PAPERS FROM PARALLEL SESSION B

Impacts of Social and Emerging Media use on Public Relations Practices in Malaysia: Public Relations Practitioners' Perspectives

Siz Siz Lim and Tek Pheung Chuan, University College Malaysia
Cheng Ean (Catherine) Lee, Sunway University Malaysia

Abstract

This research study aimed to measure the actual use of social and other emerging media by public relations practitioners in Malaysia, and explored its impact on public relations practices in terms of communication with audiences by adapting Wright and Hinson's (2016) survey instrument for quantitative survey online survey, and semi-structured interview with the selected respondents from quantitative survey were conducted to cross verify the results and findings. According to the 12-year longitudinal analysis study by Wright and Hinson (2017), Facebook and Twitter were the next most frequently used sites. However, this research found that Malaysian public relations practitioners' usage of Facebook and Instagram are more frequent. Results also found that social and other emerging media are enhancing public relations practices and continue to influence traditional mainstream media. Findings shows that respondents agree strongly that social and other emerging media are changing the practice of public relations, the trend of engaging key opinion leader and influencer is on a rise. The results provide useful insights for academics, researchers and public relations practitioners on how social and emerging media technologies are used in the Malaysian public relations industry as well as the perspectives of public relations practitioners on its impact in their practices.

Introduction

Due to the advancement of technology innovations in the digital era, public relations practitioners have embraced social and other emerging media technologies in their practices. For example, the pervasive use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube has enable public relations practitioners to create more avenues of interaction with their internal and external stakeholders. Social media has been used for communication with customers, competitors, and employees in order to create a dynamic, synchronized, and multidirectional dialogue (Reitz, 2012) because it is considered a cost effective tool in public relations research and for timely targeted dialogue with a wide range of stakeholders (DiStaso, McCorkindale, & Wright, 2011). Besides, the rapid growth of these communication technologies has impacted the practices of public relations as prior research claimed that social and emerging media technologies have dramatically changed how public relations is practiced (Wright, & Hinson, 2015; 2017).

In the Malaysia context, the explosion in social media, especially Facebook has caused many public relations practitioners to recognize the need to use these new media for effective communication with the internal and external audiences (Lee, & Low, 2013). Although there is an increase in research investigating the use of social media in public relations practices especially in the Western country, however, the research to understand the patterns of social media usage in Malaysia is still insufficient.

Literature Review

Literature shows that public relations practitioners have increasingly used social media for online communication and marketing purpose, including internal and external audiences to create a dynamic, synchronized, and multidirectional dialogue (Reitz, 2012). According to DiStaso, McCorkindale & Wright (2011), social media is considered a cost effective tool in public relations research and for timely targeted dialogue with a wide range of stakeholders. Sweetser, and Kelleher (2011) found that public relations practitioners can reap the rewards of social media by opening a channel between an organisation and its publics. DiStaso, and Bortree (2012) in their study claimed that public relations professionals valued social media as a tool for sharing organisation information which is useful for others in decision making outcomes, as well as for organisations to be accountable for the informed actions. Social media technologies have the capacity to connect organisation with its publics, social media has become essential to public relations as a tool for communicating with strategic publics because social media enables real-time, two-way communication (Lewis, & Nichols, 2016).

McCorkindale (2010) argued that despite the growing importance of social and emerging media in public relations practices, practitioners still facing challenges in finding the best way to incorporate social media strategically. According to Leong, Krishnan, and Lee's (2012) study, public relations practitioners in Malaysia acknowledged the importance of evaluation research, but the lack of budget and support from the top management had affected the measurement of public relations practices. DiStaso, McCorkindale, and Wright (2011) further concluded that organisations should conduct trainings for public relations practitioners on relevant tools implementation, and learn how to effectively measure their use, because social media measurement was a topic that has more questions than answers.

According to the Malaysia Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) 2017's internet users survey, there were 24.5 million Internet users in 2016 (76.9%) in Malaysia, and of those who visited social networking sites, 97.3% of them owned Facebook account, followed by Instagram (56.1%). Prior research from Lee, & Low, (2013); Gabriel, & Koh, (2016), Tang & Chan (2016), show that social media has been adopted as a formal channel of communication in the Malaysian public relations practices. According to Lee, and Low (2013), the explosion in social networking sites, especially Facebook, with the increase of two-way interactiveness and connectivity, led to the need to embrace these new media practices for effective two-way communication with the organisation's publics.

Gabriel, and Koh (2016)'s research on Malaysian social media usage found that public relations practitioners were actively using social media to communicate directly with their various constituents, and further produced the desired results. According to Tang & Chan (2016), the widespread use of social media in public relations had help enhanced their performance such as sharing information on Facebook to generate more exposure and to bring a closer relationship between organisations and its audiences. The Malaysian public relations practitioners have perceived social and emerging media as a preferable media for effective two-way communications, and in-depth relationship building with its publics. Although most researchers found that social and emerging media offered numerous opportunities for public relations practitioners, however, the research on impacts of social media on public relations practice is still inadequate for Malaysia. Furthermore, the rise of social and other emerging media has changed the preference of audience communication, this could pose challenges for traditional public relations professionals. Drawing from the literature, this study aimed to measure the use of social and emerging media by public relations practitioners in Malaysia, and to examine the impact of social and emerging media on Malaysian public relations practices. The two research questions (RQ) guiding this study were RQ1: how public relations practitioners in Malaysia have used social and other emerging media in public relations practice? and RQ2: what is the impact of social and emerging media on public relations practices in Malaysia?

Methodologies:
Quantitative
An online survey through Qualtrics.com was used to find out the two research questions of this study which asked about how public relations practitioners in Malaysia have used social and other emerging media in their practices and the impact of social and emerging media on public relations practices in Malaysia.

The public relations practitioners in this sample are those in the public relations agencies as well as in corporations and organisations in Malaysia. The respondents were selected via random sampling of members of Public Relations Consultants' Association (PRCA) Malaysia who received email invitations to participate in the survey, also distributed to other contact of public relations practitioners via email, postings on Facebook and LinkedIn.

The questionnaire comprised of eleven questions, and six demographic questions in a total of 42 items. All items in the questionnaire were adapted from Wright, and Hinson's (2016) survey instrument with minor modifications on the demographic questions. The total items of the questionnaire comprised of 36 items for the nine closed-ended questions ranging from multiple-choice questions and likert-scale questions, and six items of multiple-choice questions for demographic questions. The reliability score for the 42-item was $\alpha=0.782$, which is an acceptable value of alpha, ranging from 0.70 to 0.95 (Tavakol, & Dennick, 2011).

The online survey questionnaire was activated from June until December 2017. A total of 95 public relations practitioners in Malaysia completed the survey and the data was transferred from Qualtrics.com

to IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25 and was further analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Qualitative
Among the 95 respondents who answered the quantitative online survey questionnaire, five public relations agency practitioners in Malaysia with more than 4 years of experience in handling social media for the respective clients, have been selected for in depth interview to find out more insights on social media usage based on the finding of quantitative research.

The interviews were conducted through face to face meet up, telephone and/or email interview based on the respondents' availability. The period of qualitative data collection was from February until August 2018. A set of 6 in-depth interview questions have been used to answer the research questions of this study which asked about how public relations practitioners in Malaysia have used different types of social and emerging media in their practices and the impact of social and emerging media on public relations practices in Malaysia.

First interview question focuses on types of social and emerging media used for public relations practices and how do public relations practitioners in Malaysia used the different types of social and emerging media for public relations and communication work. The second interview question focuses on time spent and frequency of social and emerging media usage in public relations and communication. Third question is to explore motivation of social and emerging media usage, and reason of using the specific medium for public relations practices. Fourth question is to explore whether public relations practitioners conduct research on the communication (content, influence/impact) through social and emerging media, types of research and the outcomes. Fifth question is to examine impact of social and emerging media usage. To what extend the respondent that social and emerging media technologies have dramatically changed how public relations is practiced in Malaysia, the reason and how it's been done. The last question is to find out the implications of the use of social and emerging media technologies by public relations practitioners to Malaysian public relations industry.

Although the number of respondents is small for the qualitative research, however, their job scope are tasked on managing and creating social and emerging media content based on current trends and practices.

Results and Finding for Quantitative Survey
The following tables showcasing the findings to answer the two research questions of the study – how public relations practitioners in Malaysia have used the social and other emerging media and what is the impact of social and emerging media on public relations practices in Malaysia?

Uses of social and emerging media in public relations practice

Table 1: Average time spent in public relations practices with social and emerging media

Time spent with social and emerging media	Frequency (N=95)	Percentage (%)
None	1	1.1
1% - 10% of time	11	11.6
11% - 25% of time	19	20
26% - 50% of time	35	36.8
51% - 75% of time	23	24.2
More than 75% of time	5	5.3

Table 2: Frequency of usage of social and emerging media as part of work in public relations

	Very infrequently	Infrequently	Neither infrequently nor frequently	Frequently	Very frequently	Don't use	Mean
Facebook	3.2%	1.1%	5.3%	26.3%	60%	4.3%	4.52
Instagram	4.2%	5.3%	11.6%	24.2%	42.1%	9.5%	4.27
LinkedIn	7.4%	10.5%	11.6%	20%	18.9%	30.5%	4.26
Snapchat	16.8%	9.5%	10.5%	7.4%	4.2%	48.4%	4.22
Pinterest	16.8%	9.5%	11.6%	6.3%	4.2%	48.4%	4.21
Flickr	18.9%	11.6%	14.7%	0%	0%	51.6%	4.09
Tumblr	18.9%	12.6%	12.6%	0%	2.1%	50.5%	4.09
YouTube	5.3%	12.6%	21.1%	15.8%	29.5%	13.7%	3.95
Google+	12.6%	11.6%	14.7%	17.9%	11.6%	29.5%	3.95
Twitter	11.6%	12.6%	20%	11.6%	15.8%	24.2%	3.84

Table 3: Respondents' perception on the importance of social and other emerging media used in the overall communications and public relations efforts of the organisation

	Mean score
Social networks (Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+)	4.90
Video or content sharing sites (YouTube, Flickr, Instagram)	4.70
Search engine marketing	4.65
Social media management sites (Hootsuite)	4.53
Photo and content sharing sites (Pinterest, Instagram, Snapchat)	4.35
Micro-blogging sites or platforms (Twitter)	4.26
Bookmarking management sites (SpringPro, Evernote, Google Keep)	4.16
Screencast Applications (Screenr)	4.15
Blogs	4.05
Electronic forums or Message boards	4.04
Podcasts	3.89

Table 4: Departments primarily responsible for monitoring and managing social and digital media communication in the organisation

Departments/Organisational Functions	Frequency (N=95)	Percentage (%)
Communications or Public Relations	26	27.4
Technology (IT)	4	4.2
Digital or Social Media	29	30.5

Marketing	22	23.2
This responsibility hasn't been assigned	4	4.2
No function has this primary responsibility	3	3.2
Others	7	7.4

Table 5: Departments should be primarily responsible for monitoring and managing social and digital media communication in the organisation

Departments/Organisational Functions	Frequency (N=95)	Percentage (%)
Communications or Public Relations	39	41.1
Technology (IT)	2	2.1
Digital or Social Media	40	42.1
Marketing	5	5.3
No function has this primary responsibility	3	3.2
Others	5	5.3

Table 6: Measurement on communication through social and other emerging media

	Frequency (N=95)	Percentage (%)
Yes	36	37.9
No	34	35.8
Uncertain / Don't know	25	26.3

Table 7: Measurement by organisation on social and emerging media communication

		Frequency (N=95)	Percentage (%)
Measured the amount of communication disseminated through social and other emerging media	Yes	57	60
	No	20	21.1
	Uncertain / Don't know	18	18.9
Analyzed the content of what's been communicated in social and other emerging media	Yes	62	65.3
	No	18	18.9
	Uncertain / Don't know	15	15.8
Measured the impact information disseminated through social and other emerging media has on influentials, opinion leaders and members of strategic audiences	Yes	54	56.8
	No	19	20
	Uncertain / Don't know	22	23.2
Measured the impact information disseminated through social and other emerging media has on the formation, change and reinforcement of attitudes, opinions and behaviors	Yes	51	53.7
	No	24	25.3
	Uncertain / Don't know	20	21.1

Table 8: Respondents' level of agreement on whether or not public relations practitioners should measure the social and emerging media communication

	Mean
Measured the amount of communication disseminated through social and other emerging media	*4.03*
Analyzed the content of what's been communicated in social and other emerging media	*4.25*
Measured the impact information disseminated through social and other emerging media has on influentials, opinion leaders and members of strategic audiences	*4.28*
Measured the impact information disseminated through social and other emerging media has on the formation, change and reinforcement of attitudes, opinions and behaviors	*4.27*

Impacts of social and emerging media on public relations practices

Table 9: Respondents' level of agreement on the impact of social and emerging media on public relations practices

	Strongly disagree	*Disagree*	*Neither agree nor disagree*	*Agree*	*Strongly agree*	*Mean*
Impact on the overall communications	*0%*	*1.1%*	*6.3%*	*51.6%*	*41.1%*	*4.33*
Impact on how the organisation handles external communications	*0%*	*3.2%*	*4.2%*	*55.8%*	*36.8%*	*4.26*
Impact on how the organisation handles internal communications	*1.1%*	*9.5%*	*13.7%*	*50.5%*	*25.3%*	*3.89*

Results and Finding for qualitative research

Respondent A is holding a position as Associate in a local public relations agency, possess total 7 years of working experience in marketing, communication and public relations. Handling international clients in the field of mobile and internet technology, online marketing, audience engagement and events management.

Respondent A is utilising networking sites like Facebook and Linkedin for research on and keep contact with journalists - media relations. Besides, social media platform such as Facebook, Twitter, Google +, Instagram, Blogs, and YouTube are used for content creation and public outreach, to directly broadcast messages to the public in social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Google +, Instagram, Blogs, and YouTube. As for Influencer outreach, the same platforms are used to identify key influencer and leverage on them to communicate with the public.

Following the client's request, respondent A is using social and emerging media by project basis, on average, the agency did a few projects by month. The agency is having a client in B2B that do content creation such as blog writing on a weekly basis to ensure that they build a knowledge-sharing reputation in the industry, the content is built consistently and regularly.

In respondent A's opinion, with each new media that is introduced, companies risk losing their audiences within the existing media they have. Thus, they have to adopt new emerging media constantly, experiment heavily and determine if they are the way public relations practitioners move forward.

Heavy tracking of online trends on a weekly basis such as looking at YouTube top videos and top Google search trends is a job requirement for respondent A. This allows the practitioner to evaluate trends that

can be used to their project advantage, and also provide recommendations for influencers that can work on. There is also the opportunity to do tracking of competitor activities and observe online chatter about the represented brands through close online media monitoring.

Respondent A think that the social and emerging media has changed the entire industry to become more "faceless". A lot of correspondence with client and journalists now take place online via video, voice-calls and text mails/messages. As such, the need for human to human interaction has been greatly reduced. This has increased productivity but at the same time reduced intimacy in relationships. However, because human to human interaction has become "rare", it appears that when it does occur, the opportunity to build stronger public relations and audience engagement becomes stronger. Public relations practitioners become more recognisable to the media representatives that spoken to face to face as opposed to the other "faceless" practitioners as they've only spoken to online. Additionally, public relations has become a 24 hour job, including the respondent's experience of receiving requests for official statements that must be replied to within 30 mins. Every email that is sent to use now is sent with the expectation for immediate replies.

Respondent A pointed out that the adoption rate of social media technologies in Malaysia is pretty fast. In comparison, the pick-up rate for chat apps like Whatsapp, the adoption of apps like Waze and the use of Facebook has far exceeded the penetration of some first world countries (like England). As such, the Malaysian public relations industry has become very innovative and quick to adopt new tech. This is a trend that is likely to continue. With more adopting high tech tools to communicate, there will be more audiences adopting high tech tools to receive information and consume content. Thus, those in the traditional media space will be required to evolve fast or lose out completely. Public relations agency that live with the traditional way of working will also be left behind. The respondent believe that in the future, we will see more hybrid public relations types, in which integrated communicators will not just be skilled with all communication discipline (ad, marketing, PR, media studies... etc) but also communication technology (technical, hardware and software, know-how).

Respondent B is holding a position as Director of a local public relations agency, possess total 8 years of working experience in marketing, communication and public relations. Handling local and international clients in the field of marketing, product services, and events management.

Respondent B is utilising Facebook for news, opinion and trend watch, Twitter for breaking news, and Instagram for influencer engagement. The current trends and usage on social media platforms such as TikTok, Snapchat and Instagram's Instastories has been on a rise with the promise of anonymity as content posted is automatically deleted after 24 hours.

Major social media platforms are being used every day with high importance.
Respondent B uses primarily Facebook and Twitter to gauge sentiments, and early crisis/issue management to form arguments (if needed) and key messaging. Other functions include gauging a writer/journalists' interest in covering certain topics or subjects.

Research on content through social and emerging media is essential, especially looking at sentiments versus the volume of conversation happening.

In respondent B's opinion, many people choose to communicate ideas, expressions and opinions on social media platforms, thus, public relations practitioners need to be up to speed to ensure key messaging, responses are not tone deaf. These platforms have also create opportunities for everyone to be a reporter, therefore this has also become a media platform to monitor, review and take action if necessary.

Respondent B expressed that by adding work scope, fast turnaround and diversification of skill sets in the area of content creation would help. Public relations practitioners now have to go beyond writing, and think about executing or creating a story/campaign via pictures and video.

Respondent C is holding a position as Senior Influencer Manager a local public relations agency, possess total 8 years of working experience in communication and public relations. Handling local and international clients in the field of social influencer and audience engagement, online marketing, consumer products services, and events management.

Different set of social and emerging media has been utilised based on client's request and the industry or products involved. In respondent C's opinion, Instagram works very well in the food, fashion, beauty and lifestyle industry to promote a brand or product. And hence, besides traditional media, public relations practitioners will invite influencers or media who are strong on instagram for media events. Facebook used to be stronger before Instagram takes the front seat. The change in Facebook algorithm has made it more challenging to use Facebook for publicity without paid boosting. What the respondent likes to do is to look into relevant community/support group that the brand or company can collaborate with.

Respondent C emphasises that it is very important to make sure frequency of social and emerging media usage is high, because their lifestyle clients see more potentials and impact in social media over traditional media. Apart from monitoring monitor traditional media, Respondent C will spend one to two hours per day just to monitor social media accounts of influencers, to look out for rising influencers as well as brand mentions.

Based on respondent C's experience, public relations value and calculation by itself serve no meaning for certain types of clients in current practice, as social and emerging media has change the landscape of how impression and values been appreciated.

Monitoring the social space is been conducted on regular basis to find out what kind of photos and content can yield higher engagement rate, and whether the engagement rate bring to conversion. Due to digital space is very broad, each medium has to be used and treated differently. The respondent C found that it takes time to find the right community for one brand/influencer to grow, and a strong and unique personal or brand personality on social space will help the growth of followers.

Respondent C think that people are more accessible to content, hence it is no surprise that they are spoilt for content. With that said, audiences are pickier with content they choose for themselves. To earn more eyeballs, public relations practitioners would observe less formatted, emotion-packed, snappier, and catchy or even a more sensationalised approach in content delivery.

It has further fragmentised the already fragmented audiences group in Malaysia. Consumers have more consumption options and public relations has to reach out to more relevant and targeted channels in order to bring an impact to a brand. Clients are also looking for a more measurable ROI and conversion rate.

In respondent C's opinion, for some public relations companies who didn't see and catch on this rising trend 5 years ago, they are now a little out of touch. It is not difficult to notice a lot of big integrated firms have shut down their public relations arm or switch to digital service fully. Take Geometry PR as an example. Conventional public relations is no longer in need with digital agencies having copywriting and media optimisation capability. On the other hand, you can also see other opportunities for public relations with the rise of social media. The need for issue and crisis management has also increased to manage the community in a more tactful manner.

Respondent D is holding a position as Senior Account Manager an international public relations agency, possess total 6 years of working experience in marketing, communication and public relations. Handling international clients in the field of mobile gadget and technology, marketing, consumer products services, and events management.
Standard usage of social and emerging media for Facebook, Instagram and Linkedin is being practiced. Facebook and Instagram usage is more on mass awareness strategy that targets wide range of audiences in Malaysia. Linkedin usage is more on networking and thought-leadership building.

Respondent D who works in an international agency spend approximately 50% of his time on social and emerging media for communication, research, and execution of communication tactics for clients. In respondent D's opinion, the dynamic of communication has switched from traditional medium to social media, where people share opinions most of the time. Research is conducted mostly on the social influencers and their performance evaluation. Sometimes, the respondent will do research on brands' social pages performance based on client's request. Respondent D thinks that the power of influence has changed. Mass audience value social media platforms over traditional media as their opinions are valued too. Having said that traditional media still hold the credible power whereas social media/ emerging media tend to raise a topic or movement only. Respondent D mentioned that outcome is happening real-

time, public relations practitioners have to be extra mindful and change the mode of working from fast to now, every single minute is being measured if the objectives are achieved.

Respondent E is holding a position as Senior Public Relations Executive in an international public relations agency, possess total four years of working experience in online media communication and public relations. Handling international clients in the field of online marketing, consumer product or services, and events management.

Respondent E's agency uses a many burgeoning online key opinion leaders, Instagramers, and bloggers in social and emerging media for public relations practices now, mainly because they are the 'new mainstream' for a lot of targeted audience now. Ways of engagement mainly can be differentiated into paid and unpaid engagement, and usually the engagement methods tend to be more creative and interactive, depending on different clients. Main purpose is to interact with their followers.

Frequency of usage is high for each client in almost all campaigns and / or public relations initiatives. It's becoming something that must be included in all activities now, as clients see this is a way to reach out to their target audience now with the digitalisation. According to Respondent C, social and emerging media is heavily used because of the digitalisation, and it's unavoidable that people are spending more and more time online. When this is happening, the traditional public relations approach might not reach as many people as desired anymore, and this will be the way to adapt, so that public relations reach is still maximised.

Media dipstick is often carried out in ensuring accuracy and suitability of content and its impact. With social and emerging media becoming one of the important public relations 'target media' segment, research is surely conducted on them on its content and effects. Apart from that, desktop research (or mobile research - Instagram trends watching, hashtag studies, etc.), objective and subjective research also been carried out. Results will usually reflect how the trends actually are, and it is greatly useful in ensuring key messages, contents are well adjusted to what target audience want to consume, as contents.

In respondent C's opinion, there are definitely big changes being brought to Malaysia's public relations industry and practices. It can be easily seen from the downsizing of many print publications - it's inevitable that target audiences are switching their content platforms from the traditional print magazines and mainstream media to online media, key opinion leaders, and bloggers. This is done by the actually interesting content, and also more fun and casual content that's created by them, and its impact to the traditional media are further enhanced when people are just going paperless, and the hugely increasing screen time.

The way of public relations practices has been changed, and even some traditional PR agencies are struggling if they do not somehow start providing public relations services for the social and emerging media segment. From the picking up of usage of social media by public relations practitioners, acceptance of online media contents by target audience, and by looking at the steadily increasing price for certain social and emerging media paid engagement, it's clear that it's already become a practice of Malaysia's public relations industry.

Discussion and Conclusion
The findings and results from quantitative survey revealed that Malaysian public relations practitioners have frequently used Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn for work purposes and spend long working time in public relations and communication via social and emerging media. According to the qualitative research, among the three social media mentioned earlier, Facebook and Instagram are the top two social media used by public relations agency, which is in line with the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission's Internet Users Survey (2017), where Facebook and Instagram are the top two preferences of audience market.

In both quantitative and qualitative research, the result shows that the impact of social and emerging media use on Malaysian public relations practices has changed the way their agency and clients' preference of communicates based on the current trends and audience's online behaviour. This result coincide with Wright and Hinson's research (2017) that 'the impact is much more pronounced for external than internal audience. The result on the impact of social and emerging media usage is also

aligned with some studies (Lee, & Low, 2013; Gabriel, & Koh, 2016) in which the practices have impacted the way agencies and organisations handle online communications.

Through the qualitative in-depth interview, the respondents even pointed out that for public relations agencies that only focus on traditional practices, would have lost their market or audience if they did not catch the trends for social and emerging media. The total time spent and everyday tasks of a Malaysian public relations agencies' practitioner, required relevant skills in conducting content research, engage influencers, and managing social media account for their clients.

This study concludes that Facebook is still the black horse of social and emerging media frequently used by public relations practitioners in Malaysia for communication and public relations practices, and the impact of Facebook and other and social and emerging media, especially Instagram, has changed the way communication is handled by the public relations agencies for the fragmented market of multi-racial Malaysian audiences.

Although the total number of respondents is not high, this study has provided useful overall quantitative data and in-depth qualitative results and insights for academics, researchers and public relations practitioners on how social and emerging media technologies are used in the Malaysian public relations agency.

Future direction of research may focus on comparison of in-house public relations practitioners' usage and the effectiveness of utilisation of social and emerging media in various industry, also the impacts of engaging key opinion leader and influencer in social and emerging media.

References

DiStaso, M.W., McCorkindale, T., & Wright, D.K. (2011). How public relations executives perceive and measure the impact of social media in their organisations. Public Relations Review, 37(3), 325-328.

Gabriel, S. P. & Koh, C. (2016). Social media use by public relations practitioners in Malaysia: An exploratory study, Journal of Developing Areas, Tennessee State University, College of Business, vol. 50(5), pages 469-477.

Lee, C.E., & Low, F. (2013). Social media and public relations: The perception and adoption of Facebook by Malaysian public relations consultancies as effective external communication tool. Proceedings of the Asian Conference on Media and Mass Communication 2013, Osaka, Japan, November 8–10, 2013.

Lewis, B. K., & Nichols, C. (2016). Social Media and Strategic Communication: A Three-Year Study of Attitudes and Perceptions about Social Media among College Students, Public Relations Journal, Vol. 10, No. 1.

Malaysia Communications and Multimedia Commision (2017). Internet Users Survey 2017.

Reitz, Amy (2012). Social media's function in organisations: A functional analysis approach. Global Media Journal, 5(2), 41-56.

Tang, M. J. & Chan, E. T. (2016), Use of Social Media in PR: A Change of Trend, World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology, International Science Index 112, International Journal of Social, Behavioral, Educational, Economic, Business and Industrial Engineering, 10(4), 1279 - 1288.

Tavakol, M., & Dennick, R. (2011). Making Sense of Cronbach's Alpha. International Journal of Medical Education, 2, 53-55.

Wright, D.K., & Hinson, M.D. (2015). Examining social and emerging media use in public relations practice: A ten-year longitudinal analysis. Public Relations Journal, 9(2), 1-26.

Wright, D.K., & Hinson, M.D. (2016). Tracking social and emerging media use in public relations practice: An annual longitudinal analysis. Paper presented at the 19th Annual International Public Relations Research Conference, Coral Gables, Florida, March 4, 2016.

Wright, D.K., & Hinson, M.D. (2017). Tracking how social and other digital media are being used in public relations practice: A twelve-year study. Public Relations Journal, 11(1), 1-30.

About the Authors

Siz Siz Lim and Tek Pheung Chuan are faculty of Communication and Creative Industries, Tunku Abdul Rahman University College Malaysia; Cheng Ean (Catherine) Lee is a faculty members of the Department of Communication and Liberal Arts, School of Arts, Sunway University Malaysia, Sunway University Malaysia.