

THE ROLES OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN CRIME ISSUES IN MALAYSIA. A STUDY AT HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS IN NEGERI SEMBILAN, MELAKA AND JOHOR

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Abstract

The usage of social media in many sectors are not something new nowadays. The borderless information sharing through the Internet by using various social media applications like Facebook, Twitter, blog, WhatsApp, YouTube and many others seemed to provide implications towards economic, politic, social and security issues in many countries. Crime issues is one of those impacts. Thus, this research was carried out to study on how the social media plays the role in crime issues in Malaysia. This research involved the students from public and private higher learning institutions in Negeri Sembilan, Melaka and Johor. Random sampling techniques has been used in selecting the respondents and the data was analysed quantitatively. The findings of the research have shown that, the tendency of social media selection, accessibility to the information, effectiveness of social media and information accuracy contributed to the understanding and dissemination of information on crime issues. In the same time, social media is the powerful tool to be used in crime prevention initiatives by the respective bodies. Several recommendations also outlined to be considered by the authority bodies to combat this issue.

Keywords: social media, crime, information accessibility

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Introduction

Proliferation of information technology since the 1970s, which then has an impact on globalization. The world community in general has been able to communicate with each other regardless of geographical boundaries and time. More than that, the information sharing activities taking place so fast and rapid. This phenomenon has given the changes and challenges of various sectors such as politics, economy and social and safety in responding to current developments. To ensure that Malaysia is also not left behind by this technology and the rapid modernization, there are few initiatives taken by the government. One of the initiatives is from the information technology sector. This change is necessary to ensure that our country is able to be competitive as other developed countries. In line with these demands, under agenda and government policy since the 1990s, a number of policies and programs related to information technology were introduced.

However, such policies would have unfavourable implications if implemented with less caution and without close supervision by the authorities. The issue of criminal also might arise due to development of information technology. Information technology through social media is capable in distributing information quickly and can be accessed by anyone and anywhere, but with the less effective supervision causing some issues that could negatively impact the level of security and harmony in the country. For example, it is like spreading misinformation, spreading video footage traumatic crimes cases in the community has affected the society in general.

Therefore, this study is expected to provide information and an understanding of how social media would give a major impact on the crime issues in Malaysia and this paper is prepared to discuss on some important variables that might significant in addressing the crime issues in Malaysia through social media.

Literature Review

The Effectiveness of Social Media towards Crime Issues

Participating in different types of online networking is a normal movement that exploration has appeared to advantage youngsters and youths by improving correspondence, social association, and even specialized skills, social media locales, for example, Facebook and MySpace offer various day by day open doors for interfacing with companions, colleagues, and individuals with shared interests. Amid the most recent 5 years, the quantity of preadolescents and young people utilizing such locales has expanded drastically (EPU, 2015). Most of the impact shows extremely negative due to social media growth such as changes of the attitudes, behavior, the way of thinking and also the communication skills among the students especially. This shows that this problem is getting serious and it is demanding for solution (Wan Hamat *et. al*, 2013).

According to Mohd Dahlan & Ida Shafinaz (2010), there is significant relationship between the Internet user and the crime that arises. This is probably due to technology advancement where everything can be assessed easily by the user. Most of the users especially the youth can be considered as Internet literate but facing some problems in terms of understanding all the

facts and figures that they get from the Internet and this might cause cybercrime such as keyboard warrior and also the viral phenomenon towards some issues which the truth is still questioned. In view of their constrained limit for self-control and vulnerability to associate weight, kids and youths are at some danger as they explore and try different things with online networking.

Late research demonstrates that there are successive online articulations of disconnected from the net practices, for example, harassing, faction framing, and sexual experimentation, cyberbullying and also security issues. Numerous guardians today utilize innovation extraordinarily well and feel great and competent with the projects and online venues that their kids and young people are utilizing. All things considered, a few guardians may think that it's hard to identify with their digitally sagacious adolescents online for a few reasons. Such guardians may do not have a fundamental comprehension of these new types of socialization, which are essential to their youngsters' lives. They every now and again don't have the specialized capacities or time expected to keep pace with their kids in the always showing signs of change Internet landscape. Utilizing online networking turns into a danger to teenagers more regularly than most grown-ups figure it out. Most dangers fall into the accompanying classes: shared; unseemly substance; absence of comprehension of online protection issues; and outside impacts of outsider promoting bunches. All of these impacts more to negative even though there are a lot of good things about the Internet. Ali Salman *et. al*, (2010) said that the good information from the Internet will make the community live peacefully but the bad things that comes from the Internet might put the state in danger.

Information Accuracy

As indicated by Johnson and Kaye (2008), most web validity thinks about have concentrated on standard media or online standard news destinations. All the more as of late, analysts have concentrated on sites (Banning and Trammell, 2006), release sheets/records and talk/texting (Kaye and Johnson, 2006). These online segments have developed as persuasive gatherings of political exchange and subsequently, draw politically intrigued clients, further justifying investigation of their acceptability, reasonableness, precision and profundity. While various studies have analyzed the data contained on battle Web destinations (e.g., Bichard, 2006; Stromer Galley and Baker, 2006; Trammell, 2006; Kerbel and Bloom, 2005), few have inspected the extent to which individuals trust the data they find there. As per Metzger *et al*. (2010), a dominant part of researchers expects that people work in disconnection to frame believability assessments and that individuals must assess data validity in an effortful and tedious way. In their study utilizing a center gathering information from 109 members to analyze these suppositions, results demonstrated that most clients depend on others to make believability appraisals, frequently using bunch based devices. Comes about likewise show that as opposed to methodically preparing data, members routinely summoned intellectual heuristics to assess the validity of data and sources on the web.

Sharon *et. al* (n.d) In the interim a UCLA study found that while more than half (54.7%) of web clients said most or all data on the Internet was dependable and exact, just 33% of nonusers voiced that conclusion. A noteworthy segment of both clients (35.7%) and nonusers (45.7%)

said that lone "about half" of the data on the Internet was valid. Not all studies have discovered individuals rating web data as valid. A Roper study for the Freedom Forum discovered driving customary sources evaluated as more reasonable and fair than web sites. Little consideration has been paid to why people rate the Internet as sound as they do conventional media sources. In any case, Flanagan and Metzger (2000) recommend that as individuals turn out to be more experienced with the Internet, they turn out to be progressively sharp about what locales to trust and which ones to overlook. Further, more experienced web clients were more prone to check web data and to judge data they found online as valid than less continuous clients. Data on online media locales may entirely be pretty much as precise and trust - commendable as in the conventional media. The Digital Journalism Credibility study recommended that accomplished web clients depended on online adaptations of customary sources, for example, CNN.com, for their data. Online clients perceive that online news contrasts little in substance from its customary partner; just the conveyance is distinctive. Additionally, it is contended that online columnists keep up the measures of precision and validity generally as wildly as customary journalists and in this manner take as much care in composing and reporting.

Accessibility of Information through social media

Social networking websites like an online community of the Internet users. Due to the freedom of a social networking site, the Internet user will share almost all information such as hobbies, religion, or political environment. Nowadays, we can enjoy browsing the Internet anywhere in the home, office, cybercafé, Internet kiosks, and even in restaurants as long as there is Internet access. Many public and private premises providing Internet facilities for free to attract customers to their premises. Social networking sites are widely used not only among university students, but also adolescent, professionals and politicians (Rosen, 2007).

According to Syahrir & Fatin, (2012), in their study stated that it is estimated that there are about 170 pages of interactive social web known and active in the world for surfers to explore. Among all the social networking applications existing today, even newly introduced in 2004, Facebook ranked first of the top 15 social networking sites are the most popular, followed by Twitter and LinkedIn (EBizMBA Guide, 2014). Facebook also said to have a total of 350 million users and save 10billion pictures shared by users from all over the world.

In Malaysia, government has taken a lot of efforts in improving the service to the public and one of it is through widening the Internet coverage whereby the government provides more areas with free Internet coverage. So, this is actually give a lot of advantages to the public in dealing with all the Internet activity. This opportunity also gives benefits to the students as they can get a lot of information that might useful for them in their learning process which can be browsed everywhere. The accessibility of the Internet is now not a problem anymore since most of the areas that we go will have the optimum Internet coverage. But, due to this opportunity, there are some users might misuse this as they tend to do unethical activity that will lead to the serious issue such as cybercrime (Asiah, Shariffah & Akmal, 2015).

Methodology

This paper investigates the roles of social media in crime issues in Malaysia. The study is based on a face-to-face questionnaire survey of 484 students from institutions of higher education (public and private) in southern zone which are Negeri Sembilan, Malacca and Johor area. The student population changes so frequently from cohort to cohort that it did not allow the researchers time to access or build a sampling frame for probabilistic sampling. Hence, a convenience sampling scheme was adopted for this survey. The sample of 500 questionnaires were distributed but only 484 returned and analysed. The researchers also spread out the sample among major institutions such as UiTM and USIM to ensure representativeness of the sample. The questionnaire was developed through a process that entailed a brainstorming session, followed by review on the literature in order to get some important points for this study. A small-scale pilot run was conducted on the drafted questionnaire to sharpen the language and to ensure that smooth rapport could be built between the respondents and the researchers.

Subsequently, a large scale quantitative survey was conducted by using this questionnaire. In order to study the roles of social media with the crime issues, the questionnaire consists of 4 sections namely, demographic, the roles of social media (decision of choosing types of social media, accessibility of social media, the effectiveness of social media usage and information accuracy) and crime issues in Malaysia (understanding, disseminating of information and precaution). The response to questions is measured by 5 point Likert scale. The data was captured directly in SPSS format and frequency tables on the response were tabulated to scan for errors in data entry or coding before it proceeded to further analysis. The analysis began with scanning for all the data and descriptive analysis done for demographic. Correlation is used to measure the significant or lack of association between pair of variables. This simple but effective test is a good start to scan for relationship between variables. We also conduct multiple regression analysis to identify the most significant indicator that leads to the crime issues in Malaysia. The result significant for the researcher to construct suitable recommendations that might useful for the government and other bodies to be implemented.

Findings

From the survey, the result of correlation analysis shows there is significant relationship between all the four variables with the crime issues in Malaysia. It can be said that, the accessibility of the information, the effectiveness of the social media usage and also the information accuracy really influence the understanding of the information, distribution of information and also the precaution of the crime issues in Malaysia. The result of the correlation analysis as below:

Variables	Perception towards crime issues in Malaysia
Accessibility of information	.650**
The effectiveness of social media usage	.589**
Information accuracy	.560**

Table 1: Correlation test

Regression analysis is a statistical tool for the process of investigation of relationships between variables. Basically, the investigator seeks to ascertain the causal effect of one variable upon another (Coakes, 2013). For this study, a regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between four independent variables and dependent variable to seek which element influence the most. The regression analysis table as below:

Construct variable	Dependent Variable Perception towards Crime Issues in Malaysia	
Independent Variable	Beta	Sig
Accessibility of information	.432	.000
The effectiveness of social media usage	.134	.002
Information accuracy	.190	.000
$R^2 = .566$		
Durbin Watson = 1.897		

Table 2: Regression analysis

The result from the above table shows that the most significant variable that influence the crime issues in Malaysia is the accessibility of information from the social media. The R^2 indicated that about 57% of the variables are represented by all of the tested variables above whereas remaining 43% might be from the other variables that not been studied by the researcher.

Discussion and Implication

Overall, we can say that all the independent variables used in this study is significant with the dependent variable and the most indicator variable is the accessibility of the information from the social media. Nowadays, every single thing can be found through social media as it is on your fingertips. Compatible with the effort by the government in emphasizing the social media usage through Internet especially, it is actually improved the accessibility of browsing the Internet everywhere. According to annual report by MMCC (2012), the effort by the government in introducing more than 80% areas with the high speed unlimited Internet has successfully increased the number of Internet user in Malaysia. All the users can enjoy using the Internet at any time and everywhere and this will give a lot of advantages to the public in their daily life.

However, among all the bright side of this necessity, it also contributes to the drawback of the Internet. The faster people can access the Internet, the easier crime issues might be disseminated. This actually align with the finding of this study whereby accessibility of the information through social media contribute the highest value in influencing crime issues in Malaysia. Ahmad Shabery, (2013) found out that Malaysia is fall on number 18 of the Facebook user statistic and with the increasing number of Internet user from time to time, it might influence people to involve in spreading the uncertain crime issues worldwide. As for example, with the application of 'share' and 'like' in the Facebook, it is actually can contribute to the misuse information by irresponsible people that freely share or like the fake information

that at last will cause serious problem to the other people (Muzaffar, 2014). Zulkarnain, (2013) said that about 35% of the Facebook users believe that all the information and contents that they read through Facebook is true and accurate. Due to this scenario, there are several recommendations created based on the findings in order to reduce the crime issues that involve social media.

Recommendations

One of the recommendations that suggested by the researchers is strengthening and establishing the commissioner or secretariat that responsible for monitoring the social media activities. So this special commissioner has the right to conduct investigation if they have found anybody that has the potential for creating and spreading information that could cause harm to other users. So, when the users know that they are being observed, they will be more careful in using the Internet.

Another recommendation is by educating the teenagers from the school. The Ministry of Education could introduce new subject or syllabus that focusing on the proper way of using the Internet. The teachers need to explain to the students about the drawbacks of the Internet if it is being misused. The teachers also must teach the students on how to analyse and assess the information from social media so that they will think twice before accepting any information from it.

It is also very important to highlight here that the Internet is the most powerful tool nowadays in disseminating the information. Thus, the government should benefit from this by utilizing the role of social media in ensuring the right into promoting the campaign and educating the public regarding to the crime issues in the country.

Conclusion

The usage of the social media is increasingly becoming important nowadays. This situation has become the major concern to the country as it is associated with the use of media in crime issues. As the finding shows that the understanding and distribution of information related to crime is strongly influenced by the usage of social media, thus the society is being exposed to various kind of information related to crime. The use of Facebook, Twitter and other interactive social web has caused deception or rumours that can quickly spread (Sheedy, 2011) and it may allow the feeling of insecure among the society. However, in the event that the country is able to deal with this situation, the social media can be the capable apparatus in crime prevention efforts. Therefore the local authority should see this phenomenon as an opportunity to draw near to the general public through the social media as it helps in dealing with the crime issues.

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