The Use of WhatsApp on Political Marketing Agenda in Malaysia Politics

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Abstract
A historic event was created in Malaysia when Pakatan Harapan, the then opposition party, won Malaysia's 14th general election. Doubted as "the father of all elections" as it evidenced the collapse of 60 years of Barisan Nasional ruling era. For Pakatan Harapan, it is beyond their wildest dream. This article aims to explain how WhatsApp plays a major factor in influencing voters to make their decision. It also aims to analyze how WhatsApp assisted users in accessing information, using the information, and disseminating political party and campaigning agenda in political marketing strategies. Using content analysis and a simple random survey involving 406 respondents, this study found that WhatsApp political and agenda-setting content plays a significant role compared to other social media and instant messaging services in Malaysia. Accessibility and handy usage become the factor in accessing information, use the information and then disseminate political campaigning content, thus assisted political marketing agenda. Future use of WhatsApp on political marketing agenda is eminent and worth for future studies.
Keywords: Social Media, Election, Political Behavior, Electoral Campaigning, Malaysia

Introduction
The 14th Malaysian General Election (GE14) has created a major event in Malaysia's political and electoral history so far. The results are beyond the wildest dream. Barisan Nasional (BN), the longest governing party was defeated with 121 seats won by Pakatan Harapan (PH) that makes a simple majority, thus has the right to form a new government. It also witnessed that BN not only lost another five states to PH including Melaka, Negeri Sembilan, Johor, Kedah, and Sabah; but also lost in terms of popular votes into 32 percent only, while Terengganu falls onto Malaysian Islamic Party (Parti Islam Se-Malaysia or PAS). By far, it is the worst performance of BN, which comprised various political parties, mainly United Malays National

Organization (UMNO), Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC), and its components parties. Malaysia also chronicled few historic events including the changing of government in most democratic ways through the electoral process without any violent events. It also exhibited that Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, a former Prime Minister in 1981-2003, was re-elected as Prime Minister for the second time, making him the oldest Prime Minister in the world at the age of 94; which he then resigned due to domestic party issues in Mac 2020. Interestingly, his appointment was sanctioned by 71 percent of the young electorate aged between 21 to 49 years old.

As information and communication technology rapidly changes, so do the political marketing strategies and its tools. New media, which took stage approximately in 2003 with Myspace then followed by other social media and microblogging applications such as Facebook (2004); Twitter (2006); Instagram (2010) and the most popular is the WhatsApp (2009) application (Hamid & Rahman, 2018). Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Telegram, Youtube, Snapchat, WeChat users, and so on are normally used to share their views and opinions, diary-like activities, and blogging for and of personal interest. Because of its major contribution to persuasion, news related to political activities, views, and campaigning began to take place also. But its importance in setting political agenda is still missing (Gilardi et.al, 2021).

For instance, in the United States (US) presidential election in 2008, the then Barack Obama campaigned was considered as the benefactor of social media and microblogging movement in the use of information and communication technologies, which later emulated then by Donald Trump, though in radically fashioned, often with twitters bulldozed arguments (Boczkowski & Papacharissi, 2018). It is recognized as the first US national campaign that used new media technologies and the internet (Al-Deen & Hendricks, 2012). This has led to the social media revolution not only in the United States electoral campaign but also affected other countries such as Britain with Brexit Campaign, France with Yellow Jacket protestor, Hong Kong with pro-democracy movement, Egypt, Syria, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Brazil, Spain, and Ukraine including Malaysia's election scenery. This shift somehow does affect the Malaysian political landscape from the 2008 election until the 2018 general election, with young voters, do play a major influence (Zubaidah, 2009, p. 16). Patrice Victor one of the Reporters without Borders' regional correspond have mentioned that the Malaysian experience may help the other nations to replicate as they also develop a potent combination of repressive governments and better reasonable Internet access (Bose, 2011, p. 2).

In dissimilarity, some researchers report that social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, and others do not necessarily translate into electoral success (Larsson & Moe, 2012; Leng Ho, 2012; Miller & Ko, 2015) but its influence in forming protest behavior is salient (Jost et al., 2018; Poell, 2019). Nevertheless, social media contributing role in political information dissemination has been identified when BN lost two-thirds majority in the 2008 polls and continues declined in the 2013 election result (Azhar, 2013; Azmir Nizah, Abdul Azzis, & Ibrahim, 2016; Weiss, 2013). Additionally, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter have considered an essential application for today's communication and news sources. It can be evidenced as this application was pre-installed in many smartphone brands that are available in the market. Smartphone producers and manufacturers also viewed this as a marketing strategy to appeal to users. A huge enterprise like Apple and Samsung which has been dominated the smartphone market for quite sometimes are facing stiff challenges by China-born corporation like Huawei, Xiaomi, Oppo, Vivo, and few others (GSMArena.com, 2019).
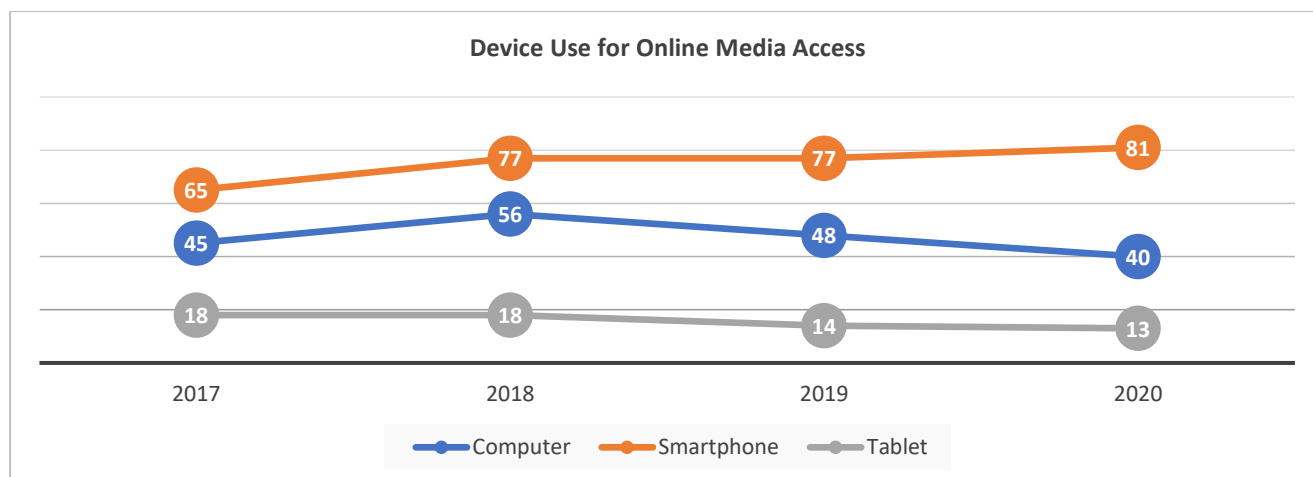
Figure 1 Device Use for Online News. Source: Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2021

The race for market acquisitions was attributed to the inclusiveness of social media available in their product. Users have these apps for their daily life activities, throwing opinions, and information gathering. Live update and streaming of events, photo sharing, voicing out their concerns and dissatisfaction and many more do contribute to the fast-changing of this application, and what more on its content carried. According to the study by Campbell and Kwak (2010), found that the usage of the mobile phone especially for information exchange was mainly associated with higher civic and also political engagement. It became interestingly, expressing opinions on political topics in Malaysia especially before or during the GE14 tremendously increased (Chinnasamy & Abdul, 2018). Figure 1 Device Use for Online News depicts the different devices used for online access. It showed a constant change in the use of different forms of media. Print media have shown a negative trend for the past four years, while online including social media use showed a stable change.
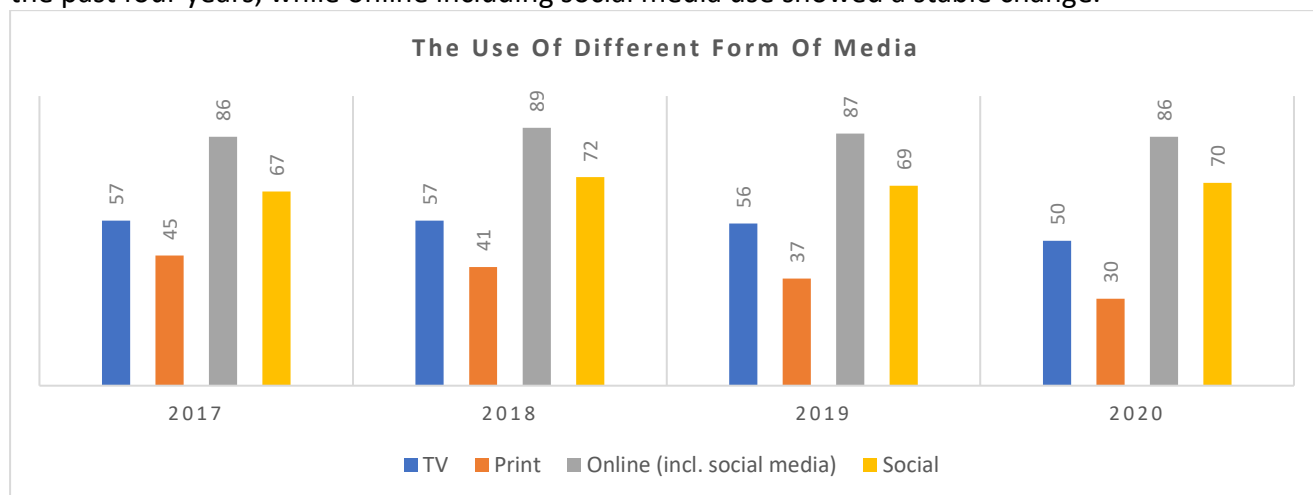

Figure 2 The Use of Different Forms of Media. Source: Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2021

Social media has been acknowledged as the major contributing factor for such a result in GE14 as evidenced in Figure 2. One of the ascertaining factors is the exponential growth of social media. In the year 2008, it is only 800 000 Facebook users. The amount was then sky-rocketing to 22 million in 2018 (Miniwatts Marketing Group, 2018). As of June 2021, it was reported that the number of registered users for Facebook is approximately 29 million

(Internetworldstats.com, 2021). In terms of political views and topics, 18.3% of internet users shared their political views online. According to Statista Research Department, (2019), almost 18.4 million smartphones users in Malaysia, and forecasted more than 20 million in 2020 (Müller, 2021). It does confirm that the underpinning cause of the phenomenon is the smartphone penetration that energizes more users to access the Internet than ever (Abdul Wahab, 2016).

It does also due to the capacity of microblogging that supports blogging activity with smaller sizes of word posts and their user-friendly features that offer wide usage among millennials (Yusop & Sumari, 2013). The emergence of the concept such as e-participation (Gibson & Cantijoch, 2013; Grönlund & Wakabi, 2015; Vicente & Novo, 2014); cyber democracy (Chun & Cho, 2012); digital democracy (Hyun, 2012); and also "Netizens" is another evidence on how important that the role of social media plays in Malaysia political participation. All these concepts essentially assuage the importance of the Internet as a tool during political campaigns especially in the recent 14th General Election in Malaysia. This situation paves for Instant Messaging (IM) application to plays a bigger role in political marketing tools for the sake of political campaigns effectively and comprehensively influence the voters.

WhatsApp, being the most popular mobile massaging app with 2 billion users worldwide (Statista Research Department, 2021). As for Malaysia, it is reported that 68 percent active users in daily activities and growing to 22 million users as of 2019 (Mobilesquared, 2019). Simple logic to this situation is due to the exponential factor that each smartphone users may at least have three different WhatsApp groups. Once information is received, the forwarding message may spiral into triplets. One of the great pieces of evidence was news in India spiral over 55 percents from its 340 million users, which creates serious concern in 2018 India Elections. The same goes with 2020 U.S Presidential Election (Clayton, 2020; Dave, 2020). Research conducted by Norshuhada Shiratuddin et al., (2016) points out that seven major social media tools used by the respondents (Generation Y), including WhatsApp, Facebook, Google+, YouTube, Instagram, and also Twitter. WhatsApp and Facebook are the most popular tools used by the respondents (Generation Y), where more than 50% of the total of 1029 respondents use them frequently. A report from Statista, We are Social and a few other research firms confirmed this trend, and it is most highly unlikely communication will be without WhatsApp.

Because most of the previous research very much focusing on the impact of Facebook (Chang & Tham, 2016; Leng Ho, 2012) and Twitter (Faizal Kasmani, Sabran, & Adzrah Ramle, 2014; Rosyidah Muhamad, 2015) on electoral results in Malaysia, this study, however, will discuss on the impact of WhatsApp on elections outcome. Therefore, this study is to embark on the influencing factor of WhatsApp in political marketing and party campaigning strategy in the wake of GE 14. A simple random survey was also conducted to confirm the exponential power of WhatsApp in assisting the political marketing agenda in Malaysia.

Changing Dynamics

Weiss (2013) regards Malaysia as a semi-democratic nation, whereby media was alleged to control by the previous regime through mainstream media either print, online, television, and outdoor advertisement. This was significantly giving to the growth of alternative media, such as blogs, news online media, and social media known as new media. This is due to anti-regime sentiment and presumed political liberalization (Pepinsky, 2013) perception among citizens. The steep decline of circulations of a mainstream newspaper such as Malay-language Berita

Harian and Utusan Malaysia with 30 percent drop, while English-language newspaper New Straits Times suffered from 41.6 percent drop from 2012 (Audit Bureau of Circulations Malaysia, 2017; Zulkifli Sulong, 2017) become the evidence on how online news media is the other choice of Malaysian, at least those who are categorized as middle class and those in living in the urban and suburban areas (Nizah & Bakar, 2019). This situation may also be further viewed and understand from the Freedom House and Reporter Without Borders reports as in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1
Index of Press Freedom in Malaysia (Freedom House)

Index	2004-2005	2008-2009	2010-2011	2012	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
World Rating	69	65	64	63	64	65	67	69	45	52	52	51
World Ranking	154th	141st	141st	144th	141st	142nd	149th	151st	Not available			
Press Freedom	Not Free	Not Free	Not Free	Not Free	Not Free	Not Free	Not Free	Not Free	Partly Free	Partly Free	Partly Free	Partly Free

Source: www.freedomhouse.org Note: 0- Most Free, 100=Least Free

Table 1 evidenced the press freedom in Malaysia. This repercussion is based on the perception that mainstream media is either governing party-owned or state-owned business entity. However, the further decline in terms of world rating and world ranking should be addressed intensely by the newly sanctioned government, and the current government. Otherwise, the current government may put itself at risk in the next election times. Post GE 14, and with the political turmoil on March 2020 which led to the change elected government, the world ranking, and rating steadfastly change.

Table 2
Index of Press Freedom in Malaysia (Reporter without Borders)

Index	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2010	2012	2013-2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
World Score	39.3	33	22.5	41	39.5	50.5	56	42.7	46.5	46.8	47.8	36.74	33.12	39.47
World Ranking	122th	113	92	124	132	141	122	147	146	144	145	123	101	119

Press Freedom	Not Free	Not Free	Not Free	Not Free	Not Free	Not Free	Not Free	Not Free	Not Free	Not Free	Not Free	Not Free	Not Free	Not Free

Source: www.rsf.org Note: 0-15- Good; 15.01-25: Fairly Good; 25.01-35: Problematic; 35.01-55: Bad; 55.01-100: Very Bad

Because online news sites are not covered by the restrictive Printing Presses and Publications Act, thus these sites are deeming to be more independent and critical on political and public issues. Figure 3 and Figure 4 further given a remarkable indication of the penetration of news sites such as Malaysiakini, Berita Harian online, Bernama.com, and few others compared with offline news media.
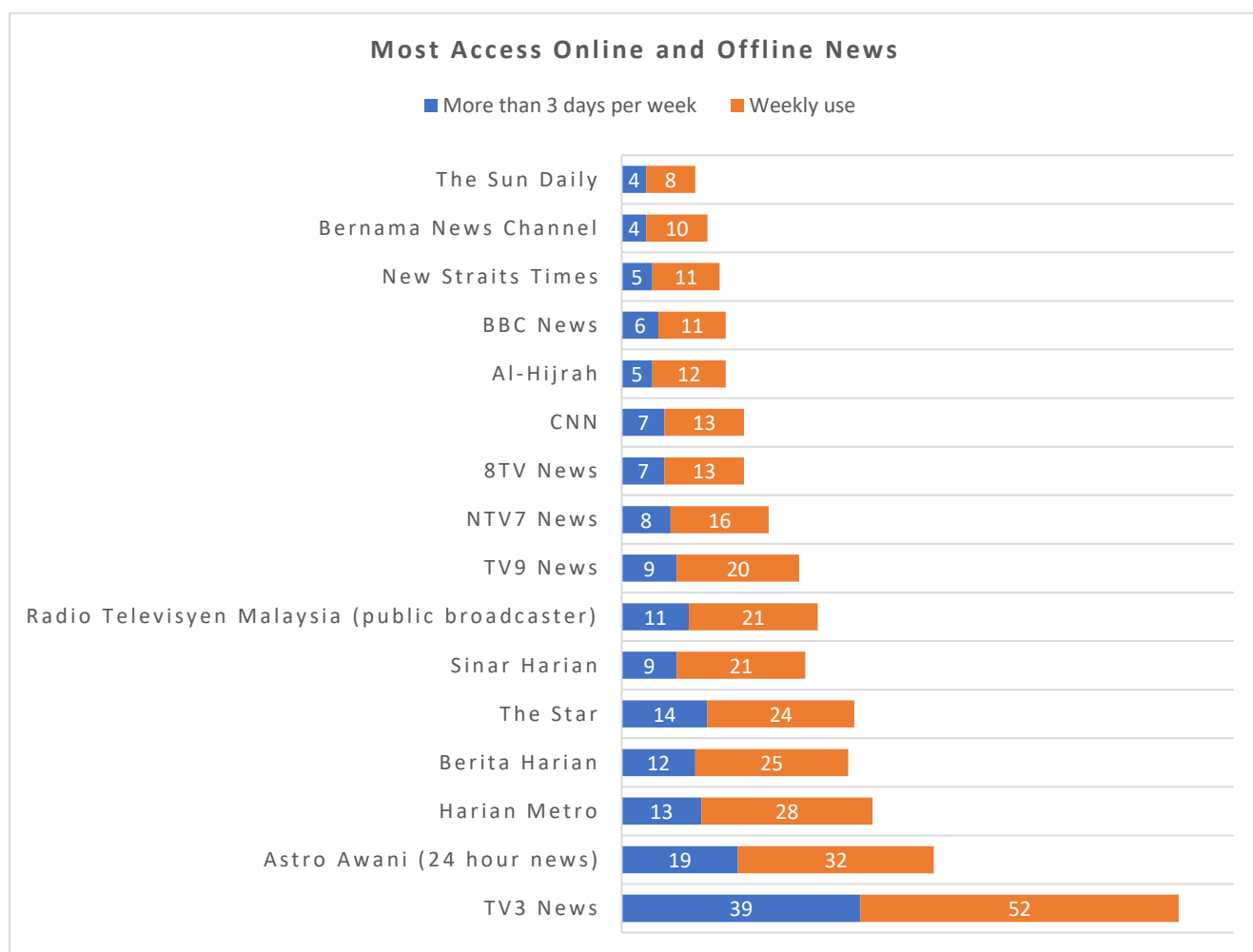

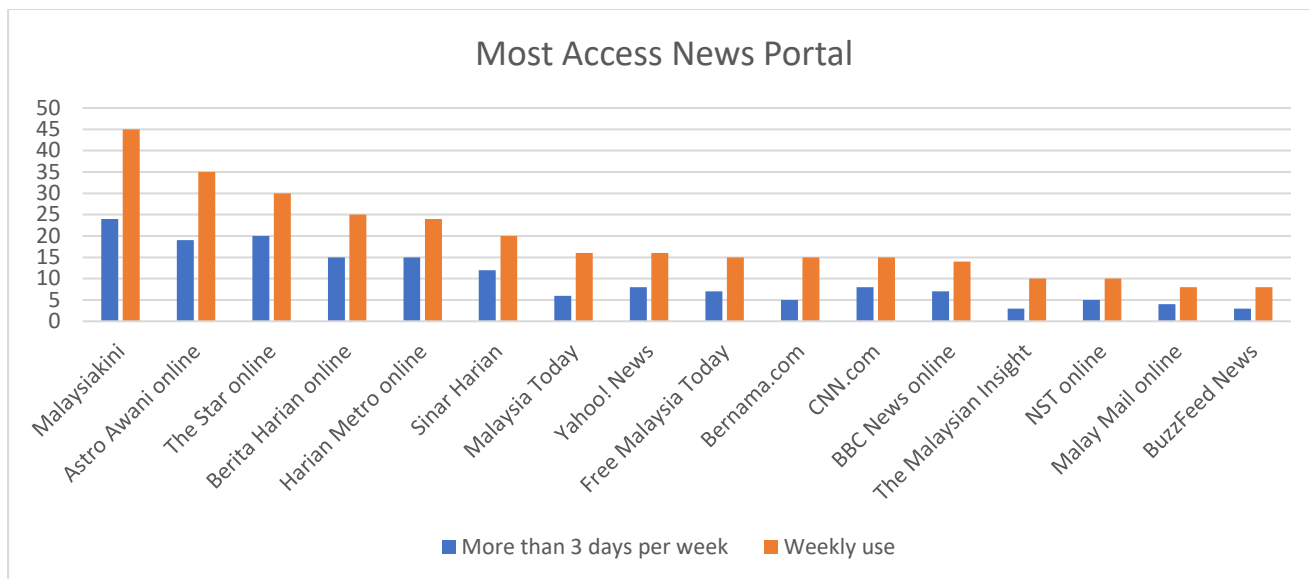Figure 3 Most Access Online News Sites in 2020

Figure 4 Most Access News Portal in 2020

Reports on Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism (Newman et al., 2017; Newman et al., 2021) found that an alternative online media has become the most visited page by Malaysian. It is deeming the medium of choice for mobile users which have been estimated 89.4 percent of Malaysian consumers as evidenced in Figure 1. Further analysis confirmed the trend that exists among Malaysians. The graph below showed that WhatsApp has been used heavily for other purposes and is second in news seeking.
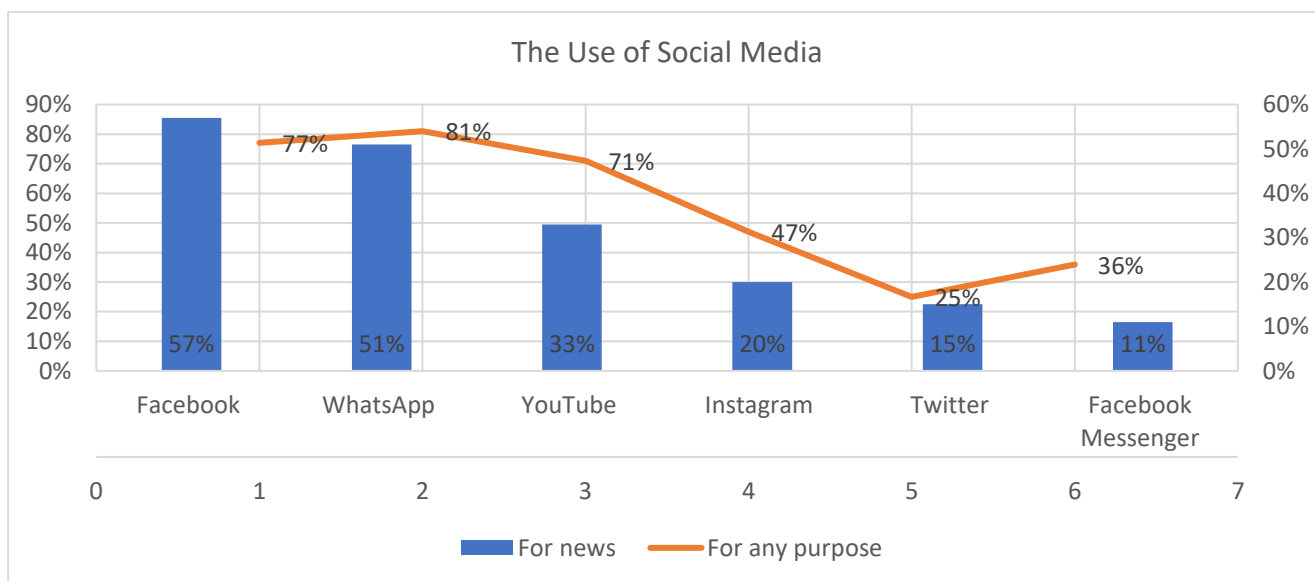

Figure 5 Top Social Media Use

In the 12th General Election (GE12) 2008, new media through blogs, party websites, Facebook, news portal, and Youtube has been credited as a source of information and political marketing for opposition to contrast a much widen pro-government mainstream media. Democratic Action Party (DAP) and BN established their Youtube channel in the wake of the 2008 election, while PAS created its channel in 2009. In terms of Facebook, only Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) started its Facebook account after the 2008 general election. With regards to Twitter, Anwar Ibrahim was the only politician who had a Twitter account before the 2008

election. However, the above scenario tremendously changed with regards to social media as the 2013 general election approaching. The Malaysian Communications Multimedia Commission (MCMC) then declared on monitoring and controlling social media usage for any abuses and seditious postings to ensure GE13 is smooth and harmonious during the election (Bernama, 2013). It is evidenced by the utmost importance of BN to ensure the prescribed truth by controlling information to voters, and it also showed the importance of social media in electoral results. Even in the difficult environment, the opposition coalition known as Pakatan Rakyat (PR) or People's Alliance managed to capture 82 parliamentary seats, which then denied the two-third majority of BN. This led to most observers concluded that internet access and penetration become one of the contributing factors to the increasing victories of opposition parties in the GE12 election. Former Prime Minister, Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi then acknowledged BN's misjudgment of information and election campaigns which neglect the power of the internet and social media. Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi also admitted as the spreading growths of social media not only obtain greater openness but could be a double-edged sword for his UMNO party.

It was the beginning era of the "Internet of things" and it was the most influential communication tool among urban, younger voters and internet savvy voters (Maznah, 2008). This sentiment was also shared by former Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak when he concluded that the 13th General election is the first social media election in Malaysia. Besides, Najib also sensed how essential social media is to young voters and this generation in the next general election. On 27 February 2013, after launching the Malaysia Social Media Week 2013 summit, Najib did emphasize the influence of social media may not be the biggest factor in the elections, but he admitted it is certainly increasing the tempo of the current political debate (Lim, 2013).

In the 13th General Election (GE13) 2013, the political landscape is changing steadily. In the wake of GE13, social media users have been increases multifold as compare to GE12. GE13 is also billed as "the mother of all elections" because it apexes to a "political tsunami". GE13 then showed extensive use of online videos to spread the message. Videos comprised of political rallies attendance, either overwhelming or serious lack of attendance, clips of parties and candidates, political parodies and satire, incidents occurred, scenes on nomination and polling day, and news reports are freely available and widespread to voters. Similarly, like GE12, in GE13, BN has muscled its political power and resources with posters, banners, and billboards along federal and state roads, so do as along highways. Reports estimate a total of RM264 million is spent on online marketing and advertising space (Zurairi, 2013) which is five times more than it did previously. The total expenditure for advertising blitz was 531 million as reported by international media buying agency Vizeum Media (Malay Mail, 2013).

As it turned out, BN's performance is worse than GE12 despite having spent a huge amount of money on advertising and online political marketing. BN's strategy on negative campaigning through its mainstream media, internet-based services, and social media did make PR went to extreme measures as portrays itself as a 'victim' and use social media as a counter-frame to BN muscled might. PR not only denying BN to its two-third majority but strengthen Selangor and Pulau Pinang legislative assembly seats instead. This may explain why BN lose miserably in GE13.

Instant Messaging, Social Media Role, and GE 14's Electoral Outcome

Despite probably spending a huge amount of money online and offline, to improve BN presence in the lead up for 14th General Election (GE14) in 2018, BN however could not measure the downward of voter's support. Scholars and political scientists often refuse to give their predictions in the wake of GE14. AWANI channel, a paid satellite television owned by All-Asian Satellite Television and Radio Operator (ASTRO) turned to be a second favorite news channel to TV3 News. TV3 News aired by the TV3 channel of Media Prima still top the ranking (Newman et al., 2017, 2021). As earlier reports confirmed, television is still a source of trust news in Malaysia (Zurairi, 2018) but it does not necessarily translate into votes. AWANI tends to portray it centralist as compared to RTM and TV3 that often portrays and perceived as BN and UMNO 'official news'. Slight changes occurred post GE14, with TV3 is making increments in terms of views as depicts in Figure 4 Most Access News Portal in 2020.

Given experience on GE13 and the impact shown by the online news portal, BN had launched a 'pop up' strategy in any online website, including the news portal. With 'tagline' Hebatkan Negaraku, BN expected it may lure more voters in achieving a new mandate in GE14. However, the GE14 results came out with the wildest opposition can dream about, with PH thumping BN both parliamentary seats and popular votes.

Table 3

Comparative Results of Malaysia's General Election on 2013 and *2018* summarized comparative election results of GE13 and GE14.

Table 3

Comparative Results of Malaysia's General Election on 2013 and 2018

	GE13		GE14		
Party Contested	Barisan Nasional (BN)	Pakatan Rakyat (PR)	Barisan Nasional (BN)	Pakatan Harapan (PR)	Parti Islam Se Malaysia (PAS)
Parliamentary Seats Won	133	89	79	121	18
Votes Count	53,66997	41,47014	40,78928	57,95954	20,39722
Votes Percentage	48.55%	37.51%	33.35%	47.39%	16.69%
Popular Votes	52,37699	56,23984	37,94827	57,67390	19,33435
Popular Votes Percentage	47.38%	50.87%	32%	49.54%	16%

Retrieved from https://dashboard.spr.gov.my/pru14/#!/home

However, understanding the contributing factors for such results is matters most. Domestic issues and scandals, party leadership, economic factors, and social media has been long regarded as contributing factors to voters in making their decision. However, due to higher internet penetration and social media usage, social media thus becoming the underneath enablers in casting a ballot. Previous research confirmed social media predictive power remains elusive (Gomez, 2014) overpower structure, incumbent advantage, access to

resources, the politicization of ethnicity and Islam, and electoral irregularities, but GE14 results explain otherwise.

The power of social media is exceeded space and it is an efficient tool to reach out to first-time young voters who eschew the normal Malaysian campaign fare of rallies (Abdullah & Anuar, 2018). Additionally, a study conducted by Pew Research Center (Lee Rainie et.al., 2012; Shirley, 2014) found that almost 25 percent of 2,253 political survey respondents in social media believe that debating, discussing or sharing views on political issues with other people on the social network is something "very important" or "quite important". According to Shiratuddin et al., (2016), all the views from the youth by using social media are desirably be recorded and must be considered before the government wants to take any action or taken in the development of the country. Apart from requesting their voices to be heard, they also want that social media as an important channel for public policy engagement and dealing with the government. It's to show how important social media is to play their role among the youth in the nowadays political environment.

Barisan Nasional remains the most popular choice among the poorest constituencies in Malaysia. Based on the statistics in the GE13 results showed that some 40% out of 79 parliamentary seats that Barisan had won in the general election are of the lowest median household income quartile- and consider the poorest 25% of constituencies (The Star Online, 2018). Data released by the Department of Statistics revealed that those in the lowest quartile are constituencies including Bagan Datuk, Mersing, and Baling, in which the median household incomes are between RM2, 208, and RM 3,612.

Moreover, Sani (2014) argued that roughly 60.7% of Malaysia are internet users in 2012 where there was a huge increase of 300% of internet penetration level in Malaysia since the election in 2008. In other views, Kemp (2012) reported that almost 90% of Malaysian Internet users have registered into social media accounts. Muniandy & Muniandy (2013) then verified that Malaysian netizens view social network sites 14 billion times every month, with YouTube accounted for 67% of all online videos viewed in Malaysia. But in 2020, WhatsApp had leaped the trend. Despite the fact of false news spreading on these online platforms, social media is still one that political leaders used to upload their speech and activities for campaigning (Chinnasamy, 2018). In comparison to the olden days, campaigning was done through walking door-to-door meetings or wandering in the market to talk about themselves or party and even putting out the poster and waving flags, even rally talks are held at night to attract the crowd to them. The emergence of social media mainly WhatsApp and others created another dimension of the campaign by all the politicians and the political parties in the last general election. The Covid19 pandemic has made the change of political marketing even more rapid-paced.

In addition to that, WhatsApp is a tool that is effective to reach the crowd other than Facebook and Twitter, with its simple function of forwarding messages and even video, but it's also turned into a channel for fake news (Chu, 2018; Nizah & Bakar, 2019). In fact, in this 14th election, messaging service WhatsApp is considered the most dominant and effective messaging tool to reach the audience. People easily get messages and videos on the election campaign almost every day and share with their friends, family, colleague, or even community chat groups. Nevertheless, the existence of the new media also as a result of the development of the internet has made the media a democratic agent of information (Salman et.al, 2018).

Since 2008, the use of new media began and setting a new way of campaigning to appeal to voters for competing parties. New media play a vital role as "public sentinels" by generating and publicizing information about the performance of government. Furthermore,

it can be modeling the incentives of politicians to deliver, and making the governments more responsive to the voters; resulted in improving the quality of government public policies. New media also can become the platform to enable the efforts of civil societies to mobilize the citizens towards the anti-corruption movements and help the citizens to monitor the performance of the government of the day; and become the agent of "social accountability (Peruzzotti, Smulovitz, 2006). Informational uses of the internet and identified usage as a resource and a forum were associated with higher levels of civic engagement. Interactive civic messaging was often a stronger influence on civic engagement than traditional newspaper readership, television consumption, and face-to-face discussion around politics. This can be evidenced during GE14 with #Hebatkan Negarku #PulangUndi #CarPoolGE14 social media campaign. The existence of these sites and portals created an alternative platform for the opposition during that period to penetrate and appeal the support from the public. Furthermore, all these sites and portals were contributory in persuasive the public especially the Malaysian urban middle class to turn against the Barisan Nasional ruling party and express their anger and vote protests for the opposition leaders.

According to Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (2017) reports, signified that the highest internet penetration was in the Klang Valley area, the nation's capital, Kuala Lumpur, at 71%, and increased to 88.7% (Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, 2020). This is followed by the most developed state in Malaysia, that is, Selangor (71%), and at the administrative capital, Putrajaya (89%). As expected internet penetration is still relatively low in other less populated states such as Sabah (43%) and Sarawak (41%), situated in east Malaysia (Wok & Mohamed, 2017).

While in 2013 the using of social media such as Facebook, and Twitter marks the trend and yet current in 2018 the using of WhatsApp has become more influential in keeping important political issues in the past few years and will become more significant in coming years ahead (Abdullah & Anuar, 2018). Its shows how social media do make a huge impact on the citizens' civic engagement especially in news worldwide. These new media or social media have also enlarged the restrictive public sphere of traditional media, allowing more alternative voices and views to emerge. Furthermore, the usage of the internet which is the most commonly used of media in the 21st century have the strength to influence public opinion especially on the issues of politics and elections but may result in some biased situation, therefore affecting the voting trend in the end. Hence, social media can be said as a double-edged sword with its pros and cons. Internet poses very real potential threats to the healthy functions of representative democracy. As voters, always are mindful when it comes to the news related to politics no matter where the sources it comes whether from the newspaper, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, or other social media. It is in fact, the time for voters to be wise and get wise.

Through an online survey involving 185 male and 221 female respondents, it revealed that there was a slight difference in the form of social media used by the young respondents. It shows that female respondents used Facebook more than WhatsApp. Figure 6 and Figure 7 depicts the finding of the survey question on gender details and the usage of WhatsApp dan Facebook. 406 respondents are statistically beyond minimum acceptance of 384 of 100,000 population as suggested by (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970).
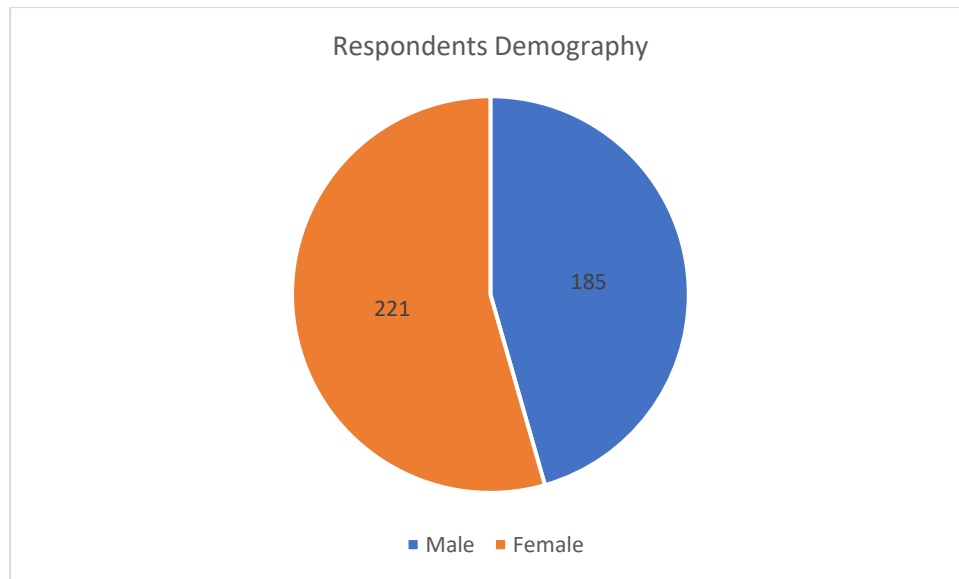
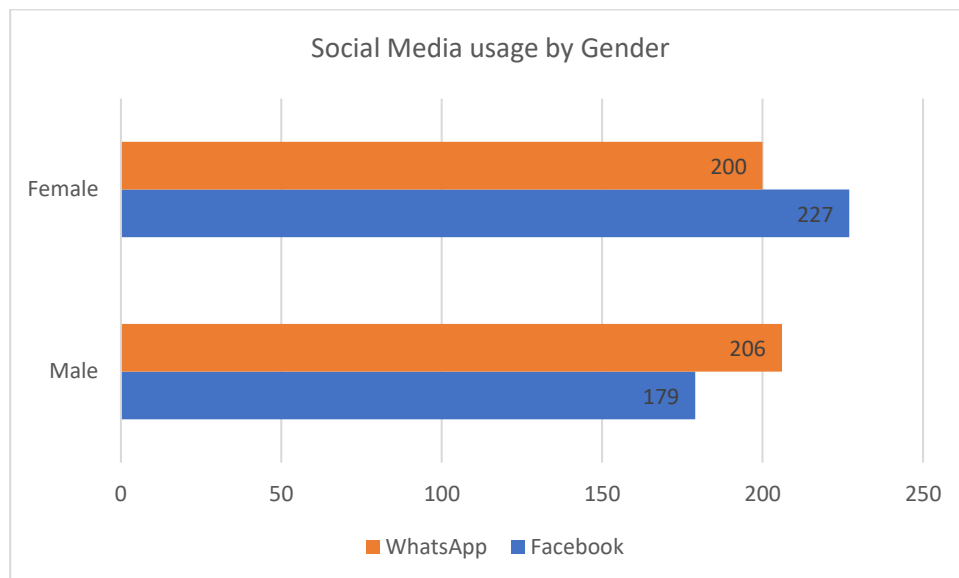Figure 6 Respondents by Gender

Figure 7 Forms of Social Media Usage

On the questions of the purpose of using WhatsApp, most respondents agreed that they use WhatsApp for their political discussion, for works related usage, and also for family matters. The respondents also somewhat used WhatsApp for social communication and least use it for business purposes. It is confirmed that WhatsApp has become the premier tool for political marketing, especially in Malaysia. This finding is parallel with the previous opinion and findings (Clayton, 2020; Farooq, 2018; Nizah & Bakar, 2019; Tan, 2018). Figure 8 showed the data from the study.
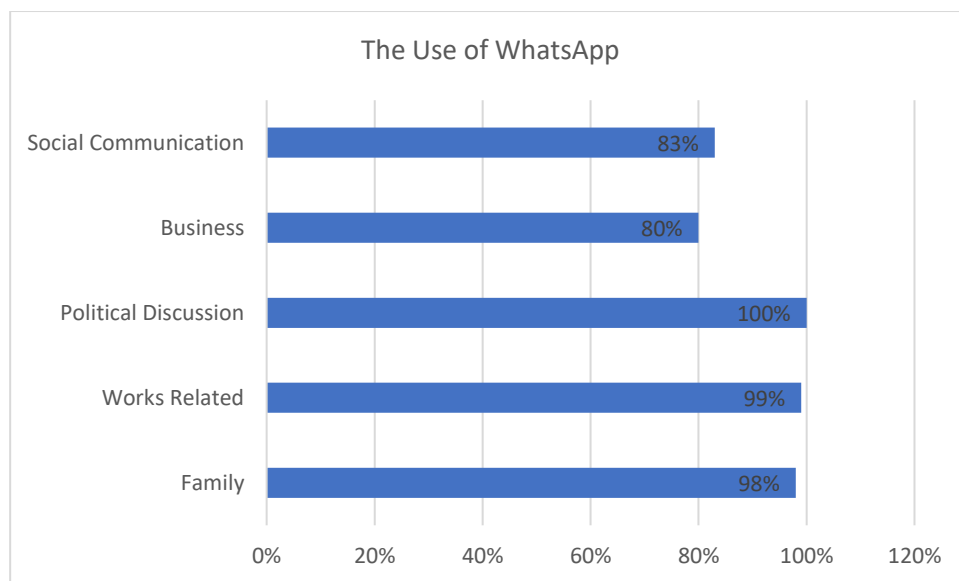
Figure 8 The Purpose of WhatsApp Usage

In terms of frequency use of WhatsApp, it shows a high percentage usage by the respondents either hourly, daily, or weekly. Therefore, it can assume that respondents did rely on WhatsApp in their daily uses, and that use is more on political discussion, work-related activities, and family discussion.
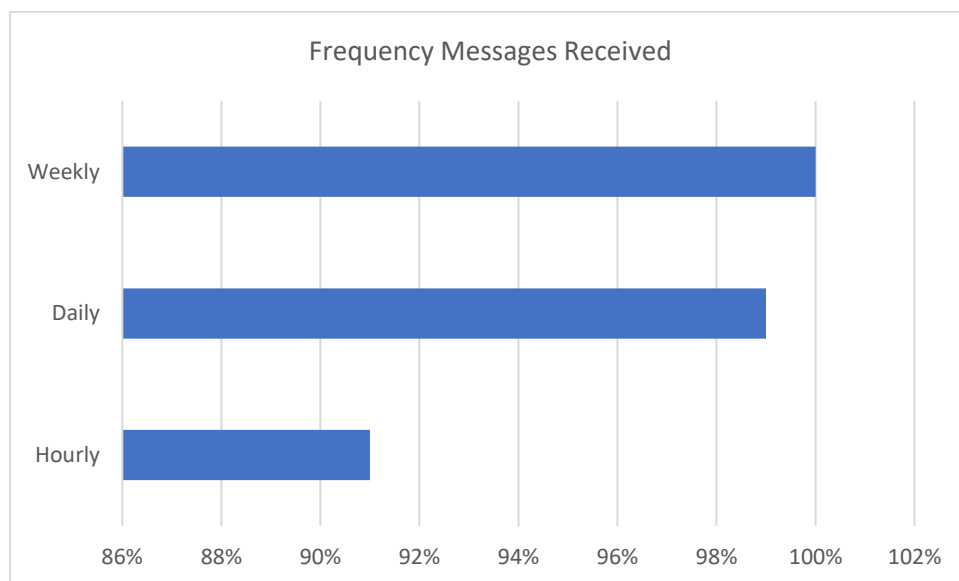

Figure 9 Frequencies of WhatsApp Usage

Conclusion

Social Media in Malaysia has been an important tool used by the political parties and politicians in disseminating the views on many political issues since the 2008 general elections. Furthermore, it is also increasingly popular and emerging as an important information source among the public. The Malaysia 14th General Election (GE14) is the vantage point for Malaysia's political history when Barisan Nasional lost their political supremacy. But that was also open a pandora box for a gridlock democracy as the party started losing feet for voters. By the next 15th general election, an increase of huge numbers of new voters especially among the young voters will be given another acid test for all political

parties as reducing voters age has been approved (Nizah, Bakar, & Azzis, 2020). The youths will be more skeptical of the new media but the new media can be their medium to engage more with the government. WhatsApp has been the main tool in political discussion, surpasses other social media forms. A thing for sure, that social media is now a way forward for political parties in strategizing their presence, concerns, anticipation, or even misled potential voters. Social media still will become a hit and become a major role in promoting political marketing agenda especially from the new young voters in Malaysia in the next coming 15th general election. From the theoretical point of view, this study highlights the sociological, psychological, and political power of WhatsApp in marketing tools. It also found that WhatsApp is largely influenced by its daily use. The exponential power of microblogging, such as WhatsApp and Telegram is expected to increase soon, especially in the forthcoming 15th Malaysian General Election. Future studies should focus on how to handle fake news, or organizing micro-political blogging, and discover political play using technology that benefits the people specifically.

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