Research Article

Exposure to the Move Forward Party's Political Communication, Attitude Homophily, Voters' Perceived Political Ideology, and 2023 Thailand General Election Decision: Comparing Four Thai Generations

การเปิดรับการสื่อสารการเมืองของพรรคก้าวไกล ความคล้ายคลึงทางทัศนคติ แนวคิดทางการเมือง และการตัดสินใจลงคะแนนเสียงของผู้ใช้สิทธิ์ ในการเลือกตั้งทั่วไปของประเทศไทย พ.ศ. 2566: ศึกษาเปรียบเทียบชาวไทยสี่ช่วงอายุ

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Abstract

Due to the growing popularity of the Move Forward Party (MFP) during the past few years, this research aims to discover the causal relationship between its political communication, the attitude

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homophily, the perceived political ideology of Thai voters, and their 2023 general election decision. This study used a mixed-method approach, a combination of textual analysis and a survey. In the first phase, 20 contents in the MFP's Facebook and Twitter accounts with the highest engagements between March 1st, 2021, and August 31st, 2022 were textually analyzed. The analysis results showed the majority of message themes that occurred in the MFP's political communication represented Libertarian-Left political ideology based on the Political Compass diagram which aligned with the party's political ideology. In the second phase, an online survey was conducted with 240 Thai voters to test three research hypotheses. The results of data analyses revealed that Thai voters of four different generations have different perceived political ideologies and made their voting decisions differently such that younger generations with Libertarian-Left ideology voted for the MFP whereas the older generations with the Authoritarian-Right ideology voted for other parties.

Keywords: *The Move Forward Party, Political Communication, Social Media Exposure, Political Ideology, Election Decision, Generations*

บทคัดย่อ

จากความนิยมที่เพิ่มสูงขึ้นของพรรคก้าวไกลในช่วงไม่กี่ปีที่ผ่านมา งานวิจัยนี้มุ่งหวังที่จะศึกษาความสัมพันธ์ที่เป็นสาเหตุระหว่างการสื่อสารทางการเมืองของพรรคก้าวไกล ความชอบในทางเชิงอคติ และการตัดสินใจในการเลือกตั้งทั่วไปในปี พ.ศ. 2566 ของผู้ลงคะแนน งานวิจัยนี้ใช้วิธีการวิจัยแบบผสม ขั้นแรกของการวิจัยเป็นการวิเคราะห์ตัวบทของการสื่อสารทางการเมือง 20 ชิ้นในบัญชีเฟซบุ๊กและทวิตเตอร์ของพรรคก้าวไกลที่ผู้คนมีส่วนร่วมมากที่สุดระหว่างวันที่ 1 มีนาคม พ.ศ. 2564 ถึงวันที่ 31 สิงหาคม พ.ศ. 2565 ผลการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูล พบว่า แก่นของเนื้อหาในการสื่อสารทางการเมืองของพรรคก้าวไกลส่วนใหญ่แสดงถึงแนวคิดการเมืองแบบเสรีนิยมฝ่ายซ้าย ตามแผนภาพ Political Compass ซึ่งสอดคล้องกับแนวคิดการเมืองของพรรคฯ ขั้นที่สองของการวิจัยเป็นการวิจัยเชิงสำรวจผ่านระบบออนไลน์ในกลุ่มผู้ใช้สิทธิ์เลือกตั้งชาวไทยจำนวน 240 คน เพื่อทดสอบสมมุติฐานการวิจัยสามข้อ ผลการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลแสดงให้เห็นว่าผู้ใช้สิทธิ์เลือกตั้งในสี่ช่วงอายุที่แตกต่างกัน มีแนวคิดทางการเมืองแตกต่างกัน ซึ่งส่งผลต่อการตัดสินใจลงคะแนนเสียงเลือกตั้งที่แตกต่างกัน โดยกลุ่มคนอายุน้อยที่มีแนวคิดแบบเสรีนิยมฝ่ายซ้ายเลือกพรรคก้าวไกล ขณะที่กลุ่มคนสูงอายุที่มีแนวคิดนิยมอนุรักษ์นิยมฝ่ายขวาเลือกพรรคอื่น

คำสำคัญ: *พรรคก้าวไกล การสื่อสารการเมือง การเปิดรับสื่อโซเชียลมีเดีย อุดมการณ์ทางการเมือง การเลือกตั้ง ช่วงอายุ*

Introduction

Thailand's political landscape has long been divided between the Libertarian and the Conservative factions, and the ongoing conflict has evolved into a psychological battle, with social media as the battleground (Wongcha-um, Thephumpanat, & Tostevin, 2019). The Future Forward Party (FFP) was founded on March 15, 2018 (Thaitrakulpanich, 2019), and was a party of the new generations that would develop the future of all citizens, (Thanon, 2020). Thanon (2020) mentioned that the party wanted to transform the political system and create a free and fair system that benefits the citizens of Thailand. The FFP was disbanded on February 21, 2020, by a Constitutional Court decision (Thaitrakulpanich, 2019). Its former members transitioned to the Phung Luang Party, later renamed the Move Forward Party (MFP), led by Pita Limjaroenrat. The MFP, positioned as progressive, align with the principles of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, emphasizing continuity with the original Future Forward Party's political ideology (Online Reporters, 2020; Techakitteranun, 2020; Wongsurawat, 2019).

Attitude homophily strongly influences interaction, as discovered in a study by Triawan (2020) that the more the audience perceived themselves as similar to someone are highly likely to develop a positive parasocial interaction with him. In this case, it is interesting to discover whether attitude homophily can also be applied to a political party such as the MFP, and whether would it translate into the selective exposure of the MFP's contents as well as the election decision.

Konsongsaen (2021) discovered that selective exposure is the starting point of the political engagement journey then the contents are consumed before deciding whether to engage with the content or not. In this case, this study aims to examine whether the Thai voters' exposure to the MFP's political communication has a significant impact on their perceived political ideology, and would that translate into their 2023 election decision.

This study seeks to address research gaps concerning the impact of political communication on individuals' ideologies and election decisions. It aims to shed light on the relationship between individuals' political ideologies and how the political communication, message strategies, and media tactics of the MFP can influence four distinct generation groups in different ways. The findings could

provide valuable insights for political parties, including the MFP, to effectively engage individuals with diverse values and beliefs while avoiding negative perceptions. Governmental Offices and NGOs could also benefit from this research in utilizing the relationship between attitude homophily and exposure to plan effective communication strategies that persuade the mass audience into the same direction as desired by the organization. Communication strategists could also benefit from the result of this study as the strategists could utilize the findings to develop targeted communication strategies, craft consistent and ideologically aligned messages, and develop strategic message planning to achieve communication goals. This research has the potential to be a valuable resource for all political actors in strategically planning their communication and media tactics.

Research Objectives

This study aims to achieve two objectives. The first one uses qualitative research intent to identify message themes of political communication used by the MFP, whereas the second one uses quantitative research aims to examine the casual relationship between the level of exposure to the progressive political communication of the MFP, attitude homophily, perceived political ideology, and voting decision of Thai voters in four generations.

Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

Political communication, ideology, and media are interconnected concepts. Media acts as a conduit for political communication, transmitting ideologies to a broader audience (Çakmak, 2018). The FFP reignited public interest in politics, emphasized ideology over individuals, using social media to rally people and encourage active political participation, leading to a surge in party membership (Meechan, 2021). Thanon (2020) research highlights the Future Forward Party's success in implementing Political Marketing Communication strategies during the 2019 General Election. The party attracted new generations to politics with social media and online platforms significantly enhanced the party's visibility and popularity. The MFP was established after the disbanded of the FFP and positioned itself as progressive, aligns with the principles of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, emphasizing continuity with

the original Future Forward Party's political ideology (Online Reporters, 2020; Techakitteranun, 2020; Wongsurawat, 2019).

Lück and Rinke (2010) suggested that media primarily reinforces existing attitudes and opinions without substantially altering them and that political ideology is frequently highlighted as a factor influencing the effects of political communication. Distinctions between groups with different political ideologies have been insufficiently explored and should be considered in future research on the effects of media. Çakmak (2018) stated that political actors utilize media to gain support for ideologies and influence votes. Media shapes content aligned with these ideologies, subtly and subconsciously influencing audiences, who may emotionally or intellectually align with certain ideologies without full awareness.

Konsongsaen (2021) investigated the Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) and the motivation of Thai millennials' online political engagement and discovered that the political engagement journey starts from selective exposure to the contents where individuals have the ability to select sources to be exposed to. The contents are consumed before the decision making of whether they will first engage with the contents. Finally, decisions to engage in terms of liking, sharing and commenting are made based on the UGT as they decide what values they will gain from such engagement. Accordingly, this study aims to examine whether online political engagement would be translated into the election decision in the 2023 General Election.

Triawan's (2020) study discovered a significant finding on attitude homophily and parasocial interaction demonstrating that respondents who perceived themselves as similar to Mark Wiens were highly likely to develop a positive parasocial interaction with him, confirming the hypothesis that attitude homophily strongly influences these interactions (Triawan, 2020). As for this study, it is interesting to find out whether attitude homophily plays an important role in the selection of political communication such that it is positively correlated with exposure to the MFP's political communication.

In terms of political ideology, Thai Gen Z's political views are shaped by the experiences of political instability and the exposure to global culture through the internet, which contrasts with the more conservative views of the older generations (Bolotta, 2023; Thai PBS World, 2020). Gen Y has

shown a considerable preference towards political activism, particularly in the context of pro-democracy movements. The rise of the youth movement in Thailand, significantly fueled by Gen Y, has been characterized by strong advocacy for equality, respect for diversity, and a deep-seated belief in democracy and political participation as essential means to fulfill societal goals. The political engagement of Gen Y surged following the 2014 military coup, leading to widespread protests and the mobilization of hundreds of thousands of young people (Lertchoosaku, 2023). Gen X tends to be more open to political reform but maintains a degree of conservatism compared to the younger generations (Thailand Development Research Institute: TDRI, 2022). Baby Boomers in Thailand, similar to those in other Asian countries, exhibit generational values that lean towards conservatism, emphasizing respect for authority, national stability, and traditional social structures (Murphy, Mujtaba, Manyak, Sungkhawan, & Greenwood, 2010). Whether differences in perceived political ideology among different generations play an important role in Thai citizens' election decisions should be further examined.

From the literature review above, it is worthwhile to explore the connections between perceived political ideology, selective exposure to the MFP's online political communication, attitude homophily, and the election decision of Thai Voters in four distinct generations.

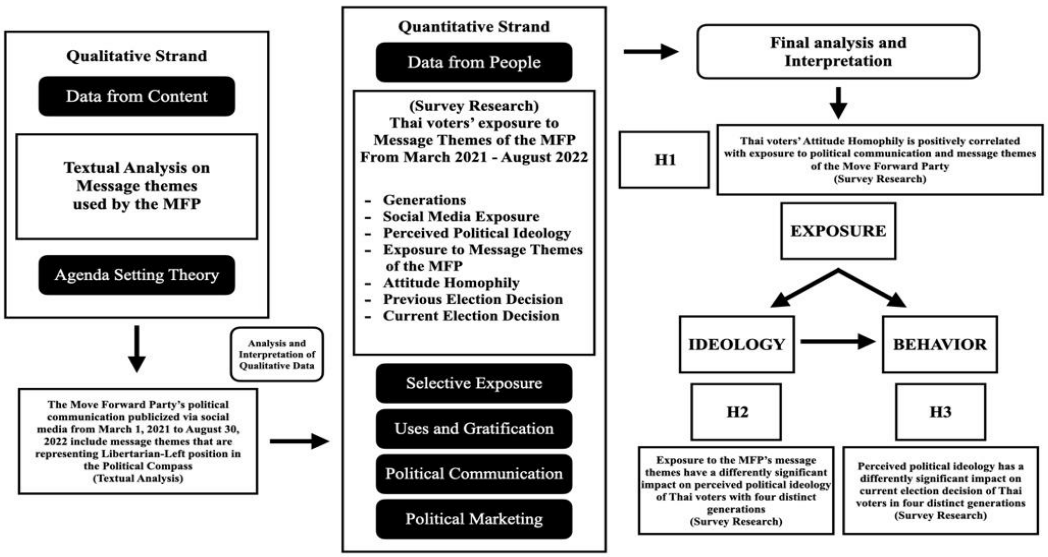


Figure 1 Conceptual framework

Research Hypotheses

Based on the above literature review and proposed conceptual framework, three research hypotheses were developed:

HP#1: Thai voters' attitude homophily is positively correlated with exposure to political communication and message themes of the MFP.

HP#2: Exposure to the MFP's message themes have a differently significant impact on perceived political Ideology of Thai voters in four distinct generations.

HP#3: Perceived political ideology has a differently significant impact on election decision of Thai voters in four distinct generations.

Method

This study employed an exploratory mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. For qualitative analysis, 20 MFP online political communication posts from March 1, 2021, to August 31, 2022, on Facebook (10 posts) and Twitter (10 posts) were purposively selected based on high engagement. The data analysis identified the top five message themes based on the Political Compass, which were then used to create a measurement of the self-administered questionnaire for the survey research.

The Political Compass diagram was used as a tool to identify the political ideology that each message theme represents and determine whether the message themes in the political communication of the MFP aligned with the party's ideology. Thirty percent of the sampled posts were coded by the second coder who is a strategic planner in a communication agency to yield inter-coder reliability of the research measurement.

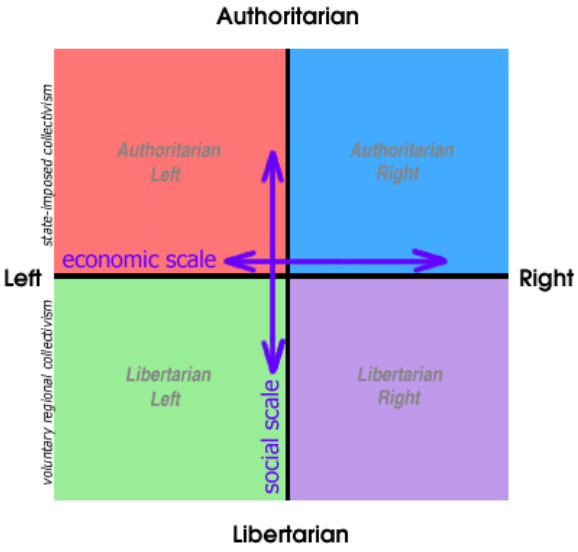


Figure 2 Political Compass, a two-axis political spectrum diagram

Source: The Political Compass (n.d.)

For the quantitative approach, Survey research was selected as it is designed to deal more directly with the nature of people's thoughts, opinions, and feelings (Shaughnessy, Zechmeister, & Jeanne, 2011). The sample size was calculated using G*Power with a total sample size of 74 with an actual power of 0.95. The survey targeted 240 Thai citizens, well above the G*Power sample size, aged 18 to 70, of all genders, from five geographic regions exposed to MFP's online political communication on platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter in the past three months. Using quota sampling, the samples were evenly divided among Generation Z (18-25), Generation Y (26-41), Generation X (42-57), and Baby Boomers (58-70) across central, north, northeastern, south, and west regions. The online self-administrated questionnaire was sent to the respondents at 18.00 on 14th May 2023 after the election ended and the data collection period lasted for approximately 4 weeks before all the data were collected.

Research Instrument

A self-administered online survey via SurveyMonkey collected data in seven sections: 1) *Personal Data*, covering gender, age, education, region, marital status, and occupation; 2) *Social Media Exposure*, assessing platform use and duration; 3) *Perceived Political Ideology* is measured by level of agreement in questions aligned with four political ideologies based in the Political Compass, Authoritarian Left, Authoritarian Right, Libertarian Left, and Libertarian Rights using 5-point Likert Scales (1 = strongly disagree, and 5 = strongly agree); 4) *Exposure to MFP's message themes* is measured by the frequency of exposure to top 5 message themes by frequency of the MFP using a 5-point-scale ranging from 0 = Never; 1 = Rarely (1 – 2 times); 2 = Sometimes (3 – 4 times); 3 = Often (5 - 6 times); and 4 = Always (7 times or more); 5) *Attitude homophily* is measured by level of agreement of the similarity between participants and the MFP using 5-point Likert Scales (1 = strongly disagree, and 5 = strongly agree); adopted from Triawan (2020); 6) *Previous Election Decision* for the 2019 election is measured by question asking participants about the political party they have voted for in the 2019 election using multiple choice question; and 7) *Current Election Decision* for the 2023 Thailand General Election is measured by asking participants whether they voted for the Move Forward Party or not using 5-point scales (1 = strongly disagree, and 5 = strongly agree);. The mean score of the Likert scale will be interpreted Data were analyzed using Linear Regression in SPSS, with reliability tested through the Reliability Analysis. Content validity was ensured through the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) conducted by three experts, resulting in adjustments based on their suggestions.

Mean scores of attitude homophily, exposure to MFP's message themes, perceived political ideology, and past and current election decision are interpreted based on the mean score interpretation by Konsongsaen (2021) -- very low similarity or agreement ($\bar{X}$= 1.00 – 1.80), low similarity or agreement ($\bar{X}$ = 1.81 – 2.60), moderate similarity or agreement ($\bar{X}$ = 2.61 – 3.40), high similarity or agreement ($\bar{X}$ = 3.41 – 4.20), and very high similarity or agreement ($\bar{X}$= 4.21 – 5.00).

Findings

Textual analysis of the MFP's political communication on Facebook and Twitter from March 1, 2021, to August 31, 2022 reveals 13 message themes as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Message themes of MFP's political communication

Message themes	Frequency
Theme A - Anti-Corruption and advocates Transparency	10 Times
Theme B - Criticizing the Prime Minister and the Government	9 Times
Theme C - Anti-Injustice *Theme D* - Advocates Human Rights, Freedom, and Social Equality *Theme E* - Anti-Authoritarian	6 Times
Theme F - Anti-Coup d'état	3 Times
Theme G - Tax Reformation *Theme H* - Report Incident *Theme I* - Anti-Capitalism *Theme J* - Advocates Constitutional Reform	2 Times
Theme K - Anti-Article 112 Law *Theme L* - Criticizing the Army *Theme M* - Re-election Campaigning	1 Time

The majority (47.37%) aligned with the *Libertarian-Left* ideology, followed by *Libertarian-Right* (26.32%), *neutral* (21.05%), and *Authoritarian-Left* (5.26%) ideologies. Some of these themes can be aligned with both Left and Right in Libertarian as the differences between the two are mostly in economic and capitalist views. No message themes represented the *Authoritarian-Right* ideology that occurred in the MFP's political communication. The top five themes, Theme A, B, C, D, and E, were used to formulate measurements for the online questionnaire.

Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, analyzed sample demographics, social media exposure, and election decisions. Respondents are composed of females (52.08%), males (40.42%), and LGBTQ+ (7.50%). Ages ranged from 18 to 77 years, with the majority being single (44.58%), holding a bachelor's degree (49.58%), and working as company employees (21.25%). Facebook was the most used social media platform (48.33%), followed by LINE (19.17%) and Twitter (10.42%). The majority spent more than 3 hours daily on their primary platform

(33.33%). Previous votes were for the FFP (27.50%), Pheu Thai Party (18.33%), and Democrat Party (12.50%).

In terms of perceived political ideology based on the Political Compass diagram, respondents exhibit high agreement with *Authoritarian-Left* ideology ($\bar{x}$ = 4.00, *S.D.* = 0.66) and *Libertarian-Left* ideology ($\bar{x}$ = 4.33, *S.D.* = 0.72) whereas moderate agreement is observed for *Authoritarian-Right* ideology ($\bar{x}$ = 2.60, *S.D.* = 1.00) and *Libertarian-Right* ideology ($\bar{x}$ = 3.39, *S.D.* = 0.85).

In terms of the exposure to the message themes of the MFP's political communication, all studied message themes had a high level of exposure among the respondents. *Theme A*, Anti-Corruption and Promote Transparency ($\bar{x}$ = 2.64, *S.D.* = 1.081), *Theme B*, Criticizing the Prime Minister and the Government ($\bar{x}$ = 2.71, *S.D.* = 1.078), *Theme C*, Anti-Injustice ($\bar{x}$ = 2.70, *S.D.* = 1.147), *Theme D*, Advocate Human Rights and Social Equality ($\bar{x}$ = 2.81, *S.D.* = 1.100), and *Theme E*, Anti-Authoritarian Regime ($\bar{x}$ = 2.58, *S.D.* = 1.228).

As for attitude homophily, the analysis result reveals that the majority of the respondents' attitude homophily is highly similar to the MFP ($\bar{x}$ = 3.58, *S.D.* = 1.09).

In terms of the Current General Election Decision, the result showed that the majority of the respondents voted for the MFP in the 2023 Thailand General Election ($\bar{x}$ = 3.57, *S.D.* = 1.47).

Table 2 Descriptive statistics of the examined variables

Measurement	**n**	**Mean**	**S.D.**	**No. of Items**	**Cronbach's Alpha**
Perceived political ideology	240	-	-	-	-
Authoritarian-left	240	4.00	0.66	3	0.79
Authoritarian-right	240	2.60	1.00	3	0.75
Libertarian-left	240	4.33	0.72	2	0.84
Libertarian-right	240	3.39	0.85	2	0.07

Table 2 Descriptive statistics of the examined variables (continue)

Measurement	n	Mean	S.D.	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Exposure to MFP's message themes	240	2.69	0.94	5	0.89
Theme A - Anti-corruption and advocates transparency	240	2.64	1.08	-	-
Theme B - Criticizing the prime minister & the government	240	2.71	1.08	-	-
Theme C - Anti-Injustice	240	2.70	1.15	-	-
Theme D - Advocates human rights, freedom, & social equality	240	2.81	1.10	-	-
Theme E - Anti-authoritarian	240	2.58	1.13	-	-
Attitude homophily	240	3.58	1.08	8	0.98
Current general election decision	240	3.57	1.47	2	0.86
Generation Z	60	4.3333	0.81	-	-
Generation Y	60	4.2083	1.03	-	-
Generation X	60	3.2333	1.39	-	-
Baby boomer	60	2.4167	1.56	-	-

Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis #1 suggested a positive correlation between Thai voters' attitude homophily and the exposure to the MFP's political communication and its message themes. A Pearson Correlation analysis was conducted to evaluate the prediction. The correlation interpretation measurement for this research is based on Sugiyono (2013) where 0.000 – 0.199 means a very weak relationship, 0.200 – 0.399 means a weak relationship, 0.400 – 0.599 indicates a moderate relationship, 0.600 – 0.799 means a strong relationship, and 0.800 – 1.000 indicates a very strong relationship. The result of the analysis, as shown in Table 3, indicates that attitude homophily and exposure to MFP's message themes have a

positive correlation across all generation groups. The strongest relationship is found in Gen Y (*r* = .744**), followed by Gen X (*r* = .700**), Baby Boomer (*r* = .668**), and Gen Z (*r* = .647**). Therefore, the results supported this hypothesis.

Table 3 Regression analysis results of exposure to MFP's message themes and perceived political ideology among four generations of Thai voters

Generation	Political ideology	B	S.E.	beta	*t*	R^2	*p*
GEN Z	Authoritarian left	.470	.086	.583	5.469	.329	<.001
	Authoritarian right	-.419	.169	-.310	-2.487	.081	.016
	Libertarian left	.369	.067	.589	5.545	.335	<.001
	Libertarian right	-.054	.136	-.053	-.401	-.014	.690
GEN Y	Authoritarian left	.260	.075	.416	3.481	.159	<.001
	Authoritarian right	-.413	.118	-.418	-3.505	.161	<.001
	Libertarian left	.364	.095	.448	3.811	.186	<.001
	Libertarian right	-.140	.125	-.146	-1.121	.004	.267
GEN X	Authoritarian left	.148	.108	.177	1.367	.015	.177
	Authoritarian right	-.292	.142	-.261	-2.056	.052	.044
	Libertarian left	.303	.126	.301	2.404	.075	.019
	Libertarian right	-.019	.135	-.018	-.138	-.017	.891
Baby Boomer	Authoritarian left	.353	.093	.446	3.796	.185	<.001
	Authoritarian right	-.314	.145	-.274	-2.169	.059	.034
	Libertarian left	.252	.094	.333	2.690	.096	.009
	Libertarian right	-.072	.123	-.076	-.582	-.011	.563

Hypothesis #2, examining the impact of exposure to MFP's message themes on perceived political ideology across generations, yielded varied results. Based on the Linear Regression analysis results, as for Gen Z, exposure to MFP's message themes accounts for 32.89% of the *Authoritarian Left* ideology, 8.07% of the *Authoritarian Right* ideology, 33.52% of the *Libertarian Left* ideology, and -

1.44% of the *Libertarian Right* ideology. As for Gen Y, exposure to MFP message themes accounts for 15.86% of the *Authoritarian Left* ideology, 16.05% of the *Authoritarian Right* ideology, 18.65% of the *Libertarian Left* ideology, and 0.43% of the *Libertarian Right* ideology. As for Gen X, exposure to MFP's message themes accounts for 1.45% of the *Authoritarian Left* ideology, 5.18% of the *Authoritarian Right* ideology, 7.50% of the *Libertarian Left* ideology, and -1.69% of the *Libertarian Right* ideology. As for Baby Boomers, exposure to MFP's message themes accounts for 18.52% of the *Authoritarian Left* ideology, 5.90% of the *Authoritarian Right* ideology, 9.56% of the *Libertarian Left* ideology, and -1.13% of the *Libertarian Right* ideology.

Exposure to MPF's message themes played a significant role in Gen Z, particularly with Authoritarian Left ideology (R^2 = .329, p < .001) and Libertarian Left ideology (R^2 = .335, p < .001). As for Gen Y, exposure influenced Authoritarian Left ideology (R^2 = .159, p < .001) and Libertarian Left ideology (R^2 = .168, p < .001). Gen X showed a small impact, while Baby Boomers exhibited a slightly higher significant impact, especially with Authoritarian Left ideology (R^2 = .185, p < .001). Accordingly, hypothesis #2, exposure to the MFP's message themes had a different impact on the perceived political Ideology of Thai voters in four distinct generations, is accepted based on these findings.

Table 4 Regression analysis results of perceived political ideology and election decision among four generations of Thai voters.

Generation	Political ideology	B	S.E.	Beta	*t*	R^2	*p*
Gen Z	Authoritarian left	.853	.106	.725	8.024	.518	<.001
	Authoritarian right	-.143	.090	-.204	-.1587	.025	.118
	Libertarian left	1.052	.142	.697	7.408	.477	<.001
	Libertarian right	-.047	.120	-.052	-.394	-.015	.695
Gen Y	Authoritarian left	.712	.223	.387	3.195	.135	.002
	Authoritarian right	-.186	.151	-.159	-1.228	.009	.225
	Libertarian left	.603	.169	.425	3.573	.180	<.001
	Libertarian right	.018	.157	.015	.115	-.017	.090

Table 4 Regression analysis results of perceived political ideology and election decision among four generations of Thai voters. (continue)

Generation	Political ideology	B	S.E.	Beta	*t*	R^2	*p*
Gen X	Authoritarian left	.194	.304	.083	.639	-.010	.526
	Authoritarian right	-.398	.222	-.230	-1.797	.036	.078
	Libertarian left	.392	.248	.203	1.580	.025	.119
	Libertarian right	.312	.245	.165	1.271	.010	.209
Baby Boomer	Authoritarian left	1.1120	.282	.459	3.931	.197	<.001
	Authoritarian right	-.677	.200	-.405	-3.378	.150	.001
	Libertarian left	.892	.310	.353	2.872	.109	.006
	Libertarian right	-.399	.262	-.197	-1.572	.022	.132

Hypothesis #3, examining the impact of perceived political ideology on the election decisions of Thai voters across generations, yielded varied results. Based on the Linear Regression analysis results, as for Gen Z, the Authoritarian Left ideology accounts for 51.79% of the current election decision, the Authoritarian Right ideology accounts for 2.51%, Libertarian Left ideology accounts for 47.73%, and Libertarian Right ideology accounts for -1.45%. As for Gen Y, the Authoritarian Left ideology accounts for 13.50% of the current election decision, the Authoritarian Right ideology accounts for 0.85%, the Libertarian Left ideology accounts for 16.63%, and the Libertarian Right ideology accounts for -1.70%. As for Gen X, the Authoritarian Left ideology accounts for -1.02% of the current election decision, the Authoritarian Right ideology accounts for 3.64%, the Libertarian Left ideology accounts for 2.48%, and the Libertarian Right ideology accounts for 1.03%. As for Baby Boomers, the Authoritarian Left ideology accounts for 19.67% of the current election decision, the Authoritarian Right ideology accounts for 15.00%, the Libertarian Left ideology accounts for 10.94%, and the Libertarian Right ideology accounts for 2.21%.

For Gen Z, both the Authoritarian Left ideology (R^2 = .518, p < .001) and the Libertarian Left ideology (R^2 = .477, p < .001) significantly influenced their decisions, while the Authoritarian Right ideology (R^2 = .025, p = .118) and the Libertarian Right ideology (R^2 = -.051, p = .695) had small to no

significant impact. Gen Y was similarly affected by the Authoritarian Left ideology (R^2 = .135, p < .01) and the Libertarian Left ideology (R^2 = .180, p < .001), with small to no significant impact from the Authoritarian Right ideology (R^2 = .009, p = .225) and the Libertarian Right ideology (R^2 = -.017, p = .090). Gen X showed no significant impact from perceived political ideology on their election decisions, the Authoritarian Left ideology (R^2 = -.010, p = .526), the Authoritarian Right ideology (R^2 = .036, p = .078), the Libertarian Left ideology (R^2 = .025, p = .119), and the Libertarian Right ideology (R^2 = .010, p = .209). In contrast, Baby Boomers were significantly influenced by the Authoritarian Left ideology (R^2 = .197, p < .001), the Authoritarian Right ideology (R^2 = .150, p < .001), and the Libertarian Left ideology (R^2 = .109, p < .01), while the Libertarian Right ideology (R^2 = .022, p = .132) had no significant impact. Overall, Hypothesis #3 is accepted, highlighting distinct impacts on election decisions among Thai voters in the four generations based on perceived political ideology.

As shown in Table 2, Gen Z ($\bar{x}$ = 4.43, *S.D.* = 0.81) have the highest level of agreement to vote for the MFP in the current election, followed by Gen Y ($\bar{x}$= 4.21, *S.D.* = 1.03), Gen X ($\bar{x}$= 3.23, *S.D.* = 1.39), and Baby Boomer ($\bar{x}$= 2.42, *S.D.* = 1.56) as interpreted using the mean score interpretation by Konsongsaen (2021).

Discussion

According to Hart et al. (2009), selective exposure refers to how individuals tend to favor information based on their own pre-existing views while avoiding contradictory information. This was evident in our survey results, where respondents with similar political views to the MFP were more engaged with the party's communication. As for the Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT), West and Turner (2017) suggested that people are active in choosing and using the media for their own satisfaction and needs, and people see the use of media to gratify the needs they have. The survey results supported the UGT's assumption that people actively choose media to satisfy their needs and goals. In this case, the MFP's communication fulfilled the respondents' need for political information that aligned with their values.

The results of Gen X are different than those in Gen Z, Gen Y, and Baby Boomers such that perceived political ideology significantly influenced the 2023 election decision in Gen Z, Gen Y, and

Baby Boomer respondents, but no significant impact on Gen X respondents. This could be due to the fact based on the study from Wilasang (2022) that the political party and the political candidate are the factors that impacted Gen X more than other generations while the policies of the candidate impacted Gen X the least compared to other generations. This could possibly translate into why the political ideology has no significant impact on the current election decision of Gen X respondents in this study as the textual analysis showed that the majority of the MFP's political communication does not usually promote the candidates in their communication. Wilasang's conclusion (2022) stated that different generations are differently impacted by the factors influencing election decisions is consistent with the findings of this study that the MFP's political communication does not have a significant influence on Gen X respondents but has a significant impact on respondents in other generations.

The majority of Thai voters of all generations with left-leaning political ideologies voted for the Move Forward Party in the recent general election. In contrast, those with right-leaning ideologies supported other political parties. This aligns with the 2023 election outcome, where the Move Forward Party secured the majority of MP seats with 14,436,851 votes (Election Commission of Thailand, 2023). Therefore, in the next election, the MFP should have to come up with a political communication strategy that retains the voters in Gen Z, Gen Y, and Baby Boomers while developing a new strategy to successfully persuade more Gen X voters. On the other hand, other political parties would have to develop strategies to counter the MFP in persuading Gen Z, Gen Y, and Baby Boomers.

Limitations and Implications

This study has limitations. Firstly, it exclusively focuses on the Move Forward Party's political communication, providing only one perspective of the overall landscape during the election period. Thai voters may compare message themes from different parties to align with their perceived political ideology. Secondly, the sample documents were collected between March 1, 2021, and August 31, 2022, well before the election. This timeframe may not capture the full intensity of the MFP's political communication, and closer to the election, there could be variations in themes and ideology communicated by the party.

This study has academic and political implications, revealing a positive correlation between attitude homophily and exposure to political communication. It highlights varying impacts of message themes on Thai voters across generations with different political ideologies, as well as the causal relationship between perceived political ideology and election decisions in these generations. Future research could explore a broader scope by comparing political communication across all parties in the same period, identifying diverse message themes and their effects on attitude homophily, perceived political ideology, and election decisions of Thai voters from each generation as well as the upcoming generations in the future.

The study's findings have implications for political entities like parties, figures, NGOs, and government offices involved in political communication. The results highlight the role of attitude homophily in influencing exposure to political communication, similarity to the party increases exposure. Differences in perceived ideology among the four generations impact exposure to message themes, suggesting tailored approaches for effective communication. The positive relationship between election decisions and perceived political ideology can inform political entities in developing strategies to persuade voters across different generations in future elections.

Conclusion

This study aimed to identify and evaluate whether exposure to the MFP's political communication strategy and the message themes contained in them have impacted and influenced Thai voters with different political backgrounds in four distinct generation groups. The study discovered significant insights, suggesting that attitude homophily plays an important role in the exposure to the political communication of the MFP. The more they feel similar, the more they choose to be exposed to the MFP political communication content posted on Facebook and Twitter.

The study also suggested that the message themes contained in the political communication of the MFP differently influenced people with different perceived political ideologies, which led to the 2023 general election decision made by the voters. However, the study has some limitations as it only focuses on the political communication of the MFP and not the other parties campaigning at the same time. These political communication campaigns of other political parties and the message themes

contained in them could have a significant impact on the 2023 general election decision of Thai voters as well. Further research should explore the comparison of each political party's political communication and the occurred message themes to explore how they could differently influence the perceived political ideology and the election decision of Thai voters.

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