SOCIAL MEDIA USE FOR CORPORATE DISCLOSURE AMONG PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTITIONERS IN MALAYSIAN COMPANIES: ITS EFFECT ON PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

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by

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ABSTRAK

Bukti daripada penyelidikan terdahulu mencadangkan bahawa penggunaan media sosial dalam organisasi mempunyai kesan positif terhadap persepi prestasi keorganisasian. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengui secara empirikal hubungan dalam konteks Malaysia. Dengan demikian, kajian ini memperkenalkan pendedahan korporat, yang diambil dari Teori Pengurusan Impresi (IMT) dan persepsi prestasi keorganisasian. Di samping itu, peranan faktor teknologi, organisasi, dan persekitaran, yang dihasilkan oleh Tornazky & Fleisher Rangka Kerja Teknologi-Organisasi-Alam Sekitar (TOEF), telah diuji sebagai pendorong penggunaan media sosial untuk pendedahan korporat dalam kajian ini. Menggunakan dua lensa teori dan penyelidikan masa lalu, kajian ini membina rangka kerja model yang menggambarkan hubungan antara pembolehubah ini. Kajian ini menggunakan penyelidikan rentas seksyen untuk mengumpulkan data daripada 120 orang pengamal perhubungan awam dalam pelbagai jenis organisasi di Malaysia. Model ini diuji menggunakan PLS-SEM. Daripada lapan hipotesis yang diuji dalam kajian ini, enam yang disokong. Dapatan menunjukkan hubungan langsung yang signifikan antara kegunaan media sosial untuk pendedahan korporat dengan persepsi prestasi keorganisasian; hubungan tidak langsung yang penting antara penggunaan media sosial untuk fungsi perhubungan awam dan persepsi prestasi keorganisasian.

Hubungan daripada segi teknologi dan persekitaran ke atas kegunaan media sosial untuk pendedahan korporat disokong. Beberapa implikasi kajian telah diambil daripada penemuan ini. Pertama, dapatan kajian menunjukkan intensiti tinggi tetapi kepelbagaian penggunaan media sosial untuk fungsi berkaitan pekerjaan dalam kalangan pengamal perhubungan awam di Malaysia. Kedua, faktor teknologi dan persekitaran meramalkan penggunaan media sosial untuk pendedahan korporat dalam konteks Malaysia. Ketiga, penggunaan media sosial untuk pendedahan korporat di kalangan pengamal perhubungan awam mempunyai hubungan positif dengan persepsi prestasi keorganisasian. Keempat, media sosial adalah satu kuasa yang menganggu dalam amalan perhubungan awam di Malaysia. Sumbangan teori, metodologi, dan praktis kajian ini jelas dibincangkan.

SOCIAL MEDIA USE FOR CORPORATE DISCLOSURE AMONG PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTITIONERS IN MALAYSIAN COMPANIES: ITS EFFECT ON PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

ABSTRACT

Evidences from past research suggest that social media use in organizations has positive effects on perceived organizational performance. The present study aims to empirically test the relationship in Malaysian context. In doing so, this present study introduces corporate disclosure, drawn from Impression Management Theory (IMT), as the mediator in the relationship between technological, organizational, and environmental factors and perceived organizational performance. In addition, the role of technological, organizational, and environmental factors, deduced from Tornazky & Fleisher's Technological-Organizational-Environmental Framework (TOEF), were tested as antecedents of social media use for corporate disclosure in the present study. Social media use for public relations functions is tested as a moderator in the relationship between corporate disclosure and perceived organizational performance. Using two theoretical lenses and a body of past research, the study develops a model framework depicting relationships among these variables. This study employed a cross-sectional research to collect data from 120 public relations practitioners in various types of companies in Malaysia. The model was tested using PLS-SEM. Out of eight hypotheses were tested in this study, six were supported. The findings reveal significant direct relationship between social media use for corporate disclosure and perceived organizational performance; and also the significant indirect relationship

between social media use for public relations functions and perceived organizational performance. Relationships that from technological and environmental factors in social media use for corporate disclosure were supported. Several implications of the study were extracted from these findings. Firstly, the findings indicate high intensity but low diversity of social media use for job-related functions among public relations practitioners in Malaysia. Secondly, technological and environmental factors predict social media use for corporate disclosure in Malaysian context. Thirdly, social media use for corporate disclosure among public relations practitioners have positive relationship with perceived organizational performance. Fourthly, social media is a disruptive force in public relations practice in Malaysia. The theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions of the present study were evident and explicitly discussed.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents background of the study in terms of explaining the outcome of technological innovation on media (in this context it specifically refers to social media) on both corporate disclosure and perceived organizational performance. It also states the problem statement, then followed by the research questions and research objectives, scope of the study, significance of the study, and the structure of this thesis. Lastly, the summary concludes this chapter.

1.1 Technological Innovation, Social Media, and Perceived Organizational Performance

Nowadays, technological innovation is a key to organizational success. Studies show that technological innovation leads to a decrease in operations cost (Zhu et al., 2006), an increase in efficiency and productivity (Wu & Subramanian, 2011; Teo et al., 2006) and acts as an enabler for organizations to achieve its goals and objectives (Windsor et al., 2013). It is important to acknowledge that technological innovation could be in two forms; first is product or terminal, and second is process or instrumental (Tornazky and Fleisher, 1990). According to Tornazky and Fleisher (1990), product or terminal refers to an innovation that is valuable in itself, meanwhile process or instrumental refers to its role as a mean toward some other outcomes. The invention of the Internet, for example, is a product innovation but the use of its applications for online shopping, for instance, can be categorized as a process or an instrumental innovation. The latter is often associated

with the use of technology to improve the ways that people do things in their everyday lives or the ways that organizations operate on a daily basis.

Central to this study is to investigate the process or incremental innovation in organizations; that is the use of social media for specific task that is corporate disclosure and determine its direct relationship with perceived organizational performance. The justification for opting social media as a basic tenet in this research is highly acceptable because of its in-built and inclusive features. Firstly, it is a "web of never-ending and constantly shifting clusters on *conversation* that have collapsed the traditional boundaries of *space* and *time*" (Mersham et al., 2009:148). As social media continues to permeate means of *conversation* among individuals, there is a growing trend among Malaysians to devote enormous amount of time and attention on social media platforms. Facebook is ranked number one among Malaysian users with 93 percent have its account, followed by Instagram with 57 percent and YouTube with 48.3 percent (Internet Users Survey 2018, MCMC).

Secondly, it is a group of Internet-based applications that are built on the ideological and technological foundations of *Web 2.0* (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010:61). According to Laing (2013), there are many new application emerging in the Web 2.0 that have the potential to impact social media and some categories/platforms are overlapping in nature. The list among others, not limited to, are 1) *location-based networking services/geo-social netw*orks (e.g., Foursquare, Yelp etc.), 2) *social bookmarking* (e.g., del.icio.us, Evernote, Google Keep, CiteULike etc.), 3) social news (e.g., Google Reader, bloglines, Digg, Reddit, Furl, etc.) 4) *special-interest social networks* (e.g., Caster, Dogster, Spotify, Last fm,

TripAdvisor, Epinions, etc.), 5) *social virtual gaming* (e.g., World of Warcraft, Farmville, etc.), 6) *social virtual world* (e.g., Second Life, etc.), 7) *mobile apps* that use the web browsers to deliver content and optimized for specific screen sizes, 8) *podcast*, a syndicated online audio or video for playback in a computer or portable media player (e.g., Podcast Alley, Yahoo! Podcast, The Executive Lounge with Andrew Coffey, etc.), 9) *screencasting*, sharing computer screen across the web either in real time through conferencing tools like GoToMeeting or WebEx, or via sharing a video recording (e.g., Screenr, etc.) and 10) *microblogging*, users can follow or subscribe to another's post (e.g., Twitter, Plurk, Jaiku, Seesmic, Posterous, Tumblr, Pownce, Plurk, Yammer, etc.).

Thirdly, it is a platform to share ideas, content, thoughts, and relationship online in the form of *text*, *audio*, *video*, *images*, and *communities* (Scott, 2011). Media sharing which consists of photo and video sharing allows users to upload photos, album, and user-generated video for viewing, tagging, rating, and commenting. Examples of photo sharing platforms are Instagram, Shutterbug, Flickr, Pownce, Plurk, Yammer and etc. Some of the platforms for video sharing are YouTube, Vimeo, Metacafe, Hulu, and etc.

Fourthly, it is a broad category of communications media which enables *social interaction* among people, whether they are known to each other or strangers, localized in the same place or geographically dispersed (Chandler & Munday, 2011). Social network site/networking site is a platform created for social interaction where members can establish profiles and create links to a network of friends known to

each other or introduced by a mutual friend for example Facebook, MySpace, Bebo, LinkedIn, QZone, Google+, Friendster, Classmates.com, and etc.

Fifthly, it is a group of online media which shares most of all the characteristics for example *participation*, *openness*, *conversation*, *community*, and *connectedness* (Mayfield, 2008). Participation refers to the blurred line between media and audience in the sense that social media encourages contribution and feedback. Openness refers to the idea that most social media rarely have any barriers to access and to make use of its content. Community is an idea where social media allows the creation of the community that shares interest quickly and effectively. Connectedness refers to one of the common features of social media that allow users to make use of links to other sites, resources, and people.

Finally, it is considered as an *"earned media"* in public relations context since it does not involve any form of payment from the organizations that are using social media platforms. These organizations use social media platforms for example YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter so that audience can use them for sharing, liking, and commenting. On the other hand, "paid media" for example TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, outdoor, display requires the organization to pay in order to get the messages broadcasted/published in it.

These characteristics/features of social media that make it completely dissimilar and distinctive from traditional media as mentioned above are very important in the context of this present study because it has evidently become a technological innovation that potentially can alter the communicative behaviours of

people interaction at an individual level and organizational level. Thus, this study would like to explore this phenomonen in organinzational setting for example profesional use of social media among public relations practitioners in Malaysian context.

The logical appeal for this investigation is evident. Past research shows that organizations with a social media presence are more valued by the market in terms of enhancing its financial performance (Hui Du & Wei Jiang, 2015). Social media influence on organizational performance can be seen through enhanced customer's relationship and customer service, cost reduction, improved information sharing and accessibility, improved brand visibility, and revenue generation (Parveen et al., 2015). More importantly, social media use has positive impacts on how people view an organization. Schniederjans et al., (2013) found that effective use of social media increases positive feeling towards the organization (ingratiation), shows competency (self-promotion), creates fear-factor (intimidation), suggests integrity, self sacrifice and moral worthiness (exemplification), and enjoins helping other in need (supplication). These suggest successful impression management tactics; an approach which this study uses to examine key concept of the present study.

An area in which social media has significant influence on is public relations practice. Studies show that social media has brought fundamental shifts to public relations with regard to shaping the core concepts and practices of public relations once more (Motion, Health & Leitch, 2016). Phillips and Young (2009) assert that the social media has changed everything about public relations, especially in terms of those who are responsible for conducting online public relations activities. Why does

social media has great influence on public relations? The answer can be found from reexamining the definition of public relations. Principally, public relations focuses on reputation, notwithstanding it is about *reputation* – "the result of what you do, what you say, and what others say about you" (Chartered Institute of Public Relations, 2008). As public relations looks after reputation with the aim of earning understanding and support and influencing opinion and behaviour, a mutual understanding between an organization and its publics is the goal in public relations practices.

A concept of dialogue is imperative in public relations particularly in the Internet and social media epoch (Wan & Theenissen, 2012). This is owing to the the fact that social media provides avenue for people to share their ideas, content, way of thinking, and relationship online. In other word, anyone is able to make, comment on, and add to social media content (Scott, 2011) which traditional media not capable to provide. Wan and Theenissen (2012) assert that organizations should be willing to engage in a dialogue provided that these organizations understand the nature of it so that they can abandon control over communication and allow stakeholders to express themselves honestly and openly. They conclude that organizations cannot engage in the true dialogue with the absence of willingness and understanding. Briones et al. (2011) provides evidence of an effective two-way dialogue between constituents, the media, and community as exhibited by the practise of public relations in the Red Cross, which has been accomplished primarily via two social media platforms (e.g. Twitter and Facebook). Scholars, such as Vujnovic and Kruckeberg (2010), even assert that organizations must recognize the strengths of the new social media to succeed in this global competitive environment. There is a massive call for

organizations to enter into the existing global networking organizations and corporations (e.g., PR Newswire or Communispace) and embrace social media to survive and thrive in today's digital age.

It is imperative to note that facilitating communication and also engaging in relationships with the publics are the primary tasks of the practitioners of public relations. So, it is crucial that public relations practitioners play their roles to assist their organizations to succeed in this new environment. As a result, using social media by public relations practitioners has become a norm in today's organizations. Public relations practitioners employ social media in order to build and maintain a network of relationship with their publics.

Another area of growing interest is the deliberate usage of social media for communicating corporate disclosure. The deliberate dissemination of material financial (and non-financial) information via formal or informal channels which is necessary to future action signifies corporate disclosure (Gibbins et al., 1990). It is through corporate disclosure practice that public relations practitioners develop and boost their companies' reputation. This is in line with Impression Management Theory (IMT), a theoretical lense of the present study, which assumes that organizations want to be viewed by other parties in a favorably and to evade being viewed negatively (Rosenfeld, Giacalone & Riordan, 1995).

With the increasing use of social media in organization, it is assumed that the use facilitates corporate disclosure. Past research has disclosed categories of social media that were used for corporate disclosure. These studies found Twitter as a preferred

medium for corporate disclosure (Prokofieva, 2015); Twitter as a link to a press releases (Blankespoor et al., 2013); Facebook and Twitter as the chosen platforms for corporate disclosure (Zhou et al., 2015); and the use of (i) social media, (ii) mobile apps, (iii) email alerts etc. to reveal news about organizations to mainly customers and also investors (Zhang, 2015).

Hence, it is pertinent to infer that social media assists the process of doing public relations to achieve organizational goals, which Tornazky and Fleisher's (1990) work refers to as a form of technological innovation. They introduced Technology-Organizational-Environmental Framework (TOEF) to identify three contexts that are capable to influence the adoption of a technological innovation in an organization; that are technological, organizational, and environmental contexts.

Past studies have used this framework to examine a vast disciplines such as e-commerce (Gibbs & Kraemer, 2004); e-business adoption (Zhu et al., 2003); Internet non-users adoption intention and adoption behaviour (Peng et al., 2012); Public Internet Access Points (PAIPs) use (Afacan et al., 2013); Radio Identification (RFID) readiness (Lyu et al., 2014); adopters and non-adopters of e-procurement (Teo et al., 2009); Web 2.0 technologies (Saldana & Krishnan, 2012); RFID adoption (Wu & Subramaniam, 2011); mobile selling (San Martin, 2013); post-adoption innovation diffusion (Zhu et al., 2006); e-business diffusion (Lin & Lin, 2009); e-business adoption and usage (Zhu & Kraemer, 2005); Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) usage (Sila & Dobni, 2012); e-procurement adoption (Huntgeburth et al., 2012); digital transformation of aviation industry (Scott, 2007); and cloud computing adoption (Borgman, 2013).

In the present study, the framework is applied to uncover the role of technology characteristics (i.e., technological factors), organizational facilitating conditions (i.e., organizational factors) and external pressure from competitors and stakeholders (i.e., environmental factors) in influencing the use of social media for corporate disclosure. This study will further extend our understanding beyond adoption of the social media in the organizations and to look at the effects of social media use for corporate disclosure on perceived organizational performance. This research is critical and timely in understanding the impact of adoption due to flourishing growth of social media in organizations. The present study examines the social media activity of public relations practitioners in Malaysia's companies. Hence, it is imperative to look into an overview of public relations practice in Malaysia and analyse related studies on this theme. The subsequent section will focus on the public relations in the context of Malaysia.

1.1.1   Public Relations in Malaysia

In essence, public relations in Malaysia has transformed itself from mainly to satisfy the affairs of the government in the beginning to the crucial role it plays in the private sector in promoting organizations images and soliciting benefits from the portrayal of the organizational images (Syed Arabi, 2004). This transformation is in line with globalization since the year of 2000 (Theaker, 2008). The driver of globalization, which is the technological advancement and telecommunication convergence, assisted public relations to further developed in Malaysia (Sriramesh & Vercic, 2003). Although public relations is not yet parallel with other professional profession like medicine and law, it has been developing rapidly in Malaysia

(Zulhamri & Threadgold, 2008) to cater the need of both public and private/corporate sectors. Figure 1.1 presents the timeline of public relations from its early inception until its present day in Malaysia.

Year	Event
1939	Department of Information was formed to disseminate information on World War II
1951	Department of Information was repalced with Department of Information Services to disseminate government policies to masses
1962	Institute of Public Relations Malaysia, (IPRM), a professional body was set up
1971	Institution of Higher Learnings started offering public relations program to produce both public relations professionals for the industry and public relations academia
1999	Public Relations and Communications Association of Malaysia (PRCA), an independent, non-profit organization representing public relations and communications practitioners working in-house or as consultancies
2008	Government renamed public relations department in all ministries to Corporate Communication Unit/Department as a rigorous approach to enhance the roles and functions of public relations department

Figure 1.1. Timeline of Public Relations in Malaysia

Research examining public relations in Malaysian context, however, is still limited. A few studies that appeared in the literature have focused on several issues such as the roles of public relations practitioners (Periasamy, 2007; Ezhar and Shamini, 2009), excellence public relations practices (Mokhtaruddin, 2012), professional values, ethics, and professionalism (Syed Arabi & Mohammed, 2016), Islamic ethics application in public relations (Nur Nasliza & Jamilah, 2018), and social media use in public relation practices (Catherine & Low, 2013; Kalthom et al., 2014; Gabriel & Koh, 2016; Zeti, 2019) in Malaysia. There is a growing interest among Malaysian researchers to study the relation between social media and public

relations practices as recent scholarship reveals the potential of social media in facilitating interactions between public relations practitioners and their stakeholders.

Catherine and Low (2013), for example, examined the adoption of social networking sites among members of Public Relations and Communications Association of Malaysia (PRCA) and they found that Facebook is an effective tool for communicating with the stakeholders. Meanwhile, Kalthom et al., (2014) in their preliminary study on Malaysia Airlines MH370 crisis, found that social media has changed crisis communication due to its attributes of immediacy, ubiquity, and availability. They recommended that basic communication principles must be applied to social media use for crisis management and that online communities' news must follow the communication principles. Gabriel & Koh (2016), on the other hand, found social media was used by public relations practitioners to disseminate information to strategic publics and its usage has benefited the profession. A more recent study by Zeti (2019) found that public relations practitioners in Malaysia perceived social media as a threat to the organizations' reputation even though it serves as a strategic tool for stakeholders engagement. These studies provide some evidence of social media use by public relations practitioners, but its effects on perceived organizational performance in Malaysian context is still understudied.

1.2   Research Problem

Social media acts as a revolutionary force that change the way public relations practitioners think and act (Grunig, 2009). Prior to the popularity of myriad social media platforms, company websites or corporate websites are the only identified and

selected means for organizations to communicate with the publics. The emergence of many social media categories brings an incremental change to public relations practices as it allows an easy and effective two-way communication between the organizations and their stakeholders. Nevertheless, there is a contradictory perspective. On one hand, social media facilitates communication, on the other hand the organizations tend to lose control of the distribution of contents via social media. Previously, by engaging in traditional media, organizations were in control of their corporate images and messages. Traditional public relations practice, according to Burns (2008:7) dictated what to be delivered to the key public through mass media and press industry. With the emergence of social media, this control is no longer exercised. Now everyone can become a journalist and in turn, he or she can talk anything about the organization (Gregory, 2012). As a result, public relations practitioners are no longer in control of the new communication technology and its application since it has given the general public the power to cause direct consequences for the organization (Vujnovic & Kruckeberg, 2010). The consequences could be positive or negative.

In light of this, different approaches were adopted by relevant authorities. The US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), a regulator of public listed companies (PLCs) in the US, for instance, had given permission for PLCs to use variety of social media to communicate with their stakeholders provided that they announce beforehand which social media they would like to opt for (The Star, 5 April 2013). This move has come out timely and appropriately due to the pervasiveness of social media today and at the same time underscored the significance of social media as a corporate disclosure tool. On the contrary,

Securities Commission (SC) which regulates Bursa Malaysia prohibits the usage of other social media platforms by PLCs as the means to disclose corporate information to the publics (e.g., retail, institutional, and foreign investors, financial community, regulators, government, prospective and existing investors). The prohibition suggests that SC is still functioning as the depository of all corporate disclosures by PLCs and that material information can only be accessed via SC websites. There is a discrepancy in the way that these regulators weigh the benefits and the shortcomings of social media use for corporate disclosure. The posssible reason for the prohibition is to avoid the negative consequences as a result of the lack of control on content distribution by the organizations.

The basis for promoting social media use in this context, on the other hand, can be linked to the body of literature. There are some evidences that suggest the positive effects of social media use on perceived organizational performance. Past studies found that social media has positive effect on firm's performance (Hui Du & Wei Jiang, 2015) and positive investors' reaction to Corporate Social Disclosure (CSD) on investment behaviour in the US, Japan, France, and Sweden (Der Laan Smith et al., 2010). There is, however, a lack of studies examining the impact of social media use for corporate disclosure on perceived organizational performance in the Malaysian context. So far, there is only one study by Parveen et al. (2015) focusing on Malaysian context that linked the positive consequences of social media use on perceived organizational performance. They developed 5 themes of perceived organizational performance namely enhanced customers' relationship and customers service, cost reduction, improved information sharing and accessibility, improved brand visibility, and revenue generation. The study by Parveen et. al (2015), used a

qualitative approach to cluster the types of perceived organizational performances. Empirical testing on the relationship between social media use for corporate disclosure and perceived organizational performance of Malaysian companies is yet to be explored. The present study intends to fill in this void.

The baseline data about the use of social media by public relations practitioners, particularly in Malaysia, is also limited (see Catherine & Low, 2013; Kalthom et al., 2014; Gabriel & Koh, 2016; and Zeti, 2019). Studies examining it in Western context, on the other hand, found mixed findings. Despite high penetration of social media use in organizations (Ratliff & Kunz, 2014; Perry et al., 2003; Giplin, 2010; Ciszek, 2013; Waters et al., 2009; Zorn et al., 2010; and Liu et al., 2012), some studies (Taylor & Perry, 2005; Toledano, 2010) demonstrated low adoption rate of social media among public relations practitioners. Avidar (2009) reported that the usage level was still at the beginning stage and Toledano (2010) claimed that practitioners were unable to benefit from social media use to upgrade their professional status. Alikilic and Abatek (2012) highlighted that not all social media platforms and applications were equally adopted by public relations practitioners.

One aspect that past research has overlooked is the use of social media in organization for specific functions. Existing studies tend to focus on general use of social media by public relations practitioners (e.g., Wolf & Archer, 2012; Avery et al., 2010; Eyrich et al., 2008; Briones et al., 2011; Kelleher, 2009; Curtis et al., 2009; Freberg et al., 2013; Taylor & Kent, 2010; Diga & Kelleher, 2009; Sweetser et al., 2011 & Waters et al., 2010) and the level of social media adoption of social media by organizations (e.g., Prokofieva, 2015; Blankespoor et al., 2013; Zhou et al., 2015;

Zhang, 2015; Hui Du & Wei Jiang, 2015; Schniederjans et al., 2013; Der Laan Smith et al., 2010; and Parveen et al., 2015). Studies also reveal that blogs, wikis, podcasts, social network sites/social networking sites, social news/news aggregation/RSS feeds, and video sharing offer unique properties for public relations functions (e.g., Burns, 2008). The typology of use depicting the types of social media used for specific public relations functions, however, is still untapped. At the time of writing, there were only two studies on social media use for public relations functions (e.g., Eyrich et al., 2008 and Alikilic & Atabek, 2012). The present study aims to extend the typology of use by linking social media platforms and public relations functions. This leads to the testing of social media use for corporate disclosure and its effect on perceived organizational performance and moderated by the usage of social media for public relations functions in the present study.

Another strand of research focuses on public relations practitioners' perception of the social media use in organizations. Public relations practitioners feel the growing importance and relevance of social media in their jobs (Bajkiewicz et al., 2011); social media offers unique properties for public relations practice (Burns, 2008) and the practice of public relations via social media is effective and indispensable (Briones et al., 2011). It is important then to delve into factors leading to the adoption of social media by public relations practitioners. There is a vast body of literature on innovation adoption. Generally, the literature agrees on several aspects that determine innovation adoption. First is innovation characteristics; it is compatible with the situation, and is well-suited to the norm of the organization (Samsudin et al., 2013), it is easy to demonstrate the benefits of using a technological innovation in the organization (Peng, Tai-Quan et al., 2012), the organization is

usually the first to try out a technological innovation in the industry and the organization likes to experiment with an innovation (San Martin, 2013).

Second is organizational supports; top management promotes the use an innovation in organization (Wu &Subramaniam, 2011); information sharing on an innovation is encouraged and recommended in the organization (Teo et al., 2006), and interaction with the colleagues helped he/she to learn more about an innovation (Talukder & Quasi, 2011). Third is environmental factors; such as the move by any industry player to use an innovation would put pressure on his/her organization to do the same (Sila, 2013) and consistent legislative framework related to the use of an innovation in an organization (Teo et al., 2006).

The present study acknowledges the influence of these factors and adopt Technological-Organizational-Environmental Framework (TOEF) as antecedents of social media use for corporate disclosure to provide comprehensive understanding of the adoption and implementation process by public relations practitioners in Malaysia. Subsequently, this study tests the effect of social media use for corporate disclosure on perceived organizational performance. Central to this study is the role of corporate disclosure which is closely linked to the idea of projecting images and managing reputation as found in Impression Management Theory (IMT). One of the basic assumptions of IMT is the need for organization to be seen in a positive manner. The potrayal of negative impression on an organization is highly avoidable. If this negative portrayal is not managed, it will lead to some other inevitable situations. The link between corporate disclosure and IMT is evident. Firstly, it is through corporate disclosure that an organization can manage and monitor its

impression on its publics. Secondly, by managing its impression on others, in a way, an organization can choose particular direct acquisitive impression management tactics that consummate to the material information being distributed. Thirdly, the role of corporate disclosure via social media in this present research is acted as a binocular device from which publics can form conscious responsiveness on an organization mainly on its products and services, management strengths and weaknesses, and financial and non-financial implications that have detrimental effect on the organization. Blending the two theoretical lenses, this study develops a model framework that aims to test these relationships. The findings are expected to add to our understanding of social media adoption in public relations practices in Malaysia and its effects on image building through disclosure of information via social media and eventually its effects on perceived organizational performance. The next section will focus on the research questions, research objectives, scope and significance of this study.

1.3 Research Questions

The general aim of this study is to put forward a further insightful understanding on the uses of social media for corporate disclosure by public relations practitioners and its effects on perceived organizational performance. The research questions for the study are constructed as follows:

RQ1: What is the level of social media use for public relations functions among public relations practitioners in Malaysian context?

RQ2:   What are the influences of technological, organizational, and environmental factors on social media use for corporate disclosure among public relations practitioners in Malaysian context?

RQ3:   What is the relationship between social media use for corporate disclosure and perceived organizational performance in Malaysian context?

RQ4:   Does corporate disclosure mediate the relationship between technological, organizational, and environmental factors and perceived organizational performance in Malaysian context?

RQ5:   Does social media use for public relations functions moderate the relationship between corporate disclosure and perceived organizational performance in Malaysian context?

1.4   Research Objectives

The objective of this study in general is to investigate factors that affect social media use for corporate disclosure and its effects on perceived organizational performance as well as to measure the role of social media use for public relations functions in moderating the relationship.

The objectives of the study are as follows:

RO1:   To understand social media use for job-related functions among Malaysia's public relations practitioners.

RO2: To investigate the influences of technological, organizational, and environmental factors on the use of social media for corporate disclosure among public relations practitioners.

RO3: To ascertain any relationship between social media use for corporate disclosure and perceived organizational performance.

RO4: To examine the mediating role of social media use for corporate disclosure in the relationship between technological, organizational, and environmental factors and perceived organizational performance.

RO5: To examine the moderating role of social media use for public relations functions in the relationship between social media use for corporate disclosure and perceived organizational performance.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study does not examine the social media use in general. It specifically looks into social media use for both corporate disclosure and public relations functions.

There are five social media platforms and nine public relations functions being measured. The social media consists of 5 most popular platforms for public relations practices namely (1) blog, (2) micro-blogging, (3) social news/news aggregation/RSS feeds, (4) social network sites/social networking sites, and (5) websites/corporate websites. Meanwhile, nine public relations functions are identified from past studies (Eyrich et al., 2008; and Alikilic & Atabek, 2012). They are (1) community relations, (2) corporate communication, (3) crisis communication, (4) customer relations, (5) government relations, (6) internal communication, (7)

international public relations, (8) media relations, and (9) social responsibility. It is important to acknowledge that this study limits the selection of social media to five platforms only because literature suggests their relevance to public relations practices.

The selection of sample for this current study is also limited to individual public relations practitioners working in a dedicated public relations department, possess a minimum of a diploma in an academic qualification and have been working in the current designation for at least 12 months in either a technician or managerial portfolio/specialization in organizations using non-probability sampling procedure.

1.6   Significance of the Study

In this section the theoretical, methodological and practical significance of the research is explained. Theoretical significance can be seen in two-folds. Firstly, this current study extends social media research by incorporating TOEF (Technological-Organizational-Environmental Framework) and IMT (Impression Management Theory). By doing so, this research is able to contribute a new theoretical framework to further understand the adoption and implementation of social media, the antecedents of social media use for corporate disclosure, uses of social media to disseminate corporate disclosure, and the effect of social media use for corporate disclosure on perceived organizational performance. TOEF developed by Tornatzky and Fleisher (1990) provides a solid understanding on the three factors namely technological, organizational, and environmental that affect or influence the adoption and implementation of a technological inovation viz. social media. Secondly, IMT

concerns itself about the use of the social media for corporate disclosure and the effect of the social media use for corporate disclosure on perceived organizational performance. This is exemplified by a particular disclosure (financially or non-financially material information) on organizations and how they are mostly affected by the action of the particular organizations' disclosure.

Methodologically, the current study develops the measurement of corporate disclosure by using the items of corporate disclosure in Bursa Malaysia. Corporate disclosure or disclosure requirement is a general term that is applicable for any companies registered under Companies Act (1965). The use of items taken from local blueprint to measure the phenomenon in Malaysian context is expected to bring unique contribution to the body of knowledge. In this present research, corporate disclosure items adopted from a 6-chapter Corporate Disclosure Guide published by Bursa Malaysia which incorporates the best practices recommended under the Best Practices in Corporate Disclosure issued in July 2004 with the ultimate aim to manage material information and at the same time to practise an accountability for the disclosure of the material information to publics. Although it is primarily published for the usage of public listed companies, nevertheless, its usage can also be applicable to non-public listed companies since these companies are entrusted under the Companies Act (1965) and Company Act (Ammendment) 2007 to practise among others, prudent disclosure. This Act makes it as an obligation for any companies to disclose information to shareholders on any connected interests, company affiliation, and affiliated lenders or guarantees. Moreover, OECD (1999) outlined five principles in Corporate Governance that are applicable to any type of company (i) right of shareholders (ii) equitable treatment of shareholders (iii) role of

shareholders (iv) disclosure and transparency and (v) responsibilities of the board. In addition, this Guide managed to encapsulate four strategies of corporate 'social' disclosure in any company regarding educating society about organization's intention to improve its performance; changing how society perceive an action; diverting an issue an organization is facing; and changing the expectation about the performance of the organization (Cormior and Gordon, 2001). Another novelty of the study is the introduction of social media use for corporate disclosure as a *mediator* in the relationship between technological, organizational, and environmental factors and perceived organizational performance in the present study.

Practically, this study contributes to our understanding of factors affecting social media use for corporate disclosure in Malaysian context. The findings are expected to shed some light on determining which factors - technological, organizational or environmental - contribute more towards adoption and implementation of social media. This will allow organizations to devise appropriate strategy on how to accelerate the adoption and implementation of social media in their organizations. Having this knowledge, perhaps, organizations can optimize the availability of social media in their organizations. Furthermore, this research is timely due to the pervasive and dominant social media as not only as a medium for interaction but it can be used as a strategic medium for disseminating corporate disclosure of Malaysia's companies.

1.7   Structure of the Thesis

There are a total of five chapters in this thesis. Chapter 1 is an introductory chapter; it provides the background of the study, statement of research problem, research questions, and objectives. The statement of the research problem has created the literature gap for this study. In this chapter also, research scope and contribution of the research are incorporated. Lastly, this chapter is concluded with a presentation on the structure of the thesis.

Chapter 2 reviews the literatures that are aimed as a schematic design for this research. It begins with sections on Diffussion of Innovation Theory, TOEF, IMT, Corporate Disclosure, Perceived Organizational Performance. Studies on TOEF in organizations, social media and corporate disclosure, social media and perceived organizational performance and social media and public relations are followed. The succeeding section of this chapter put forth the Conceptualization of the Variables, Theoretical Framework of the Study and Hypotheses of the Study. A summary concludes this chapter.

Chapter 3 presents the research methodology of this thesis. It begins with research paradigm and design, survey method, population and sampling techniques, and smaple size. A section on research instrument including expert panel and reliability and validity of the research instrument is followed. A section on data collection is also incorporated. Another important section in this chapter is operationalization of the variables. Sections on preliminary data analysis integrating

common method variance and normality is included. Mediation analysis, moderation analysis, and data analysis is next. The last part of this chapter is a summary.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the research. It consists of six sections namely exploratory factor analysis, descriptive analysis incorporating respondents' demographics, varibles of the study, corporate disclosure, perceived organizational performance, and correlation analysis, PLS path modelling, measurement model asssessment in terms of internal consistency and discriminant validity, structural model assessment in terms of multicollinearity analysis, coefficient of determination (R^2), predicitive relevance (Q^2), and effect size (f^2), and. hypotheses testing integrating direct effect and indirect effect hypotheses. A summary ends this chapter.

Chapter 5 is a concluding chapter of this thesis. It begins with a summary of the study, followed by discussion of the findings, implications of the study, contribution of the study in terms of its theory, methodology, and practice, and ends with recommendations for the future study.