USER GENERATED ONLINE VIDEO INFLUENCE ON GEN Y VOTING DECISION

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ABSTRACT

The evolution of technology in the process of morphing mass media facade has led to a massive corpus of User Generated Online Video (UGOV) particularly among the Gen Y. Despite the fact that viral sharing makes it possible for millions of people to be reached through e-word of mouth in a matter of seconds, the usage of UGOV such as YouTube has created a new platform for public discourse and has widely encouraged the civic engagement highlighting social media's role in the dissemination of political information to the Millennials. With the variety of political information disclosure, Gen Y are no longer rely solely on the conventional news media. Therefore, this article will discover how the flexibility offered by social media has influences the Gen Y voting decision.

Keywords: UGOV, social media, Gen Y, voting decision, civic engagement

1   INTRODUCTION

The user generated online video (UGOV) represents the dynamics tools of communication technology. According to Milliken, Gibson, O'Donnell and Singer (2008), UGOV possesses the potential to facilitate public discourse within the virtuality creating platforms for the content creators to upload audio-visual content to YouTube at no cost. As the largest user-driven provider in the world (Wattenhofer, Wattenhofer, and Zhu, 2012), UGOV has offered an alternative viewpoint as compared to traditional mainstream media that could be used discursively to widen and expand the public debate on the issues which are more prominent to the user. Gillespie (2010) contended that UGOV which is referring to YouTube is now the primary keepers of the cultural discussion as its dominance in the world of online video. In fact, the sense of egalitarianism encourages public voice to be heard and empowered the content owners to engage with other UGOV user.

According to Cheng, Dale & Liu (2007) YouTube is described as easy to use integrated platform and it symbolizes the new generation of video sharing. How competitive is YouTube? This platform allows content suppliers to upload video effortlessly, automatically converting from any different formats and to tag uploaded videos with keywords. Moreover, the video can be rated, given comments and easily shared by the Users through mailing links, embedding them on web pages or blogs. Thus, not only social network exists in YouTube, it also opens the door to permit the formation of communities and groups which has significantly contributed to the triumph of YouTube.

Hence, with the total 29.9 million population of Malaysia (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2013) MCMC Q4 (2013), comScore and Nielsen 2012 to 2013 (Wong 2014) reveals that the Internet Users in Malaysia have reached 17.7 million with 15.2 million Users are on top social networking Sites. Concerning the effect of social media content virality on Gen Y political inclination, it has shown that up to date, 72 per cent of the unique Users of the social media platform are among Gen Y. It shows that Malaysians, particularly Gen Y spends an average 16 hours using the Internet each week, of which 6.2 hours a week are on watching online videos.

In coincide with UGOV characteristics the researcher is of an opinion that the news became viral when the content is shared via a hyperlink, hypertext or through 'like' and 'share ' to other social media platform such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The statistics of International CCS survey 2013 and Internet Stats Worldwide (Wong, 2014) disclosed that YouTube represents 60 percent out of 17.2 million total unique viewers. The popularity of YouTube has steadily grown since 2005. Therefore, it is more precise for this study to focus on YouTube because of its nature as the fastest-growing site in the history of the UGOV. None of YouTube rivals have been making the news constantly, due to democratizing potential the platform still holds for nations worldwide (Snickars &Vonderau, 2009).

Nevertheless, the usage of social media has steadily increased and the biggest social media platforms like Facebook and YouTube have become powerful brands (Postman, 2009). However, Ihator (2001) argued that the new technologies offer individuals new opportunities to present their viewpoints directly to key constituents, but at the same time they tend to lose control over the dissemination of information. As supported by Rill and Cardiel (2013), in 2011, YouTube reinforces the potential impact that these images have on the shaping of votes political attitudes and behaviors.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The Constitution of Malaysia requires that the country's General Election be held in the fifth calendar year. It is very important to make sure that the process of voting is smooth and transparent as the decision made by the voters will determine the future and the stability of the country. Among today's voters, 40 percent have been identified as young, which also makes them the main contributors to the election (Muhammad, 2015). Current research shows that the young generation in this country actively engages in social media, with a total of 17.7 million Internet Users and 15.2 million Users on top of social networking sites (Nielsen, 2012-2013). These figures demonstrate the immense impact of social media consumption among youngsters. Social media such as Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram have empowered millions of individuals to blatantly share their views and thoughts (Wan Zainodin, Muda, Md Salleh, 2017). In fact, the social media platform is also used for predicting results, measuring how public opinion changes after important political debates and how information gets spread through social media networks (Grudz, 2018).

The term Web 2.0 was coined by Tim O'Reilly which signifies the trend of WWW technology and Web design that aims to facilitate creativity, information sharing and collaboration among Users. Web 2.0 contributes with variety of interaction on this area and making widely array of technologies from countless of ages (Sadler, 2018) It also offers a tremendous transformational opportunity in the era of millennial where the political process of the government becoming more transparent, participatory, online, and multimedia rich (Chen, 2009).

It is undeniable that technology has broadened the access of knowledge and transformed the way people communicate and perceived their surroundings. Hanna, Rohm and Crittenden (2011) contended that in the era of digitization, the media consumers nowadays, particularly Gen Y are choosy, smart, organized and strongly believe in their opinions and opinions of their peers. Their reliance on traditional media is decreasing because of unwillingness to accept one-way reach that does not involve interaction between the sender and receiver. This argument is supported by Benevueto et al. (2009), the reasons why the Users' behaviour is shifting from traditional media is because due to the emergence of online social networking (OSNs) and its popularity that allows the user to interactively and freely connect to each other, find content as well as disseminate information through network sharing UGC such as YouTube. Thus, Social media has the balance power to shifting in support of sources especially in political area. The political channel directly influences news coverage to control what kind of information that can divert in mainstream media towards the public (Brands, Graham & Broersma, 2018)

Kim (2010) on the other hand, argued that the mainstream media or traditional media has weakened the participatory democracy because as a culture of cultivation tools, UGC has a lot to offer. However, Gustafson (2009) contended that traditional media is still significant if the concentration and cultural homogenization becomes less monopolistic. In this digital age, social media as a group of internet-based technically grounded the ideological and technological which get by crisis of communication, meanwhile it brings such interactive, dialogic, and fast communication between organization and the users itself (Cheng, 2018).

Previous research in Malaysia context by Rekhraj and Jayasainan (2014) focused on psychological emotion of social networking users and their engagement in social sharing of political videos during the 13th General Election. They argued, even if the user's identity is known, they can express their thoughts without fear when sharing potentially viral videos or commenting on postings. Thus, the Prime Minister himself is using viral content as his references, especially when there is a video that has been shared repeatedly and have the potential of reaching a large audience as compared to TV. Although this study has not really discussed on the rise of political participation the results indicate that respondents treated the UGC and its virality with equal importance, presumably to make an informed voting decision.

Conroy, Freezell and Guererro (2012) stated that the differences of political information on UGC platform have assembled the youngsters with comparable thoughts, qualities and convictions to convey and share their considerations unreservedly without hesitation and incarceration. The discourse through UGC is boundless and beyond the authority control. Thus, it is undeniable that the support and choice of political parties are so much influence by online connection supplements interpersonal relations which bring about the expanded deliberate, voluntary association and political involvement (Wellman et al., 2003; Zuniga et al.,2009)

Although the online environment has brought about societal individualism and the uprooting of citizenry concerns, others see the online environment, specifically UGOV as a space of political re-engagement for Gen Y (Carpini, 2000; Zuniga et al., 2009). However, previous generation, which is baby boomers were prone to trust the party they have voted for a long time, be keen on governmental issues, read daily newspapers or watch the news, register to vote and constantly vote for every election as compared to Gen Y (Zuniga et al., 2009).

The younger generation or Internet literate voter's perceived social networking such as UGOV more persuasive, although they know it is impossible to find whether the information they search for can be trusted. YouTube on the other hand have become influential tools for the User to post not only speech of political candidates, but also short films, satires and parodies, video clips and songs. They believe it is through UGOV that they will have an idea on which party to vote for their future (Maznah Mohamad, 2008).

Thus, Holt, Shehata, Stromback and Ljungberg (2013) concluded that the utilization of UGC may constitute or inspire political expression. Indeed, utilizing UGOV for political purposes has a positive impact on political interest which in the long run will determine the slant of youths favoured political party.

According to Noris (2003) youngsters are more inclined to participate in cause-oriented politics, which means using radical action such as boycotts and demonstration. In addition, Henn and Foard (2011) highlights that the expanded inclusion of youngsters in Youth Councils and Youth Forums through UGOV platform has challenged the notion that youngsters are politically emotionless. Moreover, the main reasons of Gen Y engagement in political activity are progressively encouraged by access to new media.

Psychologically, UGOV has increased Gen Y ability to filter or choose what they want to see, post, read, comment or view. Most probably they prefer the information that is aligned and consistent with their point of views. However, the selective attitude does not lessen their curiosity from getting the other side of the story. In fact, the flexibility offered by this platform has contributed to the integration of public sphere and political fragmentation (Kim, 2011).

While most of the scholars suggest that social networking sites will drag the Users into homophily (similar preference group). Bae (2014) likewise believe that Gen Y political support and choice is characterized by homogenous political views which will lead to partisan (Himelboim, McCreery and Smith, 2013). Thus, the virality of political information on UGC or particularly UGOV, is essential for the SNS User decision making. However, because the network is homophilous, it could also contribute to correlations in peer behaviours over time (Aral, 2012).

UGOV as argued by Baumgartner and Morris (2009) has created a democratic space to Gen Y. Previously they have become negligent because the traditional one-way communication media do not speak their mind. Ultimately, they have become involved in politics because of the compatibility offered by this platform. Supporting the views on this matter, Kasmani, Sabran and Ramle (2014) emphasize that the viral aspect of UGOV has emboldened Gen Y interest in politics. However, Papagiannidis, Coursaris and Bourlakis (2012) contends that the perceptions of young voters are varied and more complex as the social and cultural settings are different. Although Gen Y is the most active User of UGOV the decision to vote sometimes is still influenced by the peer relations through social network.

The previous 13th Malaysia General Election of 2013 has managed to allure vast amount of young generation to cast their votes. Out of 13.3 million of voters, half of it is among Gen Y (Mohd Azizudin Mohd Sani, 2014). The immense impact of social media towards Gen Y has turned the online channel such as YouTube, Twitter and Facebook as a source of political information and updates. As Blais (2006) posited that the individual level the affinity to vote is closely related to various sociodemographic attributes, mainly age and the level of education. In other words, the voters are more prone, making a decision to vote the party that shared same perspectives and sensibly close to their views on the significant issues of the election.

In explicating the link of voting and UGC, Chin (2013) concluded in his study that the GE12 is the beginning of the opposition to topple the ruling coalition. He mentioned that a majority of 2.7 million new voters is among Gen Y who extensively relied on UGC for information. The PR has successful in utilizing UGC and UGOV virality as a platform to persuade the voters. So many issues raised at that point of time and most of it are included in the PR 'ceramah' video which has been uploaded by not only online alternative news portal but also amateur who owned the social media account particularly YouTube.

Among the issues are 'Kalimah Allah, the kleptocracy of Sarawak Chief Minister, Najib's and Mongolian Model, Rosmah Mansor (Najib's wife) shopping habits, corruption and many more. Highlighting those issues in social media, PR has managed to pull 100,000 crowds to join their Mega-rallies (Chin, 2013). Thus, Rajasakran and Sinnapan (2013) conversely state that Gen Y is different in terms of learning new things. The so-called technology savvy generations are highly visual learners and social media is indeed their high-ranking source to seek for political information.

Therefore, this generation tends to make their own judgements as they tend to believe in what they see (English, Sweetser and Ancu, 2011). Similarly, the Spanish 2008 Parliamentary election was also influenced by the so called social media conspiracy where the strategies to defeat the government was garnered by certain leaders of the opposition parties. Remarkably, the intense usage of UCG in Spanish has geared towards malfunctioning the democratic as it is also a new beginning of democracy transition (Padró-Solanet, 2010).

In contrary, Strandberg (2013) found that although the usage of UGC was at large in Finland 2011 election, the impact on voting decision as a whole is not robust. This quantitative study concluded that UGC is not influential to the Finland young voters. However, the situation in Malaysia is totally different. The Prime Minister of Malaysia himself has admitted that GE13 is the social media election. Thus, political power is controlled by those who controlled the information. It is undeniable that social media has changed Malaysia for the better politics. All in all, the democracy has been viewed as valuable to the lives of society. It takes only a single vote to change the ruling power (Mohd Azizudin Mohd Sani, 2014).

Thus, in another study by Towner (2013), the young voters who rely on YouTube are prone to vote on the Election Day. However, the same author added that YouTube does have a limitation. Although there will be two ways link, the interactivity between the User and the person who posted the video is restricted. Therefore, although UGOV may influence the decision to vote, these platforms are not necessarily influential on political participation.

3   METHODOLOGY

The qualitative approach is employed in this study. As Maxwell (2012) denotes, the flexibility and inductive nature are a reflexive process at every stage of qualitative research and that justifies why the process of collecting and analysing the data, modification of theory, revisits of research questions, determining threats in validity are simultaneously on going. In consequence of that, the researcher found that qualitative method is more appropriate for investigating individual or group

phenomenon that involve emotions, motivations and empathy, which cannot fully capture the numbers from the quantitative study (Chua, 2012). As supported by Creswell (2013) the ultimate of all qualitative research is to understand the phenomenon itself rather than merely focusing on the reader, the researcher and the informants being studied.

In conducting this study, the researcher adopted Moustakas's (1994) phenomenological procedure and guidelines in order to integrate the textural (what participants experienced) and structural description (how they experienced) (Creswell, 2013). However, there is slight alteration has been done to suit the research needs. The procedures engaged in study are as follows:

  i) It begins with preliminary research as well as make use of thorough experience and understanding of subject matter or phenomena being studied.
  ii) Determine the phenomenon of interest and review several examples of phenomena have been studied
  iii) Specify philosophical assumption of phenomenology
  iv) All data are collected from the individual who experienced the phenomenon. In this study, in depth interviews and multiple interviews with participants are being used.
  v) The researchers start with broad and general questions.
  vi) Develop clusters of meaning after going through the interview transcripts using Nvivo11
  vii) Integrate memoing, textural and structural description in a systematic way of reporting

Overall, by choosing this method and technique, this research has allowed the informants to express their thoughts, feelings and experiences in their own words, free of the constraints imposed by fixed-response questions that are generally seen in quantitative studies. The logic of this inductive approach helps me begins by gathering detailed information from participants and forms this information into categories or themes. These themes or categories develop into broad patterns, theories, or generalizations that are then compared with personal experiences or with existing literature on the topic.

In addition, purposive sampling with criterion-based selection were employed, which rest on the assumption that since one wants to discover, understand and gain insight on the particular aspect therefore "one needs to select samples from which one can learn the most" (Merriam, 1998, p.48). As denotes by Creswell (2007), the needs of the informants to have experience of the phenomena being studies are essential. As a matter of fact, criterion sampling is the most relevant sampling strategy because it represents people who have experienced the phenomenon.

4   DISCUSSION

In most instances, the powerful impact of this platform has been ignored by the so called 'established' political party since its inception. The study by Zhang et al. (2010) indicated that individual connected to social network sites tend to use them to engage in political activity. Not only has that, the social network sites had become the hub for bringing in young voters to get involved in the political process. Nevertheless, the social interaction through interpersonal discussion has created the space for political deliberation. That is how the political information are communicated which later on leads to the development of the user attitude and behaviour.

ENGAGING NEW IDEA AND INTERACTIVITY

The electorate interest in understanding the political process will lead to a healthy democracy (ibid). However, to make the voters understand the political process, they must feel the pertinence. It is important for them to feel the relatedness through the issues that should not be ignored by the political entity if their support is needed.

The factor that determines the support and choice of the political party were encouraged by open and unlimited exposure on YouTube platform that UGOV Users accustomed to. Although most of the political videos that they watched were sometimes very offensive, vocal and insulting, they believe that it was through such exposures that made them realized that these mediums have helped them in many ways to make an inform decision. Rekhraj and Jayasainan (2014) research that focused on psychological emotion of social networking users and their engagement in social sharing of political videos during the 13th General Election helps to substantiate this finding. They have argued that even if the user's identity is known, they can express their thoughts without fear when sharing potentially viral videos or commenting on postings. In fact, the informants feel that the exposure that they obtained gave them a better picture of the party or the candidates that they are going to choose and support as mentioned in the excerpt below:

> "Times have changed... some of the video might sound provocative before... but now I think it is quite open.... It gave us the idea and choice to make an informed decision...." (UGOV User 10 Line 353-361)

Although some of the scholars' fear that political exposure through this platform will only build the wall between those interested and those who are not, in the context of this study, the informants perceived it differently. They claimed that the youngsters now live in struggle. Most of the issues affected their life. It is through the online medium such as UGOV have bridged the information gap. This is in line with what Kim (2010) have argued, that the mainstream media or traditional media has weakened the participatory democracy because as a culture of cultivation tools, UGC has a lot to offer. Thus, the informants also confessed that their political interest is blooming due to the fact that YouTube has been a catalyst for them to explore and dig the information that interest them as exemplified in the following excerpts:

> "The political video on YouTube has triggered me to explore and to find out what's happening around me. That's why it's good to watch video in YouTube.... because you know that at the end of the video you will go and find more information. Engage you to the new things that you've never experienced before." (UGOV User 12 Line 571-574)

> *"The medium actually open our mind to think differently. We live in the era where we always seek for new things. People sometimes get bored with the political party manifesto.... So, through this social media like YouTube they will eventually help to seek err... other people's opinion as well, such as opposition... So, people are looking for the best proposal... the better offer. So, yes it helps to change our mind as well. "(UGOV User 8 Line 667-678)*

The expectations set by the informants are high. They are showing their concern not only for their future but also for the sake of the country they live in. They longed-for different views from the oppositions because YouTube is the only space for them to make a comparison, answering their curiosities not being offered by the mainstream media particularly regarding the issues highlighted by the oppositions. Using YouTube to deliver political information has given unlimited advantages to the oppositions. In fact, because of active video uploads by the oppositions, they consistently gained support from the voters and the number of support keep increasing since 2008 Malaysia General Election. Thus, as posited by Rosyidah Ahmad (2015), the online medium had become a new space for political activist and opposition voices to disseminate political information and news.

VIDEO AS EVIDENCE

The UGOV is on the rise due to the youngsters' dependency on this platform as one of their evidence in deciding which party they would go for. As argued by Maznah Mohamad (2008), the younger generation or Internet literate voter's perceived social networking such as UGOV more persuasive, although they know it is impossible to find whether the information they search for can be trusted. The study has called YouTube as an influential tool for the User to post not only speech of political candidates, but also short films, satires and parodies, video clips and songs. It argued that the younger generation believe it is through UGOV that they will have an idea on which party to vote for their future.

This argument is evidenced by former journalist from Media Prima that claimed that there was no spinning involve over the political video that he watches on YouTube. In fact, he admitted that whatever has been shown on YouTube was exactly what was happening at the location. The experience encounters with such videos were unveiled in the following statement:

> *"...when I watched YouTube, I found that the content is exactly like what I've heard and witnessed at the actual location...They really know what to highlight and how to frame the issue. It's influenced me because sometimes... besides content, there are catchy title to attract people to open the video. It triggered people to watch the video and the impact of the video... I must say was quite good... They actually... manage to capture my attention and manipulate our mind into believing in them." (UGOV User 10 Line 392-399)*

> *"Ok.... After a few years.... my view towards the Opposition... towards the Government has changed. Although for me personally... maybe...my interest or support towards the Government is going down.... that does not mean the opposition could win my support. So, the video is actually one of the evidence for me to check on what the government and the opposition is doing... how well the policy has been executed." (UGOV User 12 Line 733-737)*

> *"The opposition cannot be wrong all the time. We need to consider some of the comments from the oppositions, so, when it comes to the videos... I cannot ignore the videos uh...The video helps me to reconsider my judgments." (UGOV User 2 line 670-675)*

The different views were captured by the informants through the online medium (in this statement she refers to YouTube). As a vehicle of political mobilization, YouTube has provided dissimilar angle of what conventional news presented in the mainstream media as mentioned by the UGOV users in the following excerpts:

> *"A lot of what has been portrayed in the mainstream media does not necessarily translate to what other people experienced when they are there. So, when they post these things online it provides two different views." (UGOV User 3 Line 384-387)*

> *"Whatever videos viral on YouTube especially aa.... you know.... says bad things about our government it can't be shown in a mainstream media. So, that is the only way that the.... the... opposition to show the information that they have. So, it.... it does...influence me a lot in terms of receiving the information that I don't get in the mainstream media. Yes.... YouTube play a big role in aa... determining my political party based on the information that I received." (UGOV User 15 Line 196-202)*

Not only the video has become an evidence for UGOV Users to reconsider their judgement, it also has encouraged the audience to be more critical before making a decision. The radical content offered by this platform has initiate political interest among UGOV Users. Thus, the argument made by Holt, Shehata, Stromback and Ljungberg (2013) that the utilization of UGC may constitute or inspire political expression is evidenced in this finding. Indeed, utilizing UGOV for political purposes has a positive impact on political interest which in the long run will determine the slant of youths favoured political party. Hence UGOV Users statements have shown their maturity and responsibilities exhibit the attitude of refuse to be carried away by the mainstream media content. Thus, some of the UGOV Users confessed that YouTube play a big role in determining which political party they prefer to rule.

Seeing is Believing

The credibility of the source persisted as the pertinent issue among UGOV Users. In essence, based on Aristotelian reasoning, the characteristics of message are distinguished into logos, ethos and pathos. According to English et.al (2011), logos is an

ordinary strategy using the logical arguments to hold up the individual stance on the raised issue. In other words, it allows the receivers to gauge the arguments based on the information which later will be decided as valid or otherwise by the receivers. For instance, the usage of factual record or statistics in presenting the visual.

In alternative form of political information, emotional and humour appeals or also known as pathos is essential to ensure the effectiveness of the messages deliverance. Hence, the emotional appeals that touch the viewers heart will enhance the element in the video. In fact, the humour appeals that are often interconnected with politics have engraved viewers interest to be influenced by the information (English, et.al, 2011).

In this study, it was found that, rather than believing in print of text material, the political video in YouTube have resonate the informants to strengthen their judgment. The fact that they believe in what they see were echoed in the excerpts below:

> *"As compared to writing err... printed material umm... I would say that people can manipulate err... the word... the content err... of one particular news in just a second as compared to YouTube. So, seeing is believing is... what should be the keyword when you watch YouTube... I would rely more on YouTube when it comes to getting a new first-hand news." (UGOV User 7 Line 381-384)*

> *"I have experience watching the Prime Minister nudged by his wife on YouTube. The video influenced my perception towards him. It makes me wonder how are you (Najib) is going to rule if you have been treated like that in front of the public, the international gathering? I believe the video was not edited. That video reflects on how I perceived my leader." (UGOV User 9 Line 582-585)*

> *"I believe in what I see... It's... it's more or less like saying that facts are facts and that the truth is undeniable." (UGOV User 14 Line 202-203)*

Thus, Rajasakran and Sinnapan (2013) argument that states that Gen Y is different in terms of learning new things is evidenced in this. The so-called technology savvy generations are highly visual learners and social media is indeed their high-ranking source to seek for political information. English, Sweetser and Ancu, (2011) argument that this generation tends to make their own judgements as they tend to believe in what they see is also solidified. Seeing is believing. As predicted by Selnow (1998), the Internet will increasingly be the source of choice due to the inherent video and textual qualities. Thus, what have been forecasted by Selnow (1998) are now becoming evident in this study. Overall, YouTube encompassed the Aristotelian reasoning that once was adopted by the electronic media like television. The logical appeals, emotional appeals and communicator are the important element that may affect UGOV Users decision making. It involves the holistic cognitive process that eventually affected the youngsters' behaviour from ordinary citizens to politically conversant netizen.

FROM STREET TO VIRAL

The Coalition for Clean and Fair Election or known as Bersih is a coalition of non-governmental organizations that have organized a series of planned Bersih rallies. The main objective of organizing the rallies was to reform the current electoral system in Malaysia towards free, clean and fair elections. The call for free election is due to discrepancies in the voting process (Rajaratnam, 2009). However, since the first Bersih protest in 2007, the reporting of the rallies has been ignored by the mainstream media. The most notable issues brought up by the media during that time just focused on massive traffic jams and road closures reporting which resulted in the decline of the mainstream media dependency among the youngsters due to failing in its responsibility to function as the fourth estate (Ali Salman and Mohd Safar Hashim, 2011).

The series of Bersih rallies were strongly supported by the opposition or Parti Rakyat (PR). Bersih rallies also received wide publicity on the social media particularly YouTube when the video of the demonstrations and any incidents related to Bersih were posted and became viral among the citizen.

This UGOV platform has been fully utilized to spread the message showing the citizens' frustration of the ruling government as mentioned by UGOV Users in the following excerpt:

> *"The virality of the Bersih rally on social media is a sign of citizen mobilization. The video is a signal to show the citizen frustrations towards the government." (UGOV User 11 Line 551-552)*
> *"Bersih video is viral...to show what the people feel because we have shared status how we are upset about certain things but we cannot show it... em... You know how ... how massive the support was... It shows that ... that... yes people are supporting the bersih 4.0 rally... Rather than seeing 5000, the videos are showing 50,000 supporters flooding in the middle of Kuala Lumpur. and yeah... again... it shows how people are supporting. That's why I think people watch it because.... you know whatever that is claimed by the mainstream media saying people don't understand why they go there, is proven wrong. People supported because they understood. They protested for the betterment of this country." (UGOV User 15 Line 257-265)*

Hence, YouTube become essential tools for not only netizen but also the protesters to share the event through this platform. The experience of viewing Bersih video on YouTube has triggering a range of UGOV Users views on what makes they take sides or against the rallies. They believe things happen for a reason and whoever posted or shared the video have their own agenda. The following excerpts exemplify their views:

> *"I believe that the person who viral the Bersih video have their own agenda. Some of the video portrayed Bersih in a negative light. So...the video I think maybe... you know came from people who are pro-government. While the opposition I can see... that they are using the video... they spread the video as much as they can to gain support from*

the citizens. They tried to change people's perception… in a way… you know... . they wanted to show that the government is capable to fulfill the rakyat needs." (UGOV User 13 Line 645-651)

"I think it is more on letting the others know about what is happening. I don't agree on this rally and everything. It doesn't... it doesn't make any difference. If you really want to make changes, you have to start by... you have to just change the... the people in charge by... what you have to do is to go and vote. That's all." (UGOV User 7 Line 520-524)

"Bersih from the very beginning has... the intention of creating a ripple its influence throughout the country... to make people join their cause. And one of the best way is to make it viral and this was evidence in how it has cropped up in East Malaysia, Melbourne, London and many different places across the world. And of course the virality of Bersih 3 where... you know they used videos of aa... .Bersih supporters crashing car or pictures or videos of the FRUs aemm... shooting water at participants. So those are videos that received a lot of responses... Emotional responses to draw people to their cause." (UGOV User 14 Line 279-286)

The street demonstrations have exemplified the importance of social media like YouTube in escalating public enquiry of authority and inspiring social mobilization. Bersih is perceived by the informants as the opposition actors that make use a medium like YouTube to circulate discourses on how the citizens were being mistreated by the government.

"I still remember during the BERSIH rally the... viral video featuring one lady surrounded by a group of BERSIH supporters and err... happen to be someone actually captured the video and err... posted uploaded the video on YouTube and it just went viral ok…. Things like this... this is some of the things which traditional journalist couldn't do ok…no censorship involved... Something which ordinary people could do…something that also can attract ordinary people to watch... I would say most of Bersih video were posted by ordinary individuals not from the traditional media outlets." (UGOV User 5Line 98-104)

The viral video of Bersih protesters on the street has become the connection and communication that attracted the citizens to be politically active. This is proven based on a huge turnout of over 50,000 people during the demonstration in 2011 (Bryant, 2016). Some of the UGOV Users have attended series of Bersih rally and they saw for themselves how successful the event was. They also admitted that they join the demonstrations because of the videos that they watched on YouTube. This admission backs up what Noris (2003) has argued that youngsters are more inclined to participate in cause-oriented politics, which means using radical action such as boycotts and demonstration. They wanted to discover themselves whether whatever have been portrayed in the mainstream media is a reality. The truth is, they found many contradicting facts between the sources from UGOV as compared to other conventional media reporting. This makes Kim (2011) argument well-founded that the younger generation most probably prefer the information that is aligned and consistent with their point of views. However, the selective attitude does not lessen their curiosity from getting the other side of the story. In fact, the flexibility offered by this platform has contributed to the integration of public sphere and political fragmentation.

UGOV GALVANIZED GEN Y DECISION MAKING

The influence of online content particularly YouTube is pivotal during election. This is due to the fact that this platform has provided the viewers with the ability to gain unswerving and infinite access to either individual channel or news organization channel. In a previous study, Papagiannidis et al. (2012) posited that the voter's intention to vote is very much influenced by how recent and accurate the information they gained from the sources. Indeed, UGOV User biggest concern when looking for an accurate and current information on the political video is how relevant was the content and whether it is aligned with what they hoped for.

Most of UGOV Users are very selective in choosing the political videos on YouTube. What roused their curiosity was when they were indirectly linked to one video to another video. They keep on digging the fact although at that particular point of time they already have in mind which candidates or party they will vote for. This support the arguments made by Baumgartner and Morris (2009) that UGOV has created a democratic space to Gen Y. Previously they have become negligent because the traditional one-way communication media do not speak their mind. Ultimately, they have become involved in politics because of the compatibility offered by this platform. The curiosity does affects their decision to change what they use to believe as demonstrate in the excerpt below:

"Aaaa... it makes me think twice... you know they managed to make me consider to change my vote to a party that I'll never vote for before this... Ya, I guess they they managed to do so... ." (UGOV User 10 Line 438-440)

"The more you learn (YouTube) about the different parties or the different individuals involved in the party emm... you begin to question whatever political happening, whether it even have aa... the public interest in mind in the first place." (UGOV User 14 Line 358-360)

I think the political video that we watch on YouTube will help us to question ourselves… you know. I mean…it is not like… immediately will change my decision but… it does make me to reconsider sometimes. It is through the video that gave us the idea on what's going on. If you didn't see those kinds of videos you'll think everything is okay…" (UGOV User 12 Line 709-713)

Some of the informant even voiced out their disappointment and making a comparison on how UGOV that is YouTube have overtaken the role mainstream media particularly television. To the informants, television has been conquered by the government

and they had enough with the exaggeration of political news which is not giving the true picture of current political situation. The major frustration has led them to find alternative political information. Hence, to the informants, YouTube has disclosed the information that they believe can be trusted. Information being hidden from the mainstream are viral through social media. Kasmani, Sabran and Ramle (2014) argument is evidenced in this finding as they emphasize that the viral aspect of UGOV has emboldened Gen Y interest in politics. The virality has roused the inquisitiveness which resulted in the informants changing their voting decision as demonstrated in the following excerpt:

> *I'm sick of the news on TV…unlike social media like YouTube…Facebook… this platform has given me a paradigm shift. In fact YouTube has open up my mind to support the opposition because the relevant information that I got from the so called alternative media. It makes me doubt about the current government…seriously…I even made a decision to vote for the opposition for this upcoming election." (UGOV User 9 Line 552-527).*

As posited by Holt et al. (2013) the motivation to watch the political video is partly because of the voters' interest that has the intention to participate in political discourse. Not only YouTube has disclosed the government weaknesses, it also has given alternative views towards the opposition. Thus, UGOV Users would observe which party is more proactive in solving the issues involving the public interest because that will be the key before they cast the ballot. As posited by Mohd Azizudin Mohd Sani (2014) the previous 13th Malaysia General Election of 2013 has managed to allure vast amount of young generation to cast their votes. Out of 13.3 million of voters, half of it is among Gen Y and this the researcher stated is the immense impact of social media towards Gen Y has turned the online channel such as YouTube, Twitter and Facebook as a source of political information and updates.

5 CONCLUSION

The struggle faced by the youngsters has forced them to look into alternative views that offers new way of looking things. In fact, it is through the on line medium such as UGOV has bridging the information gap. YouTube have become the catalyst for the next generation to excavate the political information and at the same time disclosing facts and figures and giving critical point of views in different perspective which apparently contradicting with the mainstream reporting. Clearly, this situation has given the unlimited advantages to the opposition. They really make use of UGOV space and manage to pull the viewers to watch their video content. In short, this study cover up the role of online media that affected towards political information. It crucially appeals our citizens to seek alternative news from online sources. Malaysian voters were positively connected by higher levels of political contribution as anticipated in the online media.

Although the informants admit that the video is powerful evidence in finding the truth and create change, YouTube has been utilized with utmost caution. The informants are aware that they sometimes facing issues manipulation through the video on YouTube but that is not the reasons for them to be easily carried away by the content. Thus, the judgments are made based on the evidences that perceived as credible by them. However, as a vehicle of political mobilization, YouTube has provided dissimilar angle that have been left out in the mainstream media.

Nevertheless, voting requires the informants to make a critical evaluation before making a decision. The radical content has encouraged and sometimes also influences UGOV Users attentiveness in politics. Thus, some of the UGOV Users acknowledged YouTube as an important platform in giving them good option of political information in determining which political party they prefer to rule. In fact, YouTube comprises the Aristotelian perceptive that previously was advocated by television, one of the electronic media platforms. These Aristotelian reasoning were incorporate mostly in the opposition slanted video. The holistic cognitive process has affected the Gen Y behavior from ordinary and reluctant citizens to politically conversant netizen.

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