

Investigating Malaysian Youth's Social Media Usage, Competencies and Practice with regard to Crime Prevention: An Application of the Social Media Literacy Model

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Abstract

According to the statistics, majority of social media users in Malaysia are youth aged 13-34. They use the medium on a frequent basis and at an extended period of time to serve different important functions including for communication, socialisation, building and maintaining relationship, overcoming loneliness, sharing of information, learning and entertainment. There is no doubt of the usefulness of social media, but, the medium also presents risks to youth. On the social media sphere, youth are exposed to risks such as scam, sexual harassment, pedophile, pornography and cyberbullying. Earlier studies also reported that the number of crime cases reported involving youth's social media practices are on the rise in Malaysia. One way to reduce threat of committing high-risk behaviours and becoming victim on social media is by having adequate level of social media competencies. Such competencies also enable youth to effectively use social media to help the authority in preventing crime. But the question is; what is the level of Malaysian youth's competencies of social media? Do they use social media to help the authority in preventing crime? In order to answer these questions, a survey involving 500 respondents was conducted to investigate Malaysian youth's social media usage, competencies and practice with regard to crime prevention.

Keywords: Youth; social media usage; competencies; practice

1.0 Introduction

Social media is primarily referred as an online medium that provides opportunity for social interaction to occur such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and blog (O'Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011). According to Trottier and Fuchs (2014), social media is primarily characterised by three important notions which are cognition, communication and cooperation. These notions provide different forms of sociality to social media including information, facts and knowledge, actions, relations, communities and collaborations (Trottier & Fuchs, 2014).

The different forms of sociality that social media has, enable the medium to offer various important functions to its users including for communication, building of new relationships and maintaining the existing ones, as well as a platform to share knowledge and information with one another (Ismail, 2014). These functions are treasured by social media users, particularly youth. Youth are identified as avid users of social media and this is reported in different studies that were carried out across the globe (Ismail, 2014; Lenhart, Anderson, & Smith, 2015; Mahadi, 2013; Raco, 2014). For instance, in 2014, Pew Research Center stated that 87% of youth aged 18-29 in the United States use Facebook, 51% are subscribed to Instagram, 34% use Pinterest and 31% have Twitter account (Duggan, Ellison, Lampe, Lenhart, & Madden, 2015). In a relating study, it was also indicated that 71% of youth in the United States use more than one social media site (Lenhart et al., 2015). Similarly, in other countries such as in Australia and Malaysia, youth are also reported to be keen users of social media (Mahadi, 2013; Raco, 2014).

There is no doubt on the usefulness of social media (Dinerman, 2011), but it is also important to take caution on the risks associated with the medium. Among the risks include spam hoaxes, cyberbullying, online harassment and sexting (O'Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011). Youth who are using social media also open themselves to privacy threats and depression (O'Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011) Such risks can be overcome if youth have adequate level of social media competencies. Not only that such competencies can help youth to overcome risks that are associated with social media, but they also enable youth to utilise the medium for crime prevention purposes. This is explained by the United Nations who indicate that social media can be utilised as a medium to engage and strengthen the relationship between different stakeholders, increase awareness and share information related to crime (UN, 2015).

Hence, based on a case study conducted on Malaysian youth, this study asked the following research questions:

RQ1: What is the level of youth's social media usage, competencies and practice with regard to crime prevention?

RQ2: What is the relationship between objective competencies, subjective competencies and practice with regard to crime prevention?

2.0 Social Media Usage among Youth in Malaysia

Malaysia is ranked among the highest users of social media in the Asia Pacific region (Go-globe, 2015). This is contributed by the increased percentage of internet penetration in the country (Muniandy & Muniandy, 2013). In the first quarter of 2015, the internet penetration rate in Malaysia is 70.4% (MCMC, 2015). According to Go-globe (2015), social media penetration in Malaysia is 53%, and it is sixth highest in the Asia Pacific region. The same study indicated that Malaysians spend an average of 3.3 hours on social media each day and it is third highest in the region (Go-globe, 2015).

Youth, aged between 13 to 34 make up a huge percentage of 80.3% social media users in Malaysia (Mahadi, 2013). Mahadi (2013) explained, the highest users of social media in Malaysia are youth aged 18-24 (34.5%), followed by those in 25-34 (29.5%) and 13-17 (16.3%). They use social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram frequently on a daily basis which shows its importance to their lives (Subramaniam, 2014). This is explained by Ismail (2014) who indicate that, Malaysian youth use social media to serve different functions, including for communication and socialisation, education, information seeking and entertainment.

According to Mun, Li and Fernandez (2011), peer-to-peer communication is the main factor why Malaysian youth use social media. According to Mun et al. (2011), social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter provide ideal opportunity for youth to communicate, socialise and connect with their peers. More importantly, it provides avenue for youth to network and participate in online communities based on shared interest (Boyd & Ellison, 2008; Mun et al., 2011). This is elaborated by Shewmaker (2012) who indicate that:

Social networking sites and the use of wireless communication programs allow real time conversations with someone from a distance. This provides the opportunity to

continue relationships that in the past would have been too distant and to build new relationships with friends from around the world. This open line of communication builds new understandings and collaborations for young people from very different cultures. They can build worldwide coalitions around everything from special interests and hobbies to activism activities.

Social media allows youth the opportunity to share their work or content creation like images, videos and writing with one another (Mesch, 2009; Shewmaker, 2012). This shows how social media is able to fulfil youth's needs for relationship development and at the same time provide them with unique opportunity to become active media participants (Mesch, 2009).

Malaysian youth also utilise social media for information seeking and educational purposes (Hamat, Embi, & Hassan, 2012; Yin, Agostinho, Harper, & Chicaro, 2014). In a study conducted to investigate Malaysian university students' usage of social media, Hamat et al. (2012) pointed out that, majority of the respondents use social media for social learning purposes. Social media's communicative and collaborative features permit students to interact, work together and learn from one another (Hamat et al., 2012). Similarly, Yin et al. (2014) also indicate that, besides social activities, youth use social media to engage in learning. They use social media sites such as Facebook, Wikipedia, YouTube and Dropbox to support their learning (Yin et al., 2014).

Social media is also used for entertainment. It can help the growth of a particular social media site through increased user engagement (Weide, Ireland, & Kevorkian, 2011). In their explanation of entertainment through social media, Weide et al. (2011) explained:

Social entertainment is the blending of entertainment content with social media functionality such as forums, reviews, ratings, and sharing and location options. The blending of entertainment and social experiences is not new, and most sites offering entertainment content incorporate various social experiences to increase user engagement with a particular site, piece of content, brand, or other entity. A key feature of social entertainment is conversation between users. This, in addition to the posting of new content as it becomes available, creates a real-time experience that is fundamental to a dynamic online social environment. (p. 2)

Malaysian youth frequently engage in entertainment practices through their usage of social media such as downloading music and video files, and playing online games (Baboo, Pandian, Prasad, & Rao, 2013). They perform these practices to fill their free time and to overcome loneliness and stress (Baboo et al., 2013; Ismail, 2014).

The usage of social media can be used in a good or bad way, depending on how the medium is used (Blomberg, 2012; SAS, 2015). For instance, it can be wrongly used to propagate crime (Blomberg, 2012). The use of social media in propagating crime is explained by Blomberg (2012) who indicate that:

Accessible to millions of people both as consumers and, increasingly, as contributors, social networking and media websites provide a means of contact and communication between groups, some of which may have a serious impact on public safety. These sites can be used to influence opinion and to motivate either targeted groups or public opinion at large. Their potential extends into coordinating actions – including organised and opportunistic crime, political upheaval, and terrorist activity...Authorities need to anticipate the use of social media to foment unrest and incidents, especially around major events – concerts and sporting events, major political or economic summits, and elections. (p. 2)

Social media also is often used to spread incorrect information, including rumours, misleading fact and slender that could threaten public safety and harmony (Muniandy & Muniandy, 2013; Wok, Idid, & Misman, 2012). For example, during the recent disasters involving Malaysia Airlines flights MH370 and MH17, as well as the landslides in Cameron Highland and severe floods in the state of Kelantan, it was found that, many Malaysians shared incorrect information related to these incidents (Mustafa, 2014). Incorrect information shared and disseminated through social media is confusing and it can also cause unnecessary panic and complicate crisis management and rescue efforts (Mustafa, 2014).

In order to avoid propagation of criminal activities and the dissemination of incorrect information on social media, it is important for the authority to make use of the medium as a mean to engage the community, and to work together with them to prevent crime (Denef, Kaptein, Bayerl, & Ramirez, 2012). According to Denef et al. (2012), considering that media consumption, particularly among youth has shifted from traditional to new media, and its capability to mobilise people either in a good or bad way, the authority should take this opportunity to actively interact and collaborate with them on social media to ensure improved public safety. Social media enables the authority to share information and knowledge on crime and public safety with youth, to respond to their queries and to encourage them to participate in community policing through the online sphere (Denef et al., 2012).

3.0 Social Media Literacy Model

Social Media Literacy Model (SMLM) comprises of different types of competencies, knowledge and skills including ICT literacy, ethics, communication, and information literacy (EAGLE, 2014). It is also referred to as one's ability to communicate appropriately and responsibly, as well as the capacity to evaluate conversations critically when using social media (Tilman, 2010). According to Vanwynsberghe, Boudry, and Verdegem (2011), social media literacy (see Figure 1) enables users to use social media appropriately based on specific competencies which are knowledge, skills, attitudes and self-efficacy. These competences allow users to analyse, evaluate, share and create social media content (Vanwynsberghe et al., 2011).

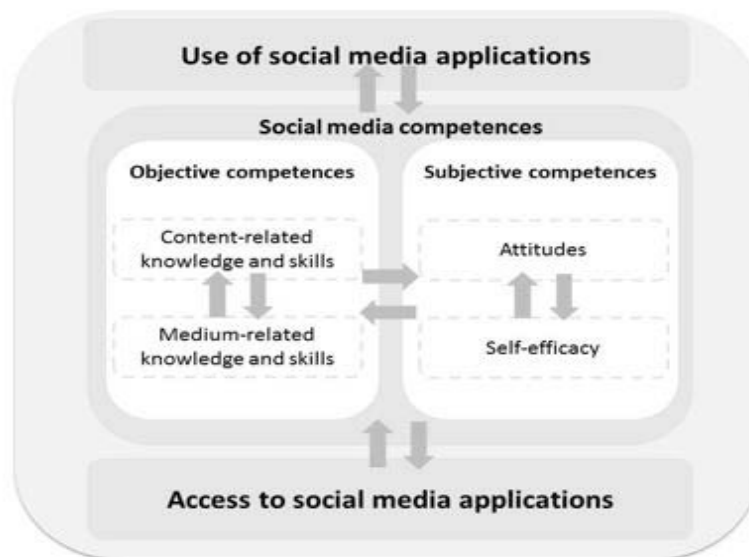


Figure 1: Conceptual model of social media literacy

Vanwynsberghe et al. (2011) explained that there are three dimensions of social media literacy which are: (a) social media access, (b) social media competences (c) social media use. Social media access is the fundamental of the SMLM and it is considered as a prerequisite for the development of social media competences. Here, access refers to the technological usage or ownership that enables one to connect to the internet and use social media (Vanwynsberghe et al., 2011).

The second dimension of the SMLM is social media competences that comprises of one's ability to use different social media applications appropriately. Social media competences are divided into objective and subjective, in which they can be measured. According to

Vanwysberghe et al. (2011), skills and knowledge can be objectively measured, while attitudes and self-efficacy are subjective and they can be measured by asking the individuals themselves. The objective competences are divided into medium-related knowledge and skills and content-related knowledge and skills. The operational knowledge and skills which are considered as a pre-requisite for the development of the advanced competences are placed at the bottom of the objective competences (Vanwysberghe et al., 2011)

Vanwysberghe et al. (2011) explained that one would not be able to analyse, evaluate, share and create social media messages, which are the content-related knowledge and skills without having the practical knowledge and skills to use social media applications. Here, the medium-related skills are considered as the practical knowledge and skills with a low degree of self-conscious awareness and content-related competences. The medium-related skills comprise of knowledge about social media, understanding of media context and content and knowledge about knowledge or the meta-knowledge (Vanwysberghe et al., 2011). It is important to note that the content-related knowledge and skills can influence the medium-related knowledge and skills. However, without subjective competences, the development of the objective competences would not take place. For example, a person who does not like to use social media would be reluctant to learn the required knowledge and skills related to the medium (Vanwysberghe et al., 2011).

According to Vanwysberghe et al. (2011), individuals who believe that they already have advanced knowledge and skills of social media are less inclined to learn the objective competences. Besides, it is also important to take into consideration of one's attitudes and self-efficacy as they are closely related to the development of knowledge and skills.

The third dimension of the SMLM is the actual usage of social media which is resulted from the development of social media competences (Vanwysberghe et al., 2011). It refers to the successful conversion of both, objective and subjective media competences within the actual social media behaviour. Such behaviour takes into account not only which social media application is used and how it is used, but also how often, and where it is used (Vanwysberghe et al., 2011). Social media competences shape and at the same time being shaped by one's own experience with social media and its content, both physically and symbolically. Here, physical refers to how often social media is used, while symbolic refers to its importance. For example, if social media is used frequently and is considered as being an

important part of one's life, then the competences of the user will be enhanced (Vanwynsberghe et al., 2011).

In regard to this study, SMLM was employed as a framework to understand Malaysian youth's social media usage, competencies and practice with regard to crime prevention.

4.0 Research Methodology

This study used a quantitative method approach. Specifically, a survey was employed to investigate Malaysian youth's usage, competencies and practice of social media with regard to crime prevention.

4.1 Respondents and procedure

This study which was conducted as part of the main research project entitled *The Usage of Social Media in Assisting the Authority to Combat Crime in Malaysia* involved a total of 500 respondents aged 15-30 years old. The respondents were randomly selected to fit in the aims of the study. Participation in this study was voluntary, and respondents were informed that they have the right to quit from the study at any time during the survey. As for respondents aged below 18, they were required to submit parental consent form to the researchers prior to the start of the survey. Confidentiality of all respondents were assured.

The survey was conducted in two different regions, which are (a) the East Coast region that consists of Pahang, Terengganu and Kelantan, and (b) the Southern region that includes Negeri Sembilan, Malacca and Johore. 250 respondents were selected from each region. The survey was conducted in different locations including at schools, higher learning institutions and public places. The survey took one month to complete.

5.0 Findings

The findings of this study are organised according to sequence beginning with respondents' characteristics, usage of social media, competencies of social media and practice the relationship between competencies and practice with regard to crime prevention.

5.1 Respondents' characteristics

Among the 500 respondents participated in this study, 64.4% of them were females and the remaining 35.6% were males. In term of their age, 69.8% were 20-24 years old, 20.6% were 15-19 and the remaining 9.6% were in the 25-30 age group. As for their academic level, 44.2% were at bachelor's level, 26.6% at school certificate level, 24.4% at diploma and the remaining 4.8% were at postgraduate level. The respondents' characteristics are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Respondents' Characteristics

Variables	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender:	178	35.6
a. Male	322	64.4
b. Female		
Age:		
a. 15-19	103	20.6
b. 20-24	349	69.8
c. 25-30	48	9.6
Academic level:		
a. School certificate	133	26.6
b. Diploma	122	24.4
c. Bachelor's degree	221	44.2
d. Postgraduate degree	24	4.8

5.2 Usage of social media among Malaysian youth

We used descriptive statistics to analyse respondents' usage of social media. This comprises of information pertaining to frequency and duration of social media usage, the sites that the respondents frequently use and the number of friends that they have on social media. The findings reveal that a majority of 67.4% of the respondents use social media 16-30 times a month, 14% use it every day, 11.6% use it 6-15 times a month and the remaining 7% indicated that they only use it 1-5 times a month. A percentage of 38.4% of the respondents indicated that they spend between 1-4 hours each time they use social media, 28.4% use it for more than 30 minutes but less than an hour, 17.8% use it for 5-10 hours, 9% reported that they use it for more than 10 hours and the remaining 6.4% use it for less than 30 minutes each time.

Table 2. Social Media Usage

Variables	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Frequency of usage:		
a. 1-5 times a month	35	7.0
b. 6-15 times a month	58	11.6
c. 16-30 times a month	337	67.4
d. Every day	70	14.0
Duration of usage:		
a. Less than 30 minutes	32	6.4
b. More than 30 minutes	142	28.4
c. 1-4 hours	192	38.4
d. 5-10 hours	89	17.8
e. More than 10 hours	45	9.0
Most used social media sites:		
a. Facebook	396	79.2
b. Instagram	292	58.4
c. WhatsApp	230	46.0
d. WeChat	181	36.2
e. Twitter	132	26.4
f. YouTube	82	16.4
g. Blog	8	1.6
h. Others	56	11.2
Friends on social media:		
a. Less than 100	98	19.6
b. 101-500	189	37.8
c. 501-1000	119	23.8
d. 1001 and more	94	18.8

In term of the social media sites that they use, many of the respondents reported that they use more than one social media site on a frequent basis. The survey findings show that the most used social media site is Facebook 79.2%, followed by Instagram 58.4%, WhatsApp 46%, WeChat 36.2%, Twitter 26.4%, YouTube 16.4%, blog 1.6% and others 11.2%. When probed on the number of friends that they have on social media, 37.8% of the respondents informed that they have between 101-500 friends, 23.8% have 501-1000 friends, 19.6% have below than 100 friends and the remaining 18.8% have more than 1001 friends. We summarise the findings in Table 2.

5.3 Social media competencies for crime prevention among youth in Malaysia

We used descriptive statistics to examine respondents' social media competencies with regard to crime prevention. The findings of the open-ended questions show that, the respondents are generally aware of what constitute a crime. When asked on their understanding of crime, 51.8% of the respondents defined it any act or behaviour that is unlawful. Another 48.2% of

the respondents explained that crime is something is negative and irresponsible as it may cause harm to others. They identified murder, robbery, rape, online fraud, vandalism, drug abuse, illegal street racing, and breach of trust as acts of crime. A huge percentage of 91.6% of the respondents also agree that youth contribute to the increase in crime cases in Malaysia. They believe that among the factors that lead youth to perform crime include poverty, lack of religious and moral awareness, lack of family love and affection, negative peer influence, poor enforcement, lack of knowledge and harmful effect of media portrayal.

Table 3. Objectives competences of social media and crime

No.	Item	Strongly Disagree & Disagree (%)	Not Sure (%)	Strongly Agree & Agree (%)
1	Crime is an issue that is taken seriously by the authority.	8.8	16.8	74.8
2	Crime is an act prohibited by the religion.	6.2	7.4	86.4
3	Crime cases are increasing each year.	3.0	11.8	85.2
4	Crime cases mostly involve youth.	6.8	14.6	78.6
5	Crime can threaten the safety of the country.	1.4	6.0	92.6
6	Crime can hamper the development of the country.	4.8	8.2	87
7	Crime can create anxiety.	1.6	8.6	89.8
8	Crime can have negative impact to the lives of people.	1.2	7.4	91.4
9	Crime threatens the economy.	3.4	13.8	82.8
10	Crime negatively impact national harmony.	1.8	6.8	91.4
11	Crime can be dealt with using social media.	14.4	31.6	54
12	Social media can be used:			
	a. For entertainment	8	22	70
	b. To manipulate	49.4	14.2	36.4
	c. To deliver information	4.2	8.8	87
	d. To incite hatred	54.4	11	34.6
	e. To get information	7.6	7.0	85.4
	f. To disseminate false news	54.2	10.2	35.6
	g. To persuade	27.6	27.4	45
	h. To imitate negative behaviour	57	8.6	34.4
	i. To educate	7.8	11.6	80.6
	j. To invade others' privacy	55	10.8	34.2
	k. To learn	7.0	10.6	82.4
	l. To access porn site	58.8	11.4	29.8
	m. To build relationship	3.4	13.2	83.4
	n. To share information	2.6	10.4	87

In order to further understand youth's competencies of social media with regard to crime, the survey also included additional 25 scale questions pertaining to the subject matter. The findings show that the mean score for objective competencies was $M=3.74$ which indicate that the respondents' understanding pertaining to social media and crime is moderately high. A huge percentage of 85.2% of the respondents agree that crime cases are on the rise in Malaysia. When asked further on the impact of crime, the respondents indicate that it can threaten public safety 92.6%, endanger national harmony 91.4% and negatively affect the country's development 87%. When probed on their knowledge of social media, the respondents believe that the medium can be used to deliver information 87%, share information 87%, get information 85.4%, build friendship 83.4%, learn 82.4%, for educational purposes 80.6% and entertainment 70%. However, when asked about the use of social media to prevent crime, only 54% of the respondents believe that it can be utilised for the purpose of crime prevention. These findings are summarised in Table 3.

Table 4. Subjective competences of social media and crime

No.	Item	Strongly Disagree & Disagree (%)	Not Sure (%)	Strongly Agree & Agree (%)
1	Crime is an important topic discussed by members of the community.	6.6	22	71.4
2	Crime is a shared responsibility of the authority and the public.	3.2	7.8	89
3	Crime needs to be dealt with urgently.	0.6	6.4	93
4	Crime needs to be dealt with using different ways.	1.6	6.6	91.8
5	In dealing with crime, I am:			
	a. Very interested to assist the authority	3	29.6	67.4
	b. Willing to contribute and assist	2.2	25.6	72.2
	c. Ready to assist whenever needed	2.6	29.2	68.2
6	I can use social media to prevent crime because:			
	a. It is the medium I trust	16.4	45.6	38
	b. It is easy to use	1.8	22.6	75.6
	c. It is an effective medium	7.8	35.2	57
	d. It allows me to disseminate information swiftly	3.6	19.2	77.6

Similar to objective competences, the respondents' subjective competences were also moderately high. The mean score for subjective competences was $M=3.97$. A huge percentage of 89% of the respondents believe that preventing crime should be a shared responsibility of the authority and the public. They think that the issue needs to be dealt with urgently 93%, using different means and strategies 91.8%. However, when asked on their interest to assist the authority in preventing crime, a lower percentage of 67.4% was reported. In term of the respondents' subjective competences of social media, only 38% of the respondents consider the medium as a trusted platform for crime prevention. Even though a moderately high percentage of 77.6% of the respondents believe that information can be disseminated swiftly through the use of social media, only 57% think that it is an effective medium to prevent crime. We summarise the findings in Table 4.

Table 5. Practices related to social media and crime prevention

No.	Item	Strongly Disagree & Disagree (%)	Not Sure (%)	Strongly Agree & Agree (%)
1	To avoid being involved in crime, I:			
	a. Avoid negative activities	2.8	6.4	90.8
	b. Acquire religious knowledge	2.2	6.0	91.8
	c. Avoid being with negative individuals	8.4	10.8	80.8
	d. Engage in useful activities	1.0	5.8	93.2
	e. Listen to parents' advice	0.4	4.8	94.8
	f. Being with friends with positive attitude	2.4	10.8	86.8
2	Social media is the medium I used the most.	5.6	24	70.4
3	I frequently use social media:			
	a. For entertainment	21.6	15.6	62.8
	b. To manipulate	79.6	14.4	6.0
	c. To deliver information	20.6	12.8	66.6
	d. To incite hatred	81.4	10	8.6
	e. To get information	15.8	5.6	78.6
	f. To disseminate false news	82.2	9.8	8.0
	g. To persuade	55.2	23.8	21
	h. To imitate negative behaviour	80.8	11.2	8.0
	i. To educate	18.8	17.2	64
	j. To invade others' privacy	78.8	11.4	9.8
	k. To learn	14.2	8.6	77.2
	l. To access porn site	81.8	10.8	7.4
	m. To build relationship	12	9.4	78.6
	n. To share information	11.2	6.6	82.2

In comparison to objective and subjective competences, the mean score for practice was slightly lower at $M=3.27$. When enquired on how to avoid performing crime, a huge majority of the respondents agree that they should not engage in high-risk activities 90.8% and befriending problematic individuals 80.8%. The respondents believe that they should acquire religious knowledge 91.8%, listen to parents' advice 94.8% and perform useful activities 93.2%. In regard to their social media practice, a percentage of 70.4% of the respondents acknowledge that social media is the medium they use the most. The respondents use social media for different purposes including for sharing of information 82.2%, building of relationships 78.6%, learning 77.2%, other educational purposes 64% and for entertainment 62.8%. Even though most of the respondents reported that they do not perform negative practices on social media, there are still those who use the medium to invade others' privacy 9.8%, incite hatred 8.6%, disseminate inaccurate news and rumours 8%, access porn site 7.4% and to manipulate others 6%. We summarise the findings in Table 5.

5.4 The relationship between objective competences, subjective competences and practice with regard to crime prevention

Correlation coefficient was used to analyse the relationship between objective competences, subjective competences and practice with regard to crime prevention. Based on the findings in Table 6, it is evident that there were significant positive relationships involving all variables. The strengths of the relationships however, vary from weak to moderate. The relationship between objective competences and subjective competences was $r=.510$, $n=500$, $p<0.01$; objective competences and practice $r=.517$, $n=500$, $p<0.01$; subjective competences and practice $r=.380$, $n=500$, $p<0.01$.

Table 6. Correlation Test between objective competences, subjective competences and practice

		Knowledge	Attitude	Practice
Knowledge	Pearson Correlation	1	.510**	.517**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	500	500	500
Attitude	Pearson Correlation	.510**	1	.380**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	500	500	500
Practice	Pearson Correlation	.517**	.380**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	500	500	500

Note. **Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

6.0 Discussions

Similar to Mahadi (2013) and Subramaniam (2014), we found that Malaysian youth are frequent users of social media. Many of them use more than one social media site and at an extended period of time to serve different important functions including for building of new relationships, sharing of information and learning. This indicates a high level of social media usage among youth in Malaysia.

In term of their competencies, youth who participated in this study were found to be having moderately high level of objective competences. They are aware of what constitute a crime, factors leading to crime and the negative implications of crime to individual, the society and the country. Youth are also aware of the potential of social media that can be used to disseminate information swiftly. Despite its potential as a medium for information sharing, including those that are crime related, only 54% of the respondents of this study think that social media can be effectively employed for crime prevention. This finding in particular shows that, youth needs to be better informed on the crucial role of social media to combat crime. According to Fairbairn, Bivens and Dawson (2013), social media should be utilised as a crime prevention tool, due to its nature that provides opportunities for youth engagement and innovation.

In relation to subjective competences, youth who participated in this study show moderate level of attitude towards social media for crime prevention. A huge percentage of 89% of the respondents agree that crime prevention should involve not only the authority but also the public at large. However, youth's willingness to assist the authority in combating crime should be further improved to ensure that the Malaysian government aspiration to improve public's participation in crime prevention efforts can be achieved (EPU, 2015). We found that only 57% of the respondents consider social media as a viable tool to prevent crime. This is probably due to their lack of trust. This is explained by Kim and Ahmad (2013) who elaborate that, whether youth are willing to participate in a particular social media community or not, is very much depending on their level of trust.

With regard to practice, most of the respondents believe that they should acquire religious and moral knowledge, listen to parents' advice and engage in useful activities to avoid committing crime. In relation to youth's social media practice, they use the medium mainly to share

information and build relationship. This finding tallies with Mesch (2009), Mun et al. (2011), Shewmaker (2012) who believe that building and maintaining relationship and sharing information are the main reasons why youth use social media. Even though most of the respondents who participated in this study claimed that they do not engage in illegal or immoral behaviour on social media, it is important to note that, there are still a small minority who frequently use the medium to access porn site, incite hatred and spread inaccurate news and information.

We have found that relationships exist between objective competences, subjective competences and practice. This finding confirms the presumption that objective and subjective competences are related, they influence each other and both are determinants for practice (Vanwynsberghe et al., 2011). With regard to the use of social media for crime prevention among Malaysian youth, it is important to continue to educate them on the potential of social media and to encourage them to utilise the medium as an effective mean to combat crime. According to Wolff, McDevitt, and Stark (2011), social media is youth's main source of information; hence, it is important to communicate with them using the medium and to develop an effective crime prevention strategy with it. To succeed, it is important to engage youth to participate in the crime prevention programme (Wolff et al., 2011). This however, is a daunting task, considering the liberating nature of youth. They often regard an online space that is built for them as being too formal, rigid and irrelevant (Brandtzæg, Haugstveit, Lüders, & Følstad, 2015). Thus, in order to engage their participation through social media, it is necessary to provide them with a space that is non-institutional and less formal (Brandtzæg et al., 2015).

7.0 Conclusions

In this study we investigated Malaysian youth's usage, competencies and practice of social media with regard to crime prevention. The findings of our study indicate that youth are keen users of social media. Many of them use more than one social media site and they often use the medium at an extended period of time. The respondents have moderately high objective and subjective competences of social media. They use social media mainly for sharing of information and building relationships. However, it is important to note that many youth are still hesitant about the use of social media for crime prevention. Thus, it is necessary to

continue to find ways on how to engage youth in crime prevention efforts through the use of social media.

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