

## Is Citizen Journalism is Similar to Keyboard Warriors and Cyber Troopers? An Exploration and Meanings from Citizen Journalists' Experience

Mastura Mahamed PhD, Siti Zobidah Omar, Ph.D  
Department of Communication, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication,  
University Putra Malaysia  
Email: mastura.mahamed@upm.edu.my, zobidah@upm.edu.my

Steven Eric Krauss Ph.D  
Faculty of Education, University Putra Malaysia  
Email: lateef@upm.edu.my

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### Abstract

Citizen journalism has the reputation being generalized as having a negative affiliation more than its potentials. Many attributed citizen journalism with skepticism and cynical phenomenon. This qualitative study is conducted to find out if youth citizen journalists have the same philosophy and view about the phenomenon and if they associate themselves with keyboard warriors and cyber troopers as well as the ethical aspects of journalism practices applied among youth citizen journalists in Malaysia. Nine informants from various states in Malaysia participated in the phenomenological study. The research question as to ways they separate themselves from keyboard warriors and cyber troopers in citizen journalism landscape in Malaysia Findings based on the themes emerged suggested that they highlighted the differences between them and keyboard warriors as well as cyber troopers, the challenges they faced as citizen journalists facing keyboard warriors and cyber troopers.

**Keywords:** Citizen Journalism, Ethics, Keyboard Warriors, Cyber Troopers, Phenomenology.

### Introduction

Cyber activism among citizen has created more engaged citizens expressed themselves using online platforms giving birth to terms such as keyboard warriors, cyber troopers and citizen journalism among others. Many considered citizen cyber activism equals citizen journalism. Yet, are they really the same? Computational Propaganda Research Project since 2012 by Oxford Internet Institute for example identified the continuous need for the public to be aware of different crowd functioning in social media for propaganda purposes and warned the risks of cyber bully. Recent article featured by the leading researchers Howard and

Bradshaw (2018) found that the amount of non-quality news (junk news) scattered online with algorithm, advertising and exposure to various contents. Information overload that may cause difficulties in distinguishing the truth and the fake information which often also rely on what the informant choose to believe. Not many made conscious effort to double check the source (Bradshaw & Howard, 2017; Choi, 2015).

Similar warning by (Newman, 2013) findings concluded that such scenario is open to threats of fake and junk news implement by political machinery via cyber troopers highlights the fight of perception that anyone can express their political and citizenry views. The comparison of 26-country study reported political views and fake news are widespread as 59 percent of respondents admitted that the internet has become their primary source of information and interaction hence identified increasing risk of non-ethical content to be available and wide spread by malicious parties such as cyber troopers and keyboard warriors despite the possible positive outcomes of more freedom of expressions available online. The arguments around citizen online contributors are all the same with lack of ethics and responsibility as the main misperception. This scenario has happened worldwide.

Therefore it is important to understand citizen journalism in Malaysia. Citizen journalism in Malaysia is a growing concept that was first experience with the introduction of blogging some might say. However the use of the term citizen journalism in Malaysia was first indicated by Citizen Journalists Malaysia (CJ.MY) in 2008. The founding member of the movement in Malaysia was Mr Maran Perianen who was a former journalist for Malaysia Kini who shared the foundation of the idea of providing citizens journalistic skills and exposure to ethical practices with increasing demand for objective and impartial news in Malaysia. He acknowledged the difficulty impartial-without leaning reporting in Malaysia. He felt that the citizens could potentially be the next group to be informed and trained to report impartially as are independent and not bound to ownership issues as well as the commercialization that happened in mainstream media (Perianen, 2016),

Other researcher such as Balaraman (2013) and Lim, (2013) among others saw that studies done on citizen journalism and cyber activism were revolved around political activism and general elections since the 2008 and they predicted that many more research will use political avenues to explore citizen journalism in Malaysia as political parties and researchers alike realized how much the internet and social media climate influence the citizen's decisions to vote. This is one of the more obvious examples of the increasing outcome of citizens producing articles that may have big impact of our lives as Malaysians In other words citizen contributions in online platforms.

Hence this opens the discussions of how these citizen contributors conduct themselves online. Is it fair to generalize netizens active online in simplistic one category fits all including those who practice citizen journalism? The ethical and practice aspects of the phenomenon though there were evidence of generalization in news reports about the categories of citizen contributors' online (Greig, 2017; Ziinine, 2017). Hence this study aim to explore the why they insisting of separation between them and the keyboard warriors and cyber troopers in Malaysian setting. This is one important step in creating a more open and positive society

### **Citizen Journalism and Ethical Considerations**

The ever growing notification of citizens participating in journalistic endeavors as the access to writing spaces open for all with the availability of online platforms and social media sites promoting user friendly interface to promote interaction raised the questions about ethical practices and considerations in citizen's journey to produce and newsworthy content.

Wasserman, (2017) warned the technology has somehow to some extent has interfere and challenged the established ideas and practices, routes and models of journalism. Others debate and exploration of journalistic professionalism and ethics becomes increasingly relevant, He identify the digital technology itself has been identified as the main cause of the breakdown of journalism as a professional profession as everybody can to some extent practice journalism qualities in the writing on a regular basis and shift our understanding of the journalism practices and professionalism as a whole and make the scene of shifting practices and changing ideologies more complicated (Fidalgo, 2013; Wyatt, 2012). To make matters worse, the complex discussions of situations also interrelated with other context such as economic and political histories that also have a role in examining the desirability of professionalism in journalism and its practices.(Lindner, Connell, & Meyer, 2015).

However there is also argument that ethical practice has to go beyond professionalism in journalism as nonprofessional journalist's content. The decoupling of the two elements is seen as a necessity especially as participatory from citizens in journalism activities is ever increasing. Hence the context of ethical practices applied beyond journalistic professionalism. Scholars such as Markham, (2010) and Culbertson, (2014) identified the increased possibilities for citizens to create and participate in media production, as well as the waning influence of legacy news platforms, have shown that media ethics must be rethought separately from professionalism. Media ethics can no longer be exclusive to professional journalists. Citizen journalists have to be exposed to citizens wanting to become citizen journalists. Basic principles such as balance, fairness and bias need to be understood. However based on their observation and analysis, citizen journalism content has greater tendency to contain inaccurate information and lack of objective reporting which potentially screamed danger. With the constant change in media landscape, it has become necessary for journalism ethical practice to be more widespread and embraced by citizen journalists to ensure news objectivity is achieved and becoming more consistent.

On the contrary, another research in Spain found that citizen participation in journalistic process help to increase journalism transparency as the cross check and balance providing more opportunity for citizens to make informed decision as local media and municipal councils found not putting transparency in informing citizens which also reflected of what has been reported in the mainstream media. Therefore the check and balance by citizen journalist is suggested to increase the level of transparency of information released to the public (Simelio, Ginesta, de San Eugenio Vela, & Corcoy, 2017).

### **Citizen Journalism Activity in Malaysia**

In Malaysia's case the online public sphere and the situation with limited media freedom and personal expression in traditional settings of face to face environment. Citizens used online spaces instead to share information, to speak their minds. The academia world has conducted numerous research that study the impact of citizen journalism in Malaysian democratic scene and discussion surrounding politics and citizenry with citizen journalism are a common topic and sights when discussing about citizen journalism including in Malaysia (Balaraman & Ibrahim, 2013; C. Leong, Pan, Bahri, & Fauzi, 2018; Salman, 2010).However Balaraman (2016) acknowledged other aspects and topics outside the political spectrum such as community reporting, casual news, special topics, problem solving articles and reactive articles to name a few were rarely discuss in Malaysian academics and media as we have limited research of citizen journalists personal views and meaning to their motivation to their involvement as citizen journalists. The idea of spreading information, helping others and discussing social

issues were the main motivations in practicing freedom of press in the context of Malaysian citizen journalists' need to be highlighted and discussed beyond CJ.MY by academia and local media scene as citizen journalism in Malaysia is growing.

Meanwhile Firdaus, (2018) observed that the presence of citizen journalism in Malaysia imposed a challenge to existing traditional newswork in media organizations yet somehow helped decrease the digital divide as the multi-tiered model of network sources and newswork expounding professional journalism increasing digital divide that causes the situation of non-network communities with limited access and resources being silent and abandoned from the news sphere and its network society. The absence of networks and resources has limit the news organizations to care enough to put enough importance of these non-network communities voices, yet not many avenues discuss citizen journalism possibilities beyond political aspects is the way forward for Malaysia to have better glimpse of community voices in Malaysian media landscape and society .Hence the room for growth of citizen journalism in Malaysia is the way forward and would add more colors to Malaysian mediascape.(Firdaus, 2018)

Hence with non- network community voices as the way forward, one broadcast station realized the gap and made efforts to utilize its potential. Previously TV station Astro Awani have citizen platform brand U Wartawan, a weekly 30-minute program for citizens to send content and videos to Astro Awani in 2009 until 2012 and now they have Awani Rangers with similar concept of encouraging young people from various walks of life sending stories of the events and happenings in their surroundings (Balaraman, Ibrahim, Arokiasamy, & Syed Mukhiar, 2016).

Besides that, online citizen based platforms such as Citizen Journalists Malaysia, The Vocket and the Patriots provided Malaysians platforms to express and share the knowledge, interest, happenings and concerns. It is more common now that citizen send stories to these platforms to reach wider audience as these websites have the own personal avid followers and readers. These websites became the platform for citizens especially the youth population to contribute more items to the social conversation and media public sphere. The platforms have allowed citizen stories to reach beyond personal social media accounts and connections in featuring various topics. The media outlet is not limited to mainstream media, online news platforms but as well as this platforms which the founders of The Vocket as the digital property. Rather than using sensationalized news, citizen journalists in Malaysia genuinely reporting about the area of interest and community stories. Citizen journalists in Malaysia increasingly offered with the appearance of platforms not limited to online platforms with broadcast stations giving citizen reporting ago with programs dedicated for such purposes (Latif, 2017).

Despite the developments described and discussed above, the skepticism among the general public and politicians put citizen journalists in similar category with keyboard warriors and cyber troopers just because citizens are involved and behind it required the depth of discussion and exploration to determine whether these three entities belonged to the same category or it is more appropriate to have the borders to differentiate the groups by its functions and practices (Abu Bakar, 2015; Berita Harian, 2015; Mokhtar, 2017; Yee, 2013). More deliberation about keyboard warriors and cyber troopers is presented in the following sections of the paper.

### **Keyboard warriors and cyber troopers in Malaysia**

In Malaysia is fair to say that keyboard warriors and cyber troopers have been portrayed rather negatively by the public yet cyber troopers is somehow hired by organizations to

spread propaganda and counter-information activities. A study explained through his findings that unfiltered postings on social media and used of martial discourse in the use of the internet and cyber troopers by organizations to occupied the cyber war with other organizations ; in the Malaysian case the between the ruling party and the opposition (Hopkins, 2014). This is concluded as the high level activity among cyber troopers have displayed both opportunity and challenges due to accessibility and openness of the public sphere have provided some affordances to both parties to use the situation to their advantage. in the part of the ruling coalition the outcome was seen as the a way for them to went forward with innovation and innovation as to how social media is used in the war of perception (Bradshaw & Howard, 2017; G. Y. Choi, 2015). The idea of framing the opposition as inherently divisive, dishonest and self- interest was the main aim with the undermining other issues such as social inequality. Thus that is observed that despite that somehow the government still received barrage of unfavorable new media content despite controlling the mainstream media signaling the continuation of the dilemma (Weiss, 2012; Yee, 2013).

Interestingly, the observation of the keyboard warrior- cyber trooper situation in Malaysia also caught the attention among media outlets local and international. The observation was made between the 13<sup>th</sup> and the 14<sup>th</sup> election periods. The observation by Malaysia newspaper *Kosmo* for example warned the danger and complexities of the two groups in Malaysian society. The newspaper warned that these two groups were bringing more harm than good. The keyboard warriors and cyber troopers were associated to the risks of using and disseminating fake news to the extent of public shaming of individuals and groups which could lead to slander and defamatory among others besides mental health risks (Kosmo, 2016)

Others in Malaysia in general still had a stigma that citizen journalism and keyboard warriors /keyboard warriors in similar category just because everyone that involved in the three categories were among citizens without really looking at the differences of these online-writing citizens closely. One example is a news reported in Malaysian newspaper *Harian Metro* that reported The Menteri Besar of Johore (Chief Minister of Johor) assumed that citizen journalists and keyboard warriors is the same and pointed out that the situation in his view, created an environment that the citizens took notice and believed what they read and on route to replace professional journalists (Berita Harian, 2015) Therefore the confusion and mixed up perception of the public about the idea of citizen journalists, keyboard warrior and cyber troopers was still evident in the Malaysian society. Therefore there is a need for Malaysians to be exposed to the different crowds of citizens-writing on online platforms.

Besides that the discussion of cyber trooper and keyboard warriors committing political violence in pursuing propaganda and cyber war of perception and negative campaigning. Such environment came with added risks to the people. Goh, (2015) observed that negative campaigning and political violence from both sides of the political spectrum was evident since 2013 general election and set to continue in the upcoming election and beyond. He continued with a conclusion that negative campaigning over social media continues to polarize Malaysian electoral politics and violent incidents became more of a frequent scene within close proximity of the Malaysian society. Such environment created to regulation discourse to help justify in defense of the things that they do for the negative campaigning over the social media platform (Kosmo, 2016). The issue of misuse of social media by Malaysians and the exposure of citizen journalism traits was somehow a debate depending on the scope of functions and practices that these citizens adhere to.

Therefore with the examples provided above it is fair to say that keyboard warrior and cyber troopers often lead into negative activities. Keyboard warriors can consist of individuals or

groups of citizens associated with negative perception. Cyber troopers at least in Malaysian case often trained and hired to counter unfavorable views of political organizations and to bring forward propaganda for each political organization. The use of half truth and false materials and stealing materials not belong to them make keyboard warriors and cyber troopers in a negative light. This opened the debate of possible justification of citizen journalists in Malaysia to separate themselves from the keyboard warriors and cyber troopers to shed more positivity of citizen reporting and conversations to situations and news on online platforms particularly in social media (Free Malaysia Today, 2016; Herrick, 2016). The dilemma surrounding citizen reporting from the three spectrums; keyboard warriors, cyber troopers and citizen journalists played into the art and functions of these different categories. Hence the aim of the current study is to capture the classification of citizen writing on social media all the same based on the perspective of youth citizen journalists. To highlight their sentiments of the often generalization of the citizen journalists aim and direction by the public and relevant authorities such as the mainstream media and politicians as explained in the previous sections. The negative tone describing keyboard warriors and cyber troopers have also influence other segments of citizen cyber activism including genuine citizen journalists. Therefore the exploration of the lived experience becomes more necessary than ever. The questions arise are:

- 1 How youth citizen journalists separate themselves from keyboard warriors and cyber troopers in citizen journalism landscape in Malaysia?
2. What youth citizen journalists see as the way forward for citizen journalism landscape in Malaysia?

### **Methods**

Nine (9) informants participated in this study. The researcher was conducting a research on exploration of the role of youth citizen journalists in Malaysia and the discussion and classification of citizen journalism ethical practice. Semi structure interviews and observation were conducted to gain insights about the citizen journalism phenomenon among youth in Malaysia. Youth in Malaysia is classified between 15-40 years old. The informants were within the mid-20s, 30s until 40 years old. To the researcher, the revelation was surprising as the discussion about ethics led to the mentioned of separation of citizen journalism and people such the term keyboard warriors and cyber trooper in the sharing of experience and such issues make meaning to their experience.

The study used phenomenological approach by Moustakas (1994). The researcher declared and separated her personal experience her thoughts as part of the bracketing process. As well as applying other steps prescribed specific to the transcendental phenomenology to stay true to the experience of the informants.

### **Results**

The data revealed that participants had diverse views and evaluations on separation of citizen journalists and other categories of citizen-writing in new media platforms with the rationale of specific reasons that the researcher would highlight from the emerging finding as the call for separation was repeatedly mentioned in their descriptions of their experience although it's not directly link to the informants role as citizen journalists.

Among them were related to these explanations. In answering the research question as to ways they separate themselves from keyboard warriors and cyber troopers in citizen journalism landscape in Malaysia. The main themes emerged were:

**Differences According to the Experience of Citizen Journalists****Content: Responsible, Courteous Truthful**

Among the emerging theme discussed was the responsible content produced by the informants. The informants shared that they would be at their best to deliver responsible, courteous truthful content. They also saw on the other hand the keyboard warriors and keyboard warriors do the opposite. According to the informants, they feel that the keyboard warriors are reckless when writing. Due to their recklessness and being irresponsible in terms of manners and contents the citizen activism online including genuine citizen journalists has to handle the keyboard warriors and try to explain with courtesy. The informants relate the content with the reflection of the character and responsibility of the content creator and his or her being a person as these informants shared (Hamdi and AD rahman). They shared

That is why the public needs to know there are genuine citizen journalists sincerely uphold their responsibility as citizen journalists. There are many decent citizen journalists out there that share their articles with the world and somebody has to highlight that. Not all citizen journalism is bad and prone to negativity. Through my personal observation many produce responsible courteous interesting contents. We need more people produce articles that enriched people and make people think. How to be decent and responsible? at least please use your common sense. Hamdi

Actually what many people don't realize is that the responsibility as citizen journalists is huge as it also reflect the type of person you are. Plus often whatever you decide to share with others will influence others who read their contents. The sense of responsibility is there whether you like it or not. Anyone with common sense would know that it's not to be taken lightly. AD Rahman

From the quotes above, it's just examples that reflected how these citizen journalists view their role as part of their responsibility as citizens. This guided them to stay courteous and truthful. This may explained the desperate need for separate the traits of citizen journalism with other types of online users.

Faiz Najmi, and Ahmad Mustakim added that such approached determined the strategies their platform usage as well as knowledge lead the content and ethics as they shared

*It highly dependent on how the citizens choose to use the online platforms. Somehow I think those who have the knowledge in journalism and ethical writing should at least try to enlighten the people around them that whatever you write and disseminate anything it comes with responsibility. Faiz Najmi*

*Youth citizen journalists could be catalysts for this as they are avid user of social media. So why not use this for something good right? Allah will be pleased and reward us. We choose the outcome and response we produce so I think we should focus on highlighting good things and if let say we disagree on something if we must say anything at all, do it in a respectable manner, right? Ahmad Mustakim*

In fact all nine informants agreed that citizen journalists' activities must be derived as part of responsibility of citizens to the society. These qualities that they adhere help them to stay true to the content that represents them best as individuals as well as citizens contributing online contents. The keyword is respectable and responsibility joint courtesy and truth with which keyboard warriors and cyber troopers may not possessed. This is not widespread. The researcher was surprised to see their commitment for responsibility and decent.

In relation of decency and responsibility of delivering content the awareness to do so self-regulation based on their personal understanding of the citizen journalism phenomenon best

practice. Personal awareness about the importance of highlighting the good positive things contributing to new knowledge. None of them supported malpractices associated with citizen activism and citizen journalism among youth. De Guyes (2017) in his findings attributed attitude and perceived social norms primarily shaped a person's tendency and reaction online. The two characteristics were found more dominant than behavioral control. This may explained the prone risk of not practicing ethics. Similar sentiment of attitude as the main influence once how people tackle their reaction online.

### **Ethical Consideration: Knowledge and Application**

The awareness and application of ethical journalistic practices and application in their journalistic endeavors is considered ones integrity with exposure to some sort of training by attending writer courses to enhance their confidence in creating content. A study by (Attheide 2013) commented that the idea of online social mediation as a way to interact with others has evolved and institutional formats were no longer a necessity as online platforms often not restricted to much of the formatting. The contributors and platforms become responsive and concern of the content. These changes at times have its own pros and cons in shaping social control. The evolvement of the social control and media logic has put the appropriateness of new media technology and ethical usage and to combat mass media portrayal to certain extent that exudes fear and battling powers. Such situations imposed the dilemma to the weightage of responsibility in content creation by the citizen journalists.

*Training provided also includes reporting with integrity. As you already know CJ.MY provide training workshops for our contributors. So far I think our citizen journalists adhere the principles and based on my observations on the contents received from our citizen journalists stick by the ethics and the training modules we train them. The principles and practice were consistent regardless the topic they wish to bring forward and submit to CJ.MY. Darsh.*

For me it is important to equip myself with the knowledge not only to produce interesting content but to also how to write with ethics so that I will not be in trouble. I have attended workshops held my media influencers which I know they produce contents that often grab the attention from the public with the resourceful and inspiring stories. I did not receive formal education in journalistic practices but I like writing and sharing my knowledge. There may be someone out there that may find my knowledge interesting and important Afiqah.

There are two Main problem with citizen journalism in Malaysia is ethics and second affiliation. Ethics . Why? Many of us did not understand when or what we should share publicly. Like myself venturing into defense writing, I knew a lot of the things I cannot share. Too much confidential information. Even like my sources share to me and say I can use it , there are times I won't share it . I have to take into account very important of suitability ad sensitivity of the information. Danny

### **Create Positive Environment While Keyboard Warriors and Cyber Troopers are Not**

The informant's majority mentioned that they are sharing to create positive environment which they observed the other two categories didn't do justice for citizens that want to write online contents with journalistic process. They expressed commitment to the basic fundamentals of journalistic practices but express concerns of the risk and negative sentiment often demonstrated by keyboard warriors and cyber troopers. They shared concerned about cyber troopers and keyboard warriors. They did not associate themselves together as citizen



journalists view themselves as the opposites. Darsh and Danny highlighted their concern about keyboard warriors and cyber troopers

For example Mallén, (2016b) mention about the risk of malpractice of journalism performed by citizens put things at risk as they report and record and this have the potential to go viral. Without guidance negativity crawled in. However with citizen journalism the informants were convinced they were not performing any malpractice. The in fact they are against citizens to become keyboard warriors and cyber troopers. They promote writing with integrity and avoid from becoming the victim as Darsh and Danny shared

The principle of staying true to facts are fundamental for CJ. MY We don't want them to ever become keyboard warriors or cyber troopers. The training that we provide to them also includes reporting with integrity. Darsh

That is wrong but I saw a lot, I mean a lot of people sharing her personal details to the public. Keyboard warriors are prying on these instances am now concerned of her mental health like now if you see her Facebook, people are bashing and scolding her very badly on Facebook. To a certain extent I don't agree with that kind of citizen journalism and I don't know if that is even considered as one. That is cyber bullying already. So that's one part of ethics that crime citizen journalists has not yet observing. Danny

They must be familiar with such practices. Not assume and do as they pleased. So that people will start to differentiate the outcome produced by keyboard warriors, cyber troopers and genuine citizen journalists Jamalee.

Both of them are concerned about the wide spread risk of cyber bully by keyboard warriors and cyber troopers disseminating negativity and hate speech which is not foreign in this scenario as other academicians have discussed this in their findings. Assimakopoulos, Baider, & Millar, (2017) and Boyd, Hayes, Wilson, & Bearsley-Smith, (2008) for example expressed highlighted that the risk of hate speech and cyber bully increase up to (percent in an online environment. The significance of these categories of hate speech have been on the rise and the critical aspects of citizens online engagements often resulted. A call motivated by racial/ethnic/national bias, a call for violence a call punishable by the criminal law of the country where it occurs such as slender and accusations and fake news to name a few. The implicitly of communicated meanings could potentially bring ham yet lack of mindfulness.

Kamarul Ilmar for instance went to more distance that he warned that there are times when readers needs to be reminded of the emotional reaction than logical reactions of the citizens online. The guideline served as a stepping stone towards clearer understanding about those involved in citizen activism online including those who identify themselves as citizen journalists., this exploration crucially in need of being more serious to highlight criteria and showcase positive image and affiliation about citizen journalism.

Maybe produce an article that advice people to avoid being a keyboard warrior. Do that often. I mean remind the readers often. I think a lot more people will respect the action. Rather than just let them go. For me you don't have to read an article per say to know the person's character. By their responds to comments often we know whether they use logic or pure emotions. That is why we need to make things more clear. That is why citizen journalism needs more of characteristics and guideline. Clear criteria and guideline as to inform the public and policy makers including the academicians that we, the citizens journalists that we inform people as positivity positive youth citizen journalism and the future Kamarul Ilmar.

With such response these informants indeed saw themselves having a different approach of operating and assuming their role as citizen journalists compared to keyboard warriors and

cyber troopers. They wish to distant themselves from the generalization the public have for citizen journalism. They are keen to portray a more positive vibe and their considered their journalistic activities as part of their responsibility as citizens.

### **Challenges Faced by Citizen Journalists**

#### **The risk of misconception from the public that netizen are keyboard warriors**

Different scholars define citizen journalists differently. Scholars such as Csu et al., 2015; Peters & Broersma, 2013; and Ross & Cromier, 2010, described citizen journalists as individual involved in journalistic process yet not trained or paid to perform the tasks. they employed press tools and technology through multiple platforms to practice their journalistic skills. Many assume associated citizen journalism with keyboard warriors without considering genuine citizen journalists that share genuine information and contents for the benefit of the public.

With alternative online news sites and online contents gaining preference particularly among urban internet users in Malaysia, a changing mindset in understanding of online news and opinion. Ziinine, (2017) revealed that 91 percent of urban Malaysians for example admitted their reliance on internet related content. On the contrary part as their trust on the government decreased, so is their trust on the content presented in mainstream media as they have felt that the mainstream media is prone to lean towards the government of the day. Others such as (Howard, 2018; Kavanaugh et al., 2014; Valenzuela, 2013) were concern about online content is highly on opinion rather than facts. The leaning of the mainstream media increase the credibility and visibility of independent online media and have encourage thinking and observation mode with mainstream media loosing readership due to rapid growth of citizen activism on online platforms. Such changes also influence their mindset toward the mainstream media creating a public evolution in utilizing online sources and platform to receive and share news content which in the end contributing to the ever changing revolution of how both mainstream media and online citizen activism including citizen journalism in the global media landscape. These changes are doing more than just changing the public mindset of the mainstream media but also the authorities. Thus, such evolution has make the public realize that they might have very limited representation in the mainstream media but for these youth citizen journalists for example they recognize online platforms and social media provide the space to receive and convey decent information and showcase alternatives for the public which may not necessary be a bad thing.

Despite the positive prospects, the misconceptions continued among findings that focus on perspectives of professional journalists and general public of the keyboard warriors as many of them felt that citizen contributors emphasize to negativity and mere opinion rather than positivity (Carr et al., 2014; Daud, 2017; Hedman & Djerf-Pierre, 2013). Yet, does anyone ever wonder if there care more and more citizens want to contribute knowledge and positivity as their contribution towards the society or it is indeed mere opinion and emotions.

Not everyone is a keyboard warrior. Not everyone is a citizen journalist. That is why there are platforms such as The Vocket, which to me is the exemplary platform that can be the catalyst for citizen journalism as they have showcase their transparency in featuring stories from the people with content of positivity and inspiration. In the same time many still have the perception that citizen journalism is similar to keyboard warriors. People somehow gravitated towards negative stories more somehow. Yet many of us appreciate decent positive content. So it will be good if we don't generalize much. If they initiate a special category for citizen journalism the better Faiz Najmi

So to say all netizen has the possibility to spread negativity is rather pessimistic. Some will do it with good intention some did not. To make matters more complicated, anyone has access to the internet and social media and online platforms. Therefore it has become more important now to increase exposure to the public about ethics and common sense. I think in many situations there are over generalization of citizen journalism. In Malaysian context however, many Malaysian not familiar with the term citizen journalism. They are more familiar with other terms. Maybe term citizen journalist need to be promoted and use more frequently in Malaysia with proper guideline is being enforced. Jamalee

The society and policy makers have to realize that Malaysians have netizens with various aspiration, variation, purposes and aims. So based on my observation and personal research, I think it is just fitting to put the netizens into different categories as per their differences. The people need to know, academicians need to know, policy makers need to know for more effective enforcement. AD Rahman

Cikgu Asmadi support the notion of different categories by saying

There is a need for different categories. Citizens use the online platforms for different reasons and purposes. So the term used should not be generalized. So I think researchers like you could be the next best thing to help with the generalization. Get insights form multiple parties including citizen journalism themselves or the online contributors. Cikgu Asmadi.

### **Risk of Cyber Bullying by Keyboard Warriors and Cyber Troopers**

Another main point emerged from the analysis; the informants also shared their concern about them at risk of being bullied on online platform by keyboard warriors. The informants expressed frustration that keyboard warriors and cyber troopers created negative atmosphere to mount attention and self-benefit. These negativity not only impacted the youth journalists personally as they experience cyber bully first hand, it also made others have the perception that citizen contributors or interactions often represent negative outcome such as cyber bully.

While in fact the informants participated in the study distant themselves from keyboard warriors as many described keyboard warriors lack of manners, a lot of hate and anger bottled inside the keyboard warriors and cyber troopers whereas the participants see themselves as decent citizens wanting to contribute by writing and sharing various topics online. Tsatsou (2014) highlighted the usage of internet has change the way we communicate. However he warned that It has become easier for users to become anonymous thus opened risk of hate speech and negativity as the open platform of internet maximized the idea of freedom of speech. The tensions between technological and social determinism with the increasing power and coverage of the internet make it possible for mal practice and malicious attempts by malicious parties such as keyboard warriors and cyber troopers performing trolls and other forms of cyber bully.

On the other hand, (Kopulous et. al., 2017) hate speech on online platforms are also on the rise with cyber bully. The increasing cases of hate speech online is increasingly alarming with some groups are vulnerable than others and increase the risk of cyber bully that have potential to escalate to bully and shaming by negative internet users as such. Which is possibly why the informants also share their concern when they associate keyboard warriors with cyber bully. Mallén, (2016) argued that the tendencies for citizen journalism to spark cyber bully. She acknowledged that it is a new approach in democracy but it can also cause harm Yet based on the views of the informants it makes one wonder if the term citizen

journalism is included to describe cyber bullies?. Or are there more suited ways to be used in this situation which raised the question are they really the same? All of them?

There are a lot of negative impressions associated to cyber troopers and Here are some response from the informants with relate keyboard warriors and cyber troopers as bullies.

The informants expressed concerned about the mannerism and the tendency of cyber bullying situations by keyboard warriors. The informants shared their instances that they were also experiencing some extent of being victims of cyber bully (S. Bennett, 2012; Herrick, 2016). They associate keyboard warriors often had negative agenda or produced content to induce reactions and hit. Some of the posts prove to be spread for fame and shame. Similar theme elaborated by the informants

The main thing about the role of citizen journalist is mannerism. Manners and consideration are indeed engaging face to case as well as online platforms including when producing content and interacting on social media. That's what keyboard warriors are lacking. That is why I'm upset when some online portals did not take any action to at least filter negative posts or reactions from netizens . There are times where this is allowed to get reactions, likes and hits from the audience. To me that is not citizen journalism at all. Kamarul Ilmar Ramli Jamalee supported this notion and emphasized on the danger of cyber bullies yet warned about generalizations as there are citizen journalists who use their knowledge as part of their journalistic endeavors.

The way of these different thought and relation of citizen writing online associated to cyber bully is kinda important thing to consider. However not all citizen using the online platforms are bad. Therefore there is a need for generalizations. Citizens can be keyboard warriors, cyber troopers, bully etc the negative things but there are genuine people report and share their knowledge about things they know. That's why I am appreciative of initiative taken by the Patriots to provide a platform for citizens to write and react to issues with facts. Some share knowledge and experience. So it rather unfair to say that citizen writers are all keyboard warriors, That's why we have to educate the public about citizen and journalistic activities and the society has to be enlighten by the growth of this phenomenon Jamalee

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

The debate about citizen journalism practices and its generalization it has with citizens using the social media as a palace for expression were inevitable. However many have somehow generalize citizens activism and expression online prone to ngativity.in Malaysia generally the term keyboard warriors and cyber troopers is more prominent and associated with citizen journalism activism. The term citizen journalists was not widely used because there are they are not exposed to the term and the people involved in citizen journalism practicing and make efforts to gain more knowledge and understanding about journalism practices and use their decency and common sense to remain ethical in the in citizen journalism reporting, an opposite of keyboard warriors and cyber troopers portraiture in the public eye.

Based on the analysis, the genuine citizens (youth citizen journalists profoundly identified themselves different than keyboard warriors and cyber troopers. They expressed their frustrations not only of the public perception but they have encountered situations where keyboard their articles were stolen and twisted by irresponsible keyboard warriors. As such these youth citizen journalists have negative associations to the negative commotions associated with keyboard warriors.

The themes emerged symbolized the informants desire to set themselves apart from irresponsible keyboard warriors and cyber troopers. They have appreciation towards using

online platform to spread positivity rather than negativity, hatred and fallacy often represented by the keyboard warrior and cyber troopers. They described the differences in content creation with the emphasis on responsibly written with truths. They considered themselves striving in creating better more positive environment in online platforms, and the cybersphere in general.

Besides highlighting how they are different from cyber troopers and keyboard warriors, the also expressed their concerns about the risk exposed to the public by the actions of cyber troopers and keyboard warriors including assuming that majority netizen and internet users are keyboard warriors. The informants also discuss specific examples of cyber bullying become a major risks as a result of actions undertaken by cyber troopers and keyboard warriors.

The danger of fake news were also a concern for the informants as they realized that such action by cyber troopers tarnished the outlook of decent citizen journalists. They also are concern about the influence citizen journalists have on the public eye. Hence the called for support for citizen journalism in Malaysia by promoting discussion and exploration of citizen journalism away from homogenizing all netizens being labeled as cyber troopers and keyboard warriors. Many also believe in establishment of guidelines could potentially help a more responsible online use and citizen journalism practice. The idea of responsible and postings, articles and responses in the internet

In conclusion, the results reflected to the citizen journalists experience in viewing themselves as citizen journalists and their reaction on other categories of citizen expression online namely keyboard warriors and cyber trappers. The presentation of the themes emerged in the study trying to see the meaning of classification in citizen journalism, in this case among youth in giving the meaning of journalistic ethics, keyboard warriors, cyber troopers and citizen journalism practice among youth.

The theoretical contribution which further enhances the application of personal experiences, motivation and consciousness for self- publication via citizen contribution as described in Picone (2001) extended Producers model and weightage in determining youth citizen journalist's awareness of how they are not keyboard warriors nor cyber troopers is evident in the study as they are showcasing through journalistic practices and ethical outcomes to provide impact to the society at large. Their desire to be classified away from cyber troopers and keyboard warriors have broadened the contextual understanding of citizen journalist giving meaningful contribution to the body of knowledge and sharing of information with ethics and responsibility. This is one important step in for future researchers as well as the relevant authorities to promote and come up with model or guidelines for more citizens to make meaningful journalistic contribution. It is not an attempt to replace professional journalism but a way to fill the gaps of uncovered areas as well as adding more responsible information sharing journalistic driven articles and expressions options within the society.

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