sharing features on social media can also make those expressed opinions highly visible and persistent. These affordances could have motivated users to engage in expressive use. See Figure 20 for mean scores of expressive use, informational use and relational use across the past three general elections.

Figure 20: Mean scores of social media use (GE2015, GE2020, GE2025)



Overall, SNS, instant messaging platforms and TikTok were the top three most frequently used platforms across expressive, informational, and relational use. See Figures 21 to 23 for expressive use, informational use and relational use.

Figure 21: Expressive use across platforms

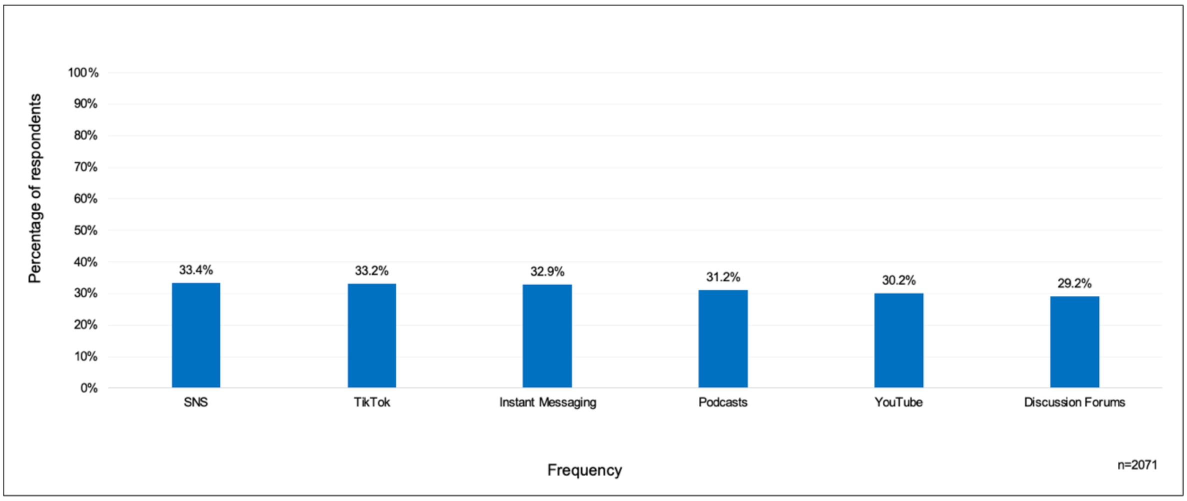


Figure 22: Informational use across platforms

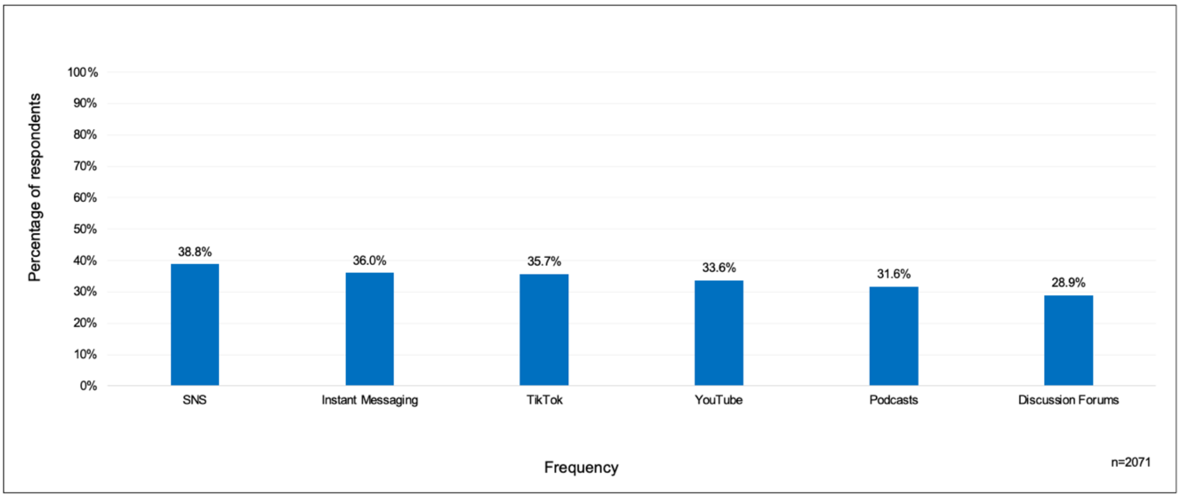
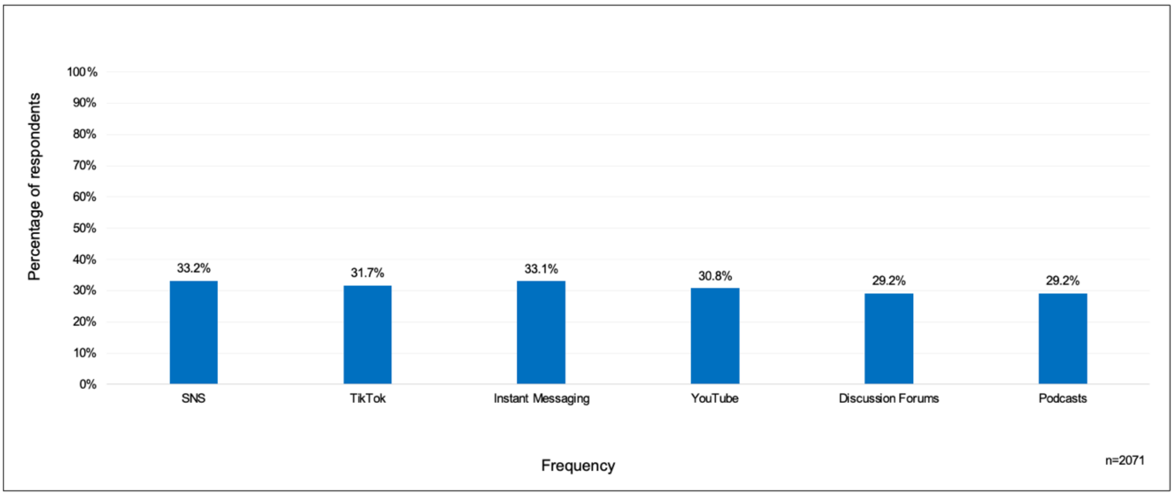


Figure 23: Relational use across platforms



Social media use by age, income and education

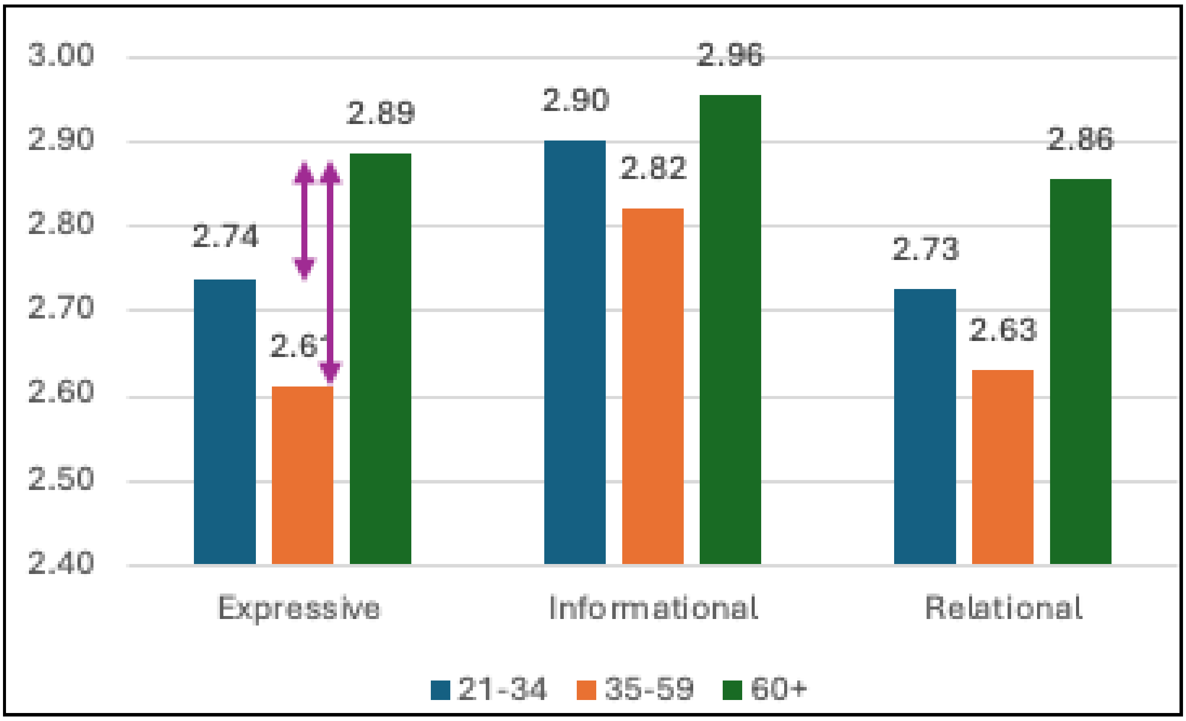
Significant differences were observed between those aged 35 to 59 years old and those above 60 years old and above, for all three usages (informational, expressive, and relational).

The most frequent type of social media use across all age groups ($\bar{x}$ = 2.96 for aged 60 years old and above, $\bar{x}$ = 2.82 for aged 35 to 59 years old, and $\bar{x}$ = 2.90 for aged 21 to 34 years old) was informational use.

The second most frequent type of social media use was expressive use for respondents aged 21 to 34 years old, and aged 60 years old and above ($\bar{x}$ = 2.74 and $\bar{x}$ = 2.89, respectively). Among those aged 35 to 59 years old, the second most frequent type of social media use was relational use ($\bar{x}$ = 2.63).

The third most frequent type of social media use was relational use for respondents aged 21 to 34 years old, and aged 60 years old and above ($\bar{x}$ = 2.73 and $\bar{x}$ = 2.86, respectively). For those aged 35 to 59 years old, expressive use was the third most frequent type of social media use ($\bar{x}$ = 2.61). See Figure 24 for mean scores of social media use across by group.

Figure 24: Mean scores of social media use by age group



Significant differences were observed between respondents with no household income and all other income earning groups, for all three usages (i.e., informational, expressive and relational).

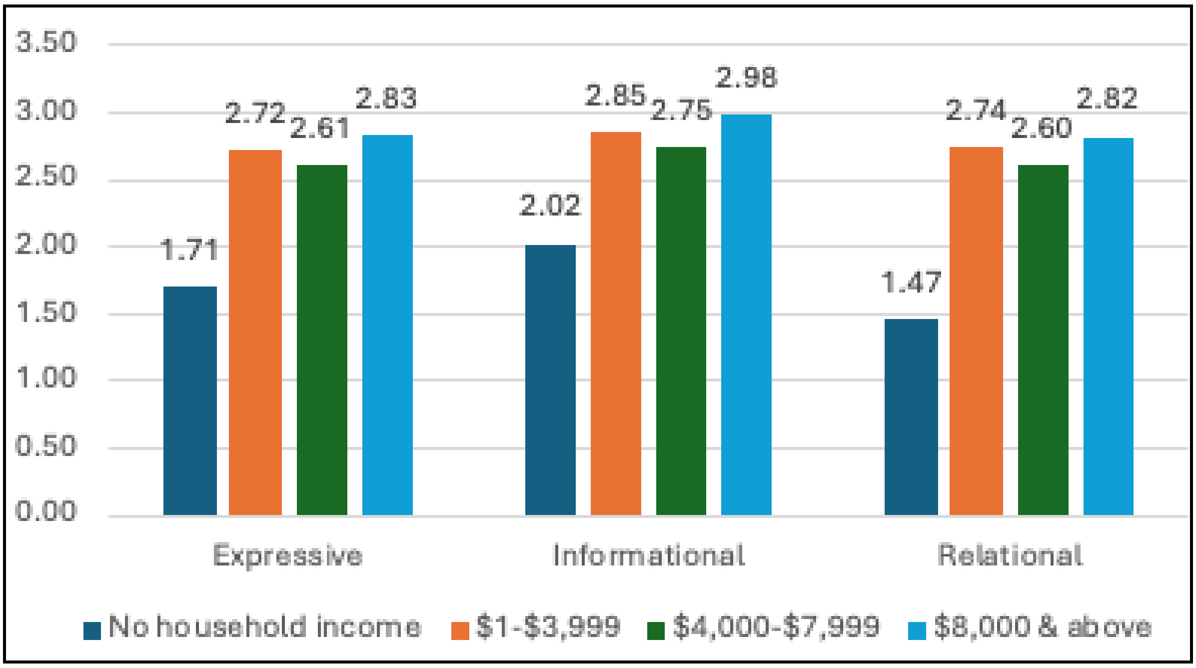
The most frequent type of social media use across all income groups ($\bar{x}$ = 2.98 for those earning $8,000 and above, $\bar{x}$ = 2.75 for those earning between $4,000 and $7,999, $\bar{x}$ = 2.85 for those earning between $1 and $3,999, and $\bar{x}$ = 2.02 for those with no household income) was informational use.

The second most frequent type of social media use for those earning $8,000 and above, earning between $4,000 and $7,999, and without a household income was expressive use ($\bar{x}$ = 2.83, $\bar{x}$ = 2.61, and $\bar{x}$ = 1.71, respectively). Among those earning between $1 and $3,999, relational use was the second most frequent type of social media use ($\bar{x}$ = 2.74).

The third most frequent type of social media use for those earning $8,000 and above, earning between $4,000 and $7,999, and without a household income was relational use ($\bar{x}$ = 2.82, $\bar{x}$ = 2.60, and $\bar{x}$ = 1.47, respectively). For those earning between $1 and

$3,999, expressive use was the third most frequent type of social media use (x̄ = 2.72). See Figure 25 for mean scores of social media use by income group.

Figure 25: Mean scores of social media use by income group



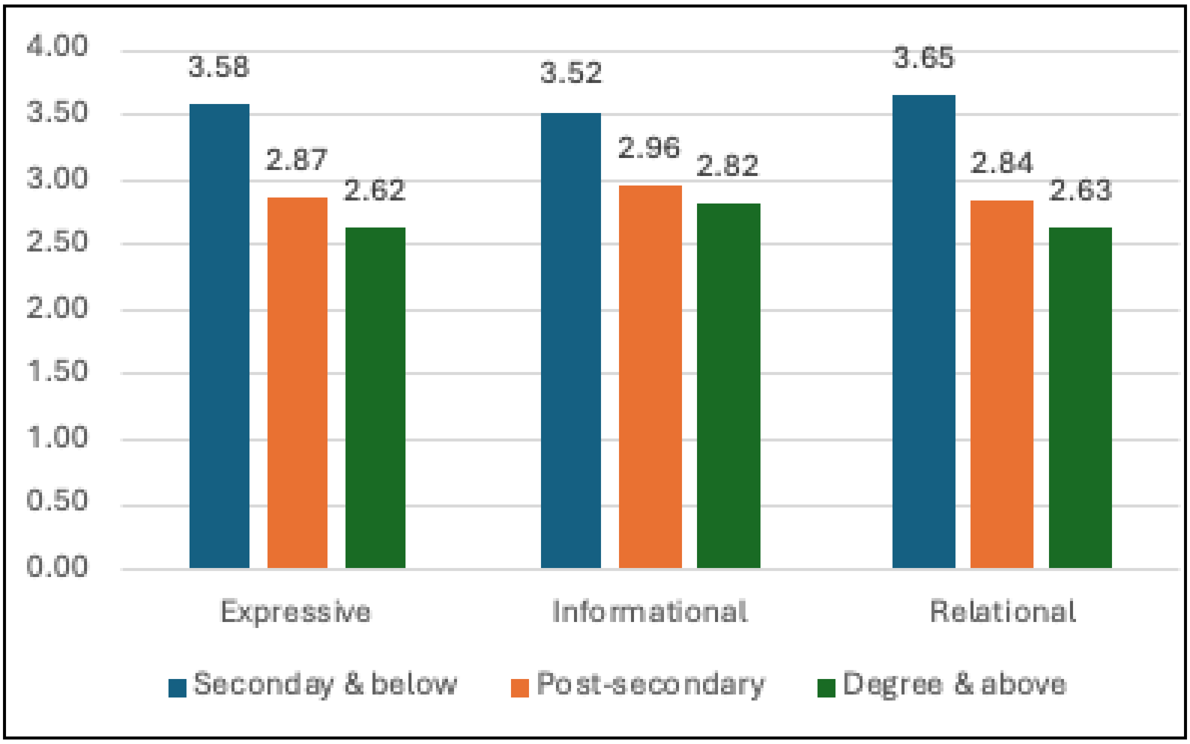
Significant differences were observed between all educational levels, for all three usages (i.e., informational, expressive and relational). Another observation also was that social media use decreased as educational attainment increased, reflecting an inverse relationship between the two.

The most frequent type of social media use for those with post-secondary education, and degree and above was informational use (x̄ = 2.96 and x̄ = 2.82, respectively). In contrast, respondents with secondary and below education reported relational use as their most frequent type of social media use (x̄ = 3.65).

The second most frequent type of social media use for those with secondary education and below, and post-secondary education was expressive use (x̄ = 3.58 and x̄ = 2.87, respectively). Among those with degree and above, relational use was the second most frequent type of social media use (x̄ = 2.63).

The third most frequent type of social media use differed across all educational groups. Those with secondary and below education reported informational use as third most frequent type of social media use (x̄ = 3.52). Those with post-secondary education reported relational use (x̄ = 2.84) and those with degree and above reported expressive use (x̄ = 2.62) as third most frequent type of social media use. See Figure 26 for mean scores of social media use by education level.

Figure 26: Mean scores of social media use by education level



3.5 AI-manipulated content

Given the growing concerns surrounding AI-manipulated content and election integrity as noted earlier, this section examines respondents' encounters with AI-manipulated content and their attitudes towards it.

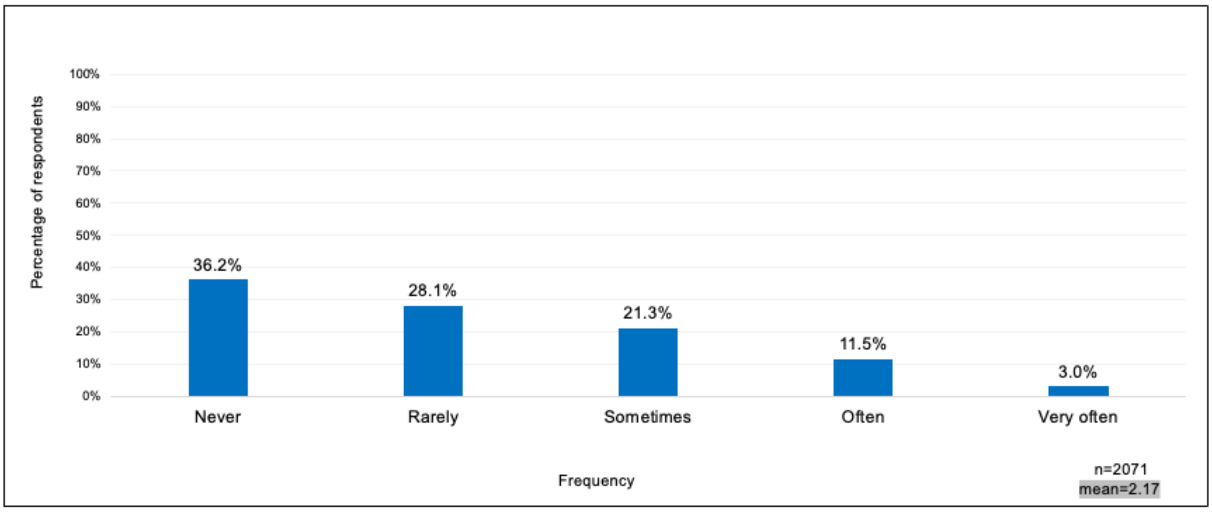
Encounters with AI-manipulated content

To measure respondents' encounter with AI-manipulated content, the survey asked them to indicate how often they chanced upon such content on a five-point frequency scale (from 1 being "never" to 5 being "very often").

Majority of the respondents (64.3 per cent) reported that they rarely or never encountered AI-manipulated content during GE2025. Only about one-third (35.8 per cent) indicated encountering such content sometimes to very often ($\bar{x}$ = 2.17).

Two factors may explain the findings. First, some respondents may not have been able to identify AI-manipulated content even when exposed to it. Second, TikTok was the predominant platform where such AI-generated videos circulated, meaning respondents who did not use TikTok would have been less likely to come across them (Tham, 2025). See Figure 27 for respondents' encounters with AI-manipulated content.

Figure 27: Encounters with AI-manipulated content



Attitudes towards AI-manipulated content

To measure respondents' attitudes, we asked them to indicate their level of agreement with eight statements on a five-point frequency scale (from 1 being "strongly disagree" to 5 being "strongly agree"). These statements examined the following: respondents' concerns about AI use in elections, confidence in identifying AI-manipulated content, trust in online information, and trust in institutions and companies to mitigate the risks of AI use in elections.

First, more than 60 per cent of the respondents expressed concerns about AI use in elections. A slightly larger proportion of respondents were concerned about the possibility of large-scale disinformation campaigns (65.4 per cent indicated "agree" or "strongly agree", $\bar{x}$ = 3.67) compared with concerns about AI manipulating public opinions during elections (63.4 per cent, $\bar{x}$ = 3.65). Taken together, these findings indicated that respondents were cognisant of the risks that AI poses to information integrity in an electoral context.

Second, about half of the respondents indicated that they were confident in their ability to distinguish AI-manipulated content (53.4 per cent indicated “agree” or “strongly agree”, $\bar{x}$ = 3.53). However, because this survey is based on self-reporting, it is important to consider the possibility of respondents overstating their confidence levels. In fact, a study by Kobis et al. (2021) highlighted that participants accurately judged their detection ability for only about three out of 16 videos used for testing. For the remaining 13 videos, respondents’ confidence levels substantially exceeded their actual accuracy. Thus, respondents’ self-reported confidence in our survey may not necessarily reflect their true ability to distinguish AI-manipulated content.

Third, about two-thirds of the respondents demonstrated distrust towards online information given the prevalence of AI-manipulated content (64.3 per cent indicated “agree” or “strongly agree” when asked if “deepfake” technology makes it hard for them to trust what is true when they are online, $\bar{x}$ = 3.70).

Fourth, respondents expressed greater confidence in the government than in private companies to mitigate the risks of AI use in elections. About 70 per cent indicated “agree” or “strongly agree” when asked about their confidence in the government (70.2 per cent, $\bar{x}$ = 3.83) and in state regulation (66.9 per cent, $\bar{x}$ = 3.80) to safeguard election integrity from risks associated with AI use. In contrast, smaller proportions expressed confidence in technology companies (57.9 per cent, $\bar{x}$ = 3.61) and website publishers (58.7 per cent, $\bar{x}$ = 3.70) to prevent the misuse of their platforms during elections. See Figures 28 and 29 for the mean scores and percentage frequencies for respondents’ attitudes towards AI-manipulated content.

Figure 28: Mean scores of respondents' attitudes towards AI-manipulated content

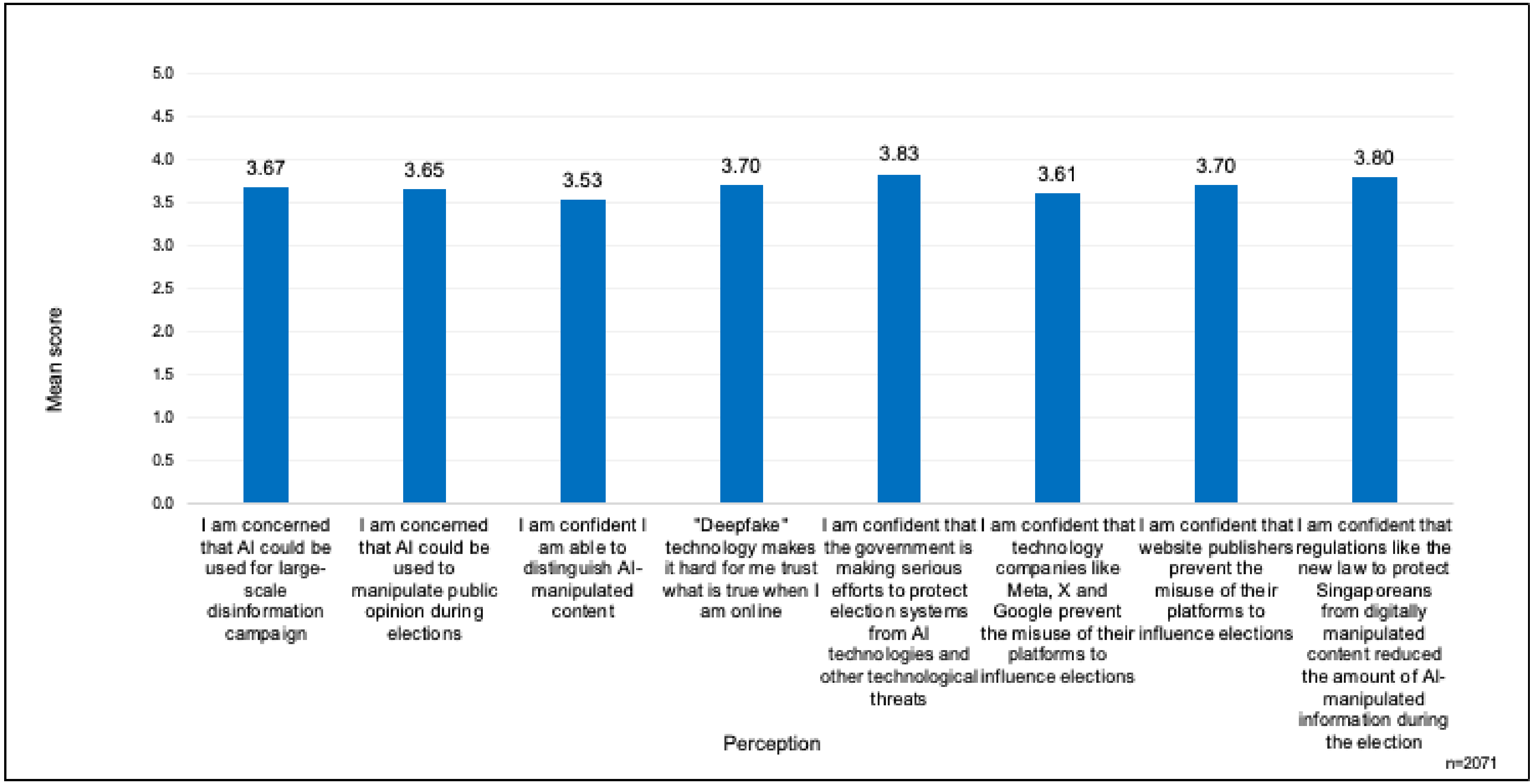
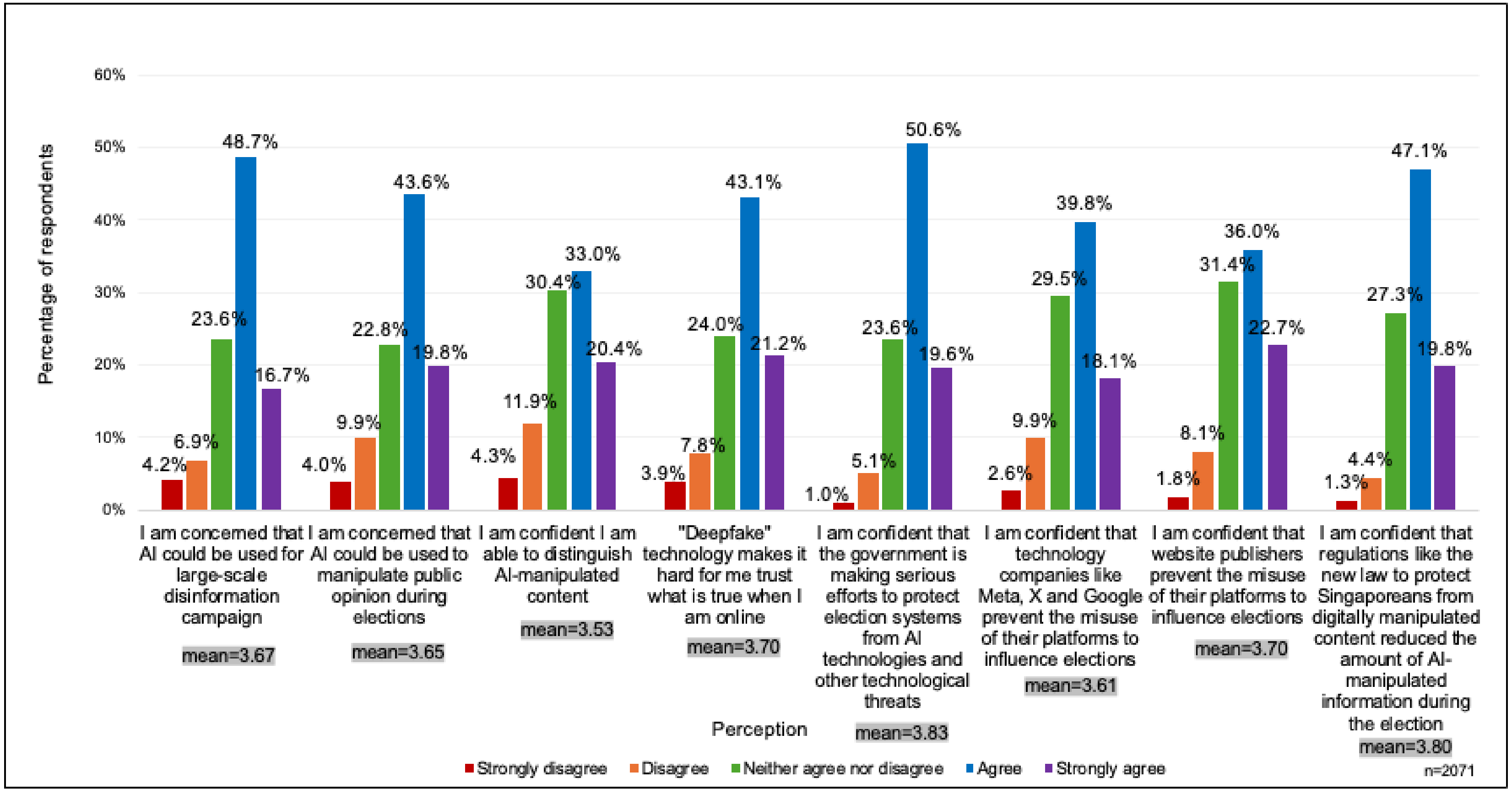


Figure 29: Attitudes towards AI-manipulated content



3.6 Media use

In this section, we present the cross-tabulations between media use and three variables, namely, partisanship, loyal versus swing voters, and timing of voting decision. For media use frequency, we computed the average usage scores of legacy and non-legacy media from Q20 and Q22 (as defined earlier in Section 2).

Media use and partisanship

Overall, the PAP secured a higher share of votes in GE2025 compared with GE2020 (61.2 per cent, n=1268). In our study, about two-thirds of respondents reported voting for the PAP in GE2025 (66.9 per cent, n=1386), close to the GE2025 results where 65.6 per cent of the 2,386,452 valid votes went to the PAP (Ng, 2025). Support for the Opposition in our survey remained relatively stable at 15.8 per cent in GE2025 (n=328), the same as in GE2020 (15.8 per cent, n=327). See Figures 30 and 31 for how people voted during GE2025 and GE2020.

Figure 30: How people voted during GE2025

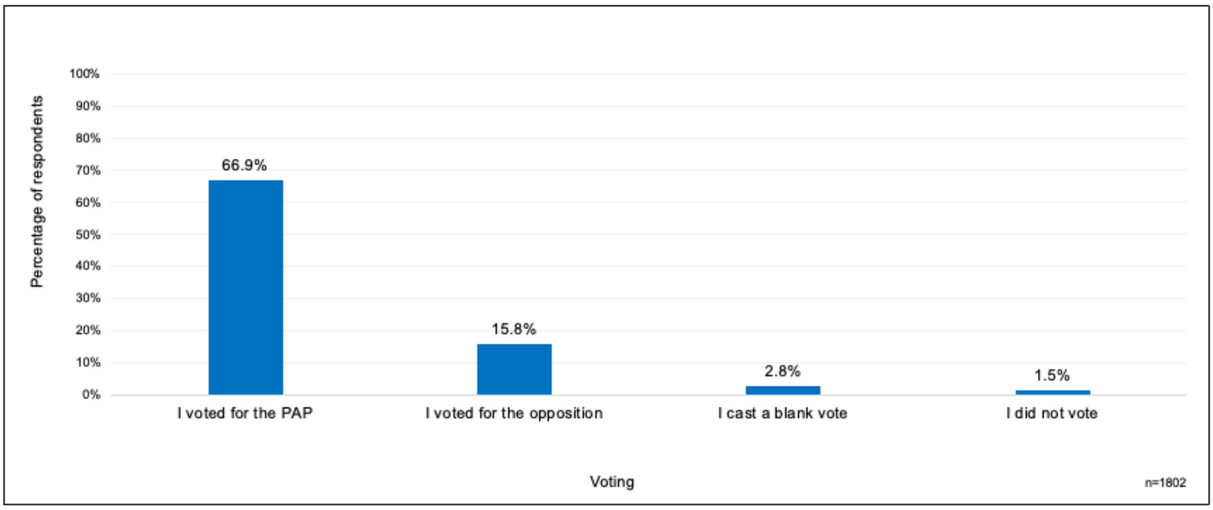
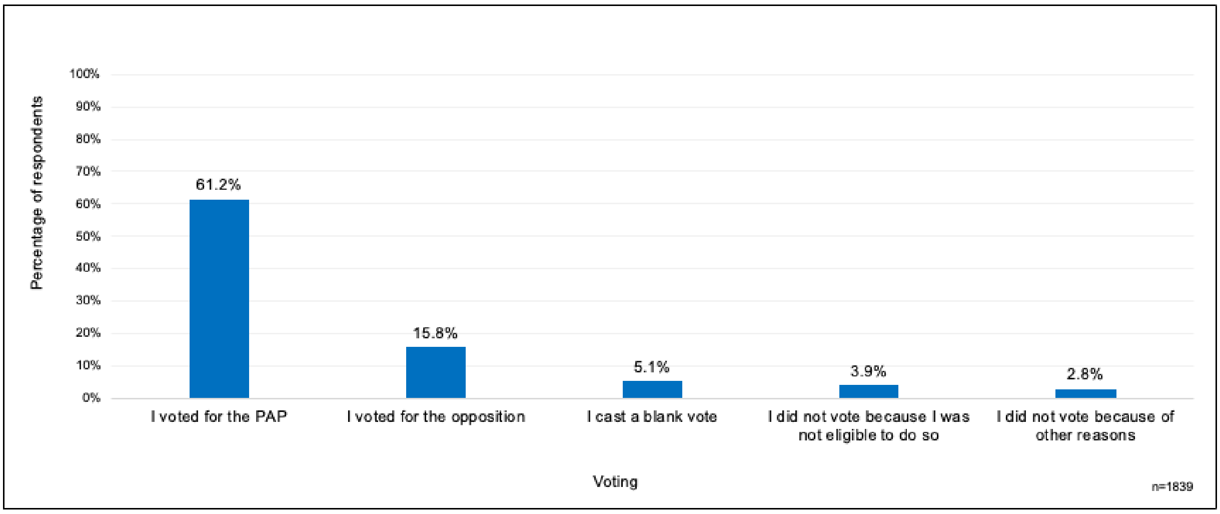


Figure 31: How people voted during GE2020



Legacy media was used more frequently than non-legacy media by both PAP and Opposition voters. Opposition voters reported higher levels of engagement across both media categories ($\bar{x}$ = 3.17 for legacy media use and $\bar{x}$ = 3.04 for non-legacy media use) compared with PAP voters ($\bar{x}$ = 2.75 for legacy media use and $\bar{x}$ = 2.38 for non-legacy media use). See Figure 32 for media use among those who voted for the PAP and those who voted for the Opposition.

Figure 32: Media use and whom respondents voted for

Media use and partisanship	LEGACY MEDIA (mean score)	NON-LEGACY MEDIA (mean score)	LEGACY MEDIA Vs NON-LEGACY MEDIA
PAP voter (n=1386)	2.75	2.38	***
Opposition voter (n=328)	3.17	3.04	***

*** *p < 0.001*

Media use and loyal versus swing voters

Our study revealed that most respondents were loyal voters who voted for the same political party during GE2020 and GE2025 (92.8 per cent, n=1423). A smaller proportion of our respondents identified as swing voters who voted for different parties during the two elections (7.2 per cent, n=110). See Figure 33 for the proportion of loyal versus swing voters.

Figure 33: Proportion of loyal versus swing voters

Type of voter	LOYAL VOTER	SWING VOTER
	92.8% (n=1423)	7.2% (n=110)

Loyal voter: Voted for the same party in GE2020 and GE2025.
Swing voter: Voted for different parties in GE2020 and GE2025.

There were some differences in media use between loyal voters and swing voters. Loyal voters used legacy media more frequently ($\bar{x}$ = 3.11) than non-legacy media ($\bar{x}$ = 2.98). In contrast, swing voters displayed a more balanced use, with no significant difference between their mean scores for legacy ($\bar{x}$ = 3.10) and non-legacy media ($\bar{x}$ = 3.00).See Figure 34 for media use among loyal voters and swing voters.

Figure 34: Media use and loyal versus swing voters

Media use and voting behaviour	LEGACY MEDIA (mean score)	NON-LEGACY MEDIA (mean score)	LEGACY MEDIA Vs NON-LEGACY MEDIA
Loyal voter (n=1423)	3.11	2.98	***
Swing voter (n=110)	3.10	3.00	ns

Loyal voter: Voted for the same party in GE2020 and GE2025.
Swing voter: Voted for different parties in GE2020 and GE2025.

**** $p < 0.001$*
ns = no significant difference

Media use and timing of voting decision

To understand when respondents decided whom to vote for, we gave them options based on milestones during the GE2025 (see Table 3).

Table 3: GE2025 timeline

Before 15 April 2025	Before the election was announced
15 April to 23 April 2025	After the election was announced and before nomination day
24 April to 1 May 2025	From nomination day to before cooling-off day (campaigning period)
2 May 2025	On cooling-off day
3 May 2025	On polling day

About one-third of the respondents (32.1 per cent) said they decided whom to vote for before the election was announced. Another 18.7 per cent made their decision between after the election was announced and before nomination day. The remaining voters made up their decisions during or after the nine days of campaigning (20.9 per cent decided during campaigning period, 10.4 per cent on cooling-off day, and 15.2 per cent on polling day).

Across all the timing of voting decision, voters generally used legacy media more frequently than non-legacy media. See Figure 35 for timing of voting decision, and Figure 36 for media use and timing of voting decision.

Figure 35: Timing of voting decision

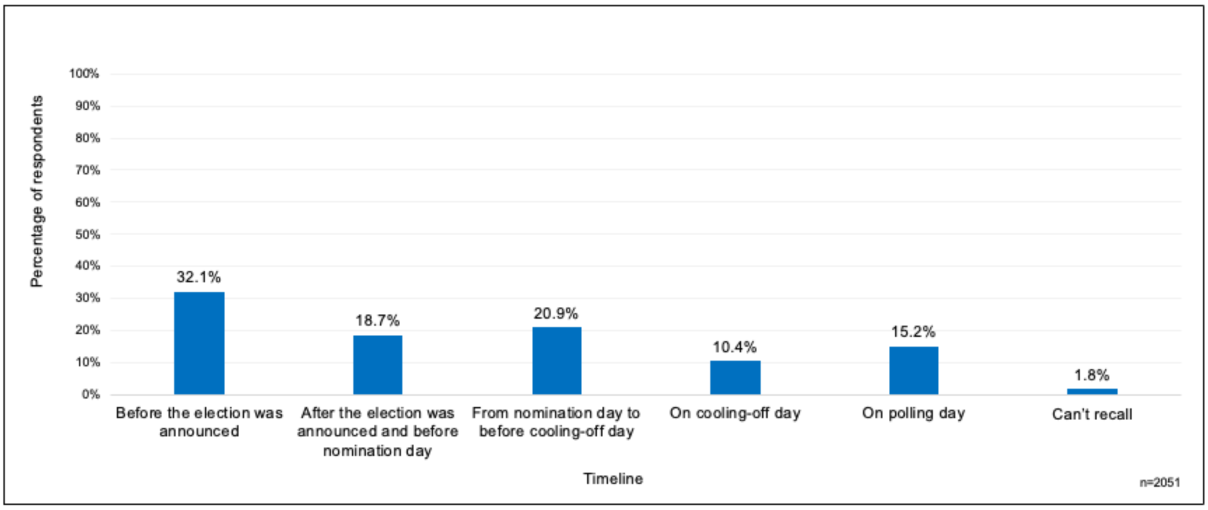


Figure 36: Media use and timing of voting decision

Media use and timing of voting decision	LEGACY MEDIA (mean score)	NON-LEGACY MEDIA (mean score)	LEGACY MEDIA Vs NON-LEGACY MEDIA
Before the election was announced (n=665)	3.13	2.97	***
After the election was announced and before the nomination day (n=386)	3.15	3.00	***
From nomination day to before cooling off day (n=433)	3.01	2.83	***
On cooling-off day (n=216)	2.98	2.81	***
On polling day (n=314)	3.01	2.87	***

*** $p < 0.001$

4. CONCLUSION

Amidst the hype surrounding the impact of new media formats on voting behaviour, this study sheds light on voters' use of media and their trust in these platforms as sources of election information; the role of social media in the General Election; and individuals' encounters with and attitudes towards AI-manipulated content.

First, we learned that the digital formats of Singapore legacy media emerged to be key player in GE2025 as an "all-rounder". These digital formats served as the main staple of election information across age, education, and income groups, and were more trusted than non-legacy media and personal communications. Furthermore, digital formats of Singapore legacy media were used more frequently than non-legacy media by PAP voters, opposition voters and loyal voters. These findings suggest that attempts by Singapore legacy media to adopt wider range of formats to reach out to audiences and voters (e.g., through digital transformation and innovation) could have paid-off. Meanwhile, TV's prominence remained constant across the last three elections with a reach comparable to that of the digital formats of Singapore legacy media. That said, non-legacy media emerged as important communication channels for reaching opposition voters and swing voters during GE2025.

Second, our findings surrounding online forums highlight inter-generational differences which hold implications for voter education. Most age groups used online forums more frequently compared with GE2020 but expressed relatively low trust in them. However, online forums formed a notable part of seniors' information diet during the election and were also more trusted by this group. This underscores the need to strengthen digital literacy among seniors and raise awareness of the risks associated with relying on online forums for election information.

Third, our findings nuance the claim that GE2025 was a "podcast election". Although podcasts gained visibility among the youths, they were not widely accessed across the electorate. In our study, podcasts ranked only eighth among all platforms used for seeking and sharing election information, suggesting that their influence was congregated among specific voter segments rather than shaping the entire GE2025. Importantly, youths' preference for TikTok and YouTube content over podcasts points to a “TL;DW” (“too long; didn’t watch”) preference, highlighting the need for political communicators to repackage and adapt content into shorter, platform-appropriate formats.

Fourth, in a diverse media landscape, social media was consistently used more frequently by voters to learn more about political parties and candidates than traditional party channels. By analysing the differences between the types of social media use (i.e., expressive, relational and informational), our study provided a more nuanced understanding of social media use. Our study spotlighted the significant growth in expressive social media use in GE2025, especially for those aged 60 years old and above, have secondary and below education, and earn the highest household income ($8,000 and above). The significant growth in expressive social media use suggests that political communicators should develop active citizenship that is informed and positive.

Finally, only one-third of respondents reported encountering AI-manipulated content. Given the pervasiveness of AI-manipulated content online, voters’ low encounter with such content during GE2025 could be attributed to either minimal or low abuse, or due to the deterrent effect of the Elections Integrity of Online Advertising (ELIONA Act) which came into force in January 2025. A reason of greater concern could be respondents’ challenges in recognising such content when they encountered them, highlighting the need for literacy efforts relating to AI-manipulated and generated content to keep pace with developments in AI technologies.

These insights underscore how rapidly Singapore’s election information environment is evolving. As the media landscape continues to fragment, it becomes increasingly critical for political communicators to track how voters navigate media and the internet in order to adapt their communication strategies swiftly and effectively. Continued monitoring of these trends will support more meaningful engagement between voters and political actors which will eventually strengthen the electoral communication and foster a more informed democratic participation.

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APPENDIX 1: ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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