The Use and Abuse of Technology: The Relationship Between Personalities and Continuance Intention in Performing Internet Vigilantism Among Malaysians

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ABSTRACT

The opportunity to research internet vigilantism (IV) is timely due to its wide prevalence and the social concern that surrounds it. There is still a lack of comprehensive academic understanding of why users continue to condone IV. A significant number of studies suggested that the role of personalities has instigated such intentions. This was based on significant relationships found between different types of personality to their continuance intention of performing cyberbullying, a subsequent result of IV. This study reviewed literature in the respective areas and intends to identify the level of extraversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism personality among Malaysians and their continuance intention to perform IV. This study also hypothesized that there were significant relationships between extraversion, neuroticism and psychoticism personality with continuance intention to perform IV. Data was collected from 247 Internet users in Malaysia and was analyzed with statistical analysis (SPSS) using mean, standard deviation, and regression analysis. It was found that Malaysians possessed mild neuroticism personality but strong psychoticism and extraversion personality. There were also significant relationships between extraversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism personality with continuance intention to perform IV among Malaysians. This study has contributed to the literatures of psychology works that correlate personality traits to online social behaviour.

INTRODUCTION

The internet as a communication technology allows for both personal and mass interaction. At times, communication can be benevolent and minding. At other times, it can be cruel and forceful to the extent of performing Internet vigilantism (IV). It is an act and vigilantes are the committee/sets of people who upload videos that entails out-of-the-norms act, on the Internet sites to deliberately entice crowds, overpower and castigate crime of a perpetrator (or in some cases, allegedly accused). Instantaneously these people viewed the processes of law as insufficient, sluggish and erratic. These responses were done virtually; via replies of comments on Facebook, tweets on Twitter and respond boxes on blogs, subsequently tips to cyberbullying. It is bullying that takes place using electronic platforms. This represents online social behaviour with the approach of shaming, but within this context, this was done through textual means (Chang, Zhong and Grabosky, 2018).). The opportunity to research Internet vigilantism leading to cyberbullying is timely due to its wide prevalence and the social concern that surrounds it. A 2010 study conducted by the University of Valencia claimed that nearly 30% of teens are cyberbullied each year by undergraduates. Such bullying can be devastating. This is because it escalated a young adult's stances of concern, despair, social retreat, and suicidal movements (Buelga, Cava, & Musitu, 2010). IV can be defined as the act of taking justice over some issues to produce perceived undesirable outcomes.

People from all walks of life have equivalent ability to share their views on disparity and unfairness in the present justice systems of the world, regardless of their status and power. This happened due to the augmentation of internet usage over time (Bruns, 2008). Vigilantes play a vital role to curb cyberbullies as they can subsidize the better empowerment of justice. This can be done by inspiring public awareness over some matters that would otherwise be unnoticed by the legal powers. Internet vigilantes should and ought to be able to expand public tailing and fund to a better democracy. However, this must be done vigilantly, within their limits and obligations (Ruan, 2011). With such power, Internet vigilantism needs to be monitored. This is to ensure that vigilantes will be warier in partaking information according to its legitimacy. Chang and Poon (2017) indicated that Internet vigilantes perform vigilante activities to achieve both social justice and individual satisfaction. These two factors, however, are not mutually exclusive. They claimed that one of the motives that energized IV was because Internet vigilantes saw the criminal justice system as incompetent. Surely, we all have diverse opinions on IV. Some might consider it as critical as it will magnify the public awareness over issues. These issues might have been unnoticed. Some agreed that IV was appropriate and information must be exposed which otherwise would not be accessible to the community. A study on copyright vigilantism, however, suggested that it is not necessary even for copyright owners to choose vigilantism (Storch, 2012).

RELATED STUDIES

Social media network has become ear of crisis events. Affected people in events are turning to social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and blogs to pursue evidence (Palen & Liu, 2007), and emergency responders have begun to integrate them into communications tactics (Hughes & Palen, 2012; Latonero & Shklovski, 2011). However, the rise of distortion of information on social media network is also worrying. The identifications of the level of awareness towards internet vigilantism (IV); and their level of intention to continue to perform IV are vital, as claimed by (Smallridge, Wagner, & Crowl, 2016). This is because IV has been sporadically examined over the last few decades within the criminological discipline. Thus, the seriousness of this area should not be taken lightly. IV is an act of uploading

information that entails out-of-the-norms act, on the Internet sites by committee/sets of people organized to deliberately entice crowds, overpower and castigate crime of a perpetrator (or in some cases, allegedly accused). Instantaneously these people viewed the processes of law as insufficient, sluggish and erratic. These responses were done virtually; via messages on WhatsApp or Telegrams, replies of comments on Facebook, tweets on Twitter and respond boxes on blogs, subsequently tips to cyberbullying. It is bullying that takes place using an electronic skill (Chang & Poon, 2017; Arvanitidis, 2016). This represents online social behaviour with the approach of shaming. However, within this perspective, this was done through written means (Wall & Williams, 2007). Various studies have been done in the areas of cyber-bullying in Malaysia (Ghazali et al., 2016; Balakrishnan, 2015; Teimouri et al., 2014).

However, according to Bakar, Yusof and Budiman, (2018), there are lacks of studies regarding internet vigilantism in this country. In Malaysia, on January 13th, 2017, a 17-year-old student was arrested for an alleged defamatory comment she made on Facebook about the late Sarawak Chief Minister Adenan Satem. 40 police report on such postings were made and seven of those were being probed. The arrest of the student brings to five the number of people arrested by Sarawak police for posting defamatory comments on the death of the Chief Minister (Malay Mail, 2017,). On Feb 3rd, 2017, police detained a college student on suspicion of being involved in uploading documents on the issuance of the 'Bangsa Johor' identity card, which went viral on the social media few days before his arrest. This resulted in online clashes among Twitter users in Malaysia, which has led to cyberbullying acts towards the citizens of Johor Darul Takzim particularly. The police received a report at 9.45 p.m. on 2nd of February regarding the uploading of the application forms, terms of application and the privileges offered and the Bangsa Johor

identity card in the social media purportedly issued by the Johor state government. Police said the suspect was found to have uploaded the documents in the Twitter account in the name of Tuan Syed Sigaraga (@syedsigaraga). Police investigated the case under Section 233 of the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 and those involved could be fined not more than RM50,000 or jailed not more than one year or both upon conviction (Malay Mail, 2017, February 03).). On April 28th, 2016, a 38-year-old man has reportedly been arrested for uploading an alleged provocative Facebook post that insulted the Islamic religion. The suspect had, according to reports, used a pseudonym when uploading the information on social media. It was assumed to have been aimed at sparking racial tension in the state. The suspect was probed under the Sedition Act 1948 and Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 (Bernama, 2016,). On July 22nd, 2016, more than 3,000 people hovered the National Registration Department (NRD) headquarters. This was the result of a fake message distributed via WhatsApp and Facebook. The message had claimed that the NRD in Putrajaya was offering those with Permanent Resident (PR) status with instant citizen status if they apply by that date. Those with PR status had assembled at the headquarters as early as 3 a.m. in hopes of acquiring Malaysian citizenship. They were unaware that the message they received was fake. Despite explaining to them that the message was fabricated, people were still unwilling to leave (Kannan, 2016).

HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Many psychology works correlate personality traits to online social behaviour. The word "personality" comes from the Latin word, Persona which stands for the theatrical mask to project different roles of a performer. The most famous personality theory is Eysenck's Personality Theory. Hans Jürgen Eysenck developed a model of personality based upon just three universal trails; extraversion,

neuroticism, and psychoticism. Extraversion can be defined as to concentrating attention towards other people and the environment. So, a person high in introversion might be discreet and distant, while an individual high in extraversion might be friendly and outward. Neuroticism is related to grumpiness versus even-temper. It refers to an individual's propensity to become disappointed or sensitive. Stability refers to the tendency to stay emotionally constant; meanwhile, individuals who are high on this trait tend to have trouble dealing with realism. Psychoticism may be disruptive, antagonistic, non-empathetic and unscrupulous.

Chen, Chen and Chen (2009), Furnham and Cheng (2000), Furnham and Cheng (1997) and Eysenck (1990) claimed that personality traits (particularly extraversion and neuroticism) have been persistently found to be the main grounds of individuals' continuance intention to use media. This is generally because of happiness gratification, accounting for up to half of the total variance. Researches then extended to test online variables. They found various significant relationships between personality and online social behaviour. For example, Correa, Hinsley and De Zuniga (2010) and Guadagno, Okdie and Eno (2008) found that people scoring on high neuroticism often continue using more social media services such as Facebook, Twitter, and blogs. However, Bosnjak and Tuten (2001) found a negative correlation between neuroticism and general Internet usage. It is also found that people with emotional insecurity seem to have addictive behaviour on the internet. This has led to their continuance usage, as claimed by Hardie and Tee (2007), Li, Yang and Mingxin (2006) and Mehroof and Griffiths (2010). Several relationships between personality and self-reported Facebook features were revealed by Gosling, Augustine, Vazire, Holtzman and Gaddis (2011). For example, they were a positive relationship between extraversion and frequency of Facebook usage and engagement in the site. As in offline contexts, extraverts seek out virtual social engagement, leaving behind a behavioural residue such as friendship connections or picture postings. Psychoticism is the most complex trait within Eysenck's theory, and only lately has some light been shed on its biological environment. Psychoticism is related to the weakness of psychotic disorders, predicts poor adjustment and personality disorders. However, this does not mean that people with high scores on this trait are certain to grieve from such personality disorders (Claridge, 2016). Findings from this study will make this certain. In general, past studies have looked at how a user's personality traits stimulate Internet services continuance usage. Very often, studies examine how personality has led to continuance usage of particular Internet services. This includes social networks (Amichai-Hamburger & Vinitzky, 2010), blogs (Guadagno, Okdie, & Eno, 2008), and fantasy computer role-playing games (Park & Henley, 2007). However, no studies to date have yet tested levels of personality traits (as a representation of online social behaviour), continuance intention and its relations to the act of Internet vigilantism that eventually leads to cyberbullying, especially in Malaysia. Taking into account the above discussion, thus far, this study intends to identify the level of personalities of Malaysian social media users towards internet vigilantism, their continuance intention and its relationships (if any) with the personalities towards internet vigilantism.

Hypothetically, this study is asking whether:

H1: There is a significant relationship between extraversion personality and continuance intention to perform internet vigilantism among Malaysians.

H2: There is a significant relationship between neuroticism personality and continuance intention to perform internet vigilantism among Malaysians.

H3: There is a significant relationship between psychoticism personality and continuance intention to perform internet vigilantism among Malaysians.

METHODOLOGY

An online survey of 41 questions using Google Form was distributed to 247 internet users in Malaysia (n = 247), chosen using purposive sampling method to recruit respondents with specific attributes (Malaysians, active use of internet; and has committed IV before). World Asia Internet Stats by Country and 2018 Population Statistics [internet] (2018) claimed that Malaysia has 25,084,255 internet users in Dec/2017 with 78.3% penetration, thus the sample chosen for this study is 400 (p = .5, >100,000) by referring to table by Israel Glenn sampling table. However, due to time constraint, this study has settled with 247 respondents. The research instrument in this study comprises of 5 sections, namely demographics, extraversion personality, neuroticism personality, psychoticism personality and continuance intention to perform IV. All sections except for Section 1 used 5-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 = "Not Me At All" to 5 = "To A Great Extent Like Me" and "Strongly Disagree" to 5 = "Strongly Agree" for continuance intention to perform IV. Data were analyzed with SPSS using descriptive statistics and regression analysis. Results were categorized in descriptive statistics (percentages, mean and standard deviation) for section 1 and regression analysis (significant/ no significant relationships) for the rest of the sections. Crosschecking with the subject matter Professors to get the standardization of the questionnaire and wording of the questions was done to get the instrument's validity. Cronbach Alpha reliability test on 30 respondents for pre-test gained a high score (.920) and Cronbach Alpha reliability test on 30 respondents for real data collection of 247 respondents was at .937.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The demographic characteristics of respondents indicated that 66% of the respondents were male and the rest were female. A total of 91% of them aged less than 30 and 54% of the respondents use the smartphone to access the Internet. A total of 16% of respondents accessed the Internet at home, while others accessed on the go (14%), workplace (10%), place of education (10%) and various other places depending on their daily matters. This study has reviewed literature in the respective areas and hypothesized that there were significant relationships between extraversion, neuroticism and psychoticism personality with continuance intention to perform IV. Respondents in this study see themselves with a strong extraversion personality as they claimed themselves as a talkative (M = 3.12, SD = 1.040), sociable (M = 3.10, SD = .914) and full of energy person (M = 3.02, SD = 1.000) with a confident and forceful personality (M = 3.01 SD = .963) on social media platforms. Respondents in this study see themselves with mild neuroticism personality. It was relaxing (M = 2.61. SD = 1.067) and a stress relief (M = 2.46, M = 1.095) for them to share current news/events on social media platforms and create interests towards it. However, not being able to share current news/events on social media platforms and create interests towards it has tensed them (M = 2.33, SD = 1.122). Respondents in this study also see themselves with a strong psychoticism personality. They have tried not to be rude on social media platforms (M = 3.99, SD = .993) as they would think things over before sharing current news/events on social media platforms and create interests towards it (M = 3.77, SD = .976). They also find that teasing people using hurtful, practical jokes on social media platforms are harmful (M = 3.43, SD = 1.285). However, interestingly respondents in this study moderately agree to continue uploading images/videos that entail out-of-the-norms act on the internet sites because they feel entitled to their views on disparity

and unfairness in the present justice systems (M = 2.49, MD = 1.089). Respondents will also continue to upload these images/videos to deliberately entice crowds, overpower and castigate crime of a perpetrator (M = 2.48, SD = 1.102). They also regarded the processes of law in Malaysia as sluggish (M=2.44, SD = 1.110).

According to Hassan (2019, February 20), Malaysia is one of the first countries to create laws regarding fake news. Malaysia passed the Anti-Fake News Bill 2018 that would punish citizens on social media or those working at a digital publication for spreading fake news with RM500,000 ringgit ($123,000) fine and a possible a prison sentence of up to six years. The Anti-Fake News Act has been criticized for impeding on free speech and its loose definition of fake news. Hence, the reason why a majority of the parliament voted for its repeal. Nonetheless, the senate had rejected the Anti-fake News (repeal) Bill 2018, which was earlier passed by the Dewan Rakyat because they believed that the law should be improved rather than abolished. Therefore, Malaysians must be reminded of the current existence of Penal Code, Printing Presses and Publications Act 1948 and Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 in preventing the rise of fake news issues.

In general, it was found that there were significant relationships between all personalities (extraversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism personality) with continuance intention to perform IV among Malaysians (p = .000 < 0.05). Findings from this study are alarming as it indicated that Malaysians are deliberately enticing crowds, overpower and castigate crime of a perpetrator (or in some cases, allegedly accused) by performing and intending to continue performing IV. People use their words to demonstrate love and care and also to a fault and to rebuff others. Seeking no other effective avenues, people take out their frustrations online in a way to correct perceived societal wrongdoings and engage in social control of the people they feel need to be brought to justice or corrected. By using the internet to call to action others to punish people for these social infractions, a paradox occurs within privacy, free speech, and the limits of the law. With the existence of Fake News Law, Malaysians will soon be shown about legitimate social morals and etiquette on the Internet. While it will not dispose of digital harassing, it will help with additionally understanding and quicker affirmation of the issue so it can be taken care of seriously. The thought is to secure online substance more so than it is disposed of it. While this is a clever thought, it would be hard to do and along these lines not sensible to about all Internet clients. Although the findings were rather alarming, this study has contributed to the literatures of psychology works that correlate personality traits to online social behaviour.

Acknowledgements

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