

Youths 'relied on traditional mass media'

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SINGAPORE - Although it is widely believed that new media holds more sway over youths, an Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) survey has shown that those between the age of 21 and 35 spent more time getting their political news from traditional mass media.

Among 447 respondents within that age bracket - who were polled between Polling Day on May 7 and July - television remained the top platform they turned to during the election period, spending an average of more than 28 minutes daily getting their political news. The findings were presented at an IPS forum yesterday.

Respondents also spent more time on online platforms of mass media outlets (23 minutes), as compared to alternative sources, such as Facebook (18 minutes) and blogs or news websites (13 minutes).

The results led two researchers, Nanyang Technological University's Assistant Professor Trisha Lin and Professor Alice Hong Yah-Huei of Taiwan's Fu Jen Catholic University, to comment that, contrary to popular perception, traditional media had a greater impact on the voting decisions of youths during the General Election.

Still, they noted that the influence of new media was stronger on youths than on the general population.

For instance, in terms of how important and credible they regarded various sources of political information, youths placed greater weight on blogs, YouTube and video websites, Facebook and political party websites than the respondents in general.

Youths were also more cynical than Singaporeans in general of government and politics. For example, 50.2 per cent of young respondents in the survey viewed political participation in Singapore as over-regulated - 7.7 per cent higher than the overall average.

According to the survey results, those who voted for the Opposition (55 per cent) considered new media more important and more credible compared to those who voted for the ruling party (40 per cent).

However, more than four in 10 (43.6 per cent) of those polled did not want to reveal how they cast their votes. Out of those who did, 15.9 per cent said they voted for the Opposition, 26.2 per cent answered the PAP, while 14.3 per cent said they did not vote.

The 447 respondents were part of 2,000 Singaporeans polled in a telephone survey conducted by the IPS.