

WHAT DRIVES ONLINE CITIZEN JOURNALISM IN MALAYSIA?

A REASONED ACTION MODEL APPROACH

by

Del Guynes

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To my amazing wife and companion for life, Christi.

You are God's best for me.

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Citizen journalism is a global phenomenon that manifests in a variety of ways, depending on the political environment and extent of media freedoms. In Malaysia, it appears that citizen journalism has, over the past twenty years, contributed significantly to the rise of public discourse of opposition to some of the policies and behaviors of the ruling political party, the majority seat holder in Malaysia's parliament since its independence from Great Britain in 1957. That majority in parliament has grown precariously thin, with the most recent national elections seeing almost 40% of the seats going to the opposition—which, in fact, actually won the popular vote. Until now, a theoretical basis for evaluating the behavioral reasons underlying citizen journalism has not appeared in the research in any context, thereby precluding an understanding of beliefs and perceptions that could lead to behavioral interventions that might encourage greater Malaysian participation in online journalism. To fill this gap, this dissertation takes the Reasoned Action Model (RAM) approach, a theoretical framework that has primarily been useful when examining health behaviors, and applies it to online citizen journalism in Malaysia. The dissertation employs an OLS multiple regression analysis for data gathered from an online

survey ($N = 2,020$) that explores modal salient beliefs about factors that influence participation in citizen journalism in the Malaysian context. The RAM demonstrates an effective theoretical basis for evaluating drivers of participation in citizen journalism, exposing several key predictors of intention to participate, which include having the capacity to participate, possession of a smartphone, feeling satisfaction, and influence of friends, NGOs, and boyfriends/girlfriends, among others. Based on the findings, there are behavioral interventions that might positively influence the beliefs that underlie modal variables, with a view toward increasing intention to report online one's views of government policies and elected officials.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Personal observation, shared via mobile networks and the Internet, is influencing lives in an increasing variety of ways, from the innocuous to the more meaningful and consequential. As a result, influential roles traditionally thought to be the exclusive domain of professionals such as advertising consultants and journalists are being taken up, if unwittingly at times, by amateurs. Whether realized by the individual contributors themselves, personal communication technology with its associated networks is enabling a growing number of people to behave as citizen journalists, as the term has come to be known, and the impact of these citizen journalists can be profound (Kaufhold, Valenzuela, & Gil De Zúñiga, 2010).

In a marked way, people are changing from being just consumers of journalism to being contributors (Boczkowski & Peer, 2011; Bruns, Highfield, & Lind, 2012; Fico et al., 2013), and citizen journalism has become an accepted part of the discipline of journalism, although a consensus on the precise meaning of the term “citizen journalism” has not been reached. Most of us realize that, without the participation of amateur citizen journalists, some events of local and global import would be lost to the world (Desta, Fitzgibbon, & Byrne, 2014). Even though there have been assertions that citizen journalists “[measure] the world in coffee spoons, the fragmentary but sometimes powerful content they produce may contain words and images of death and survival, destruction and renewal, hope and despair ... the essential moments of life on earth” (Wall, 2015, p. 2).

In Malaysia, there has been a growing segment of online citizen journalists since the beginning of a political reform movement in the late 1990s, fueled by rapid growth in availability

of Internet access and the use of social media platforms and intelligent mobile networks, combined with the government's commitment not to censor the Internet (Anuar, 2007). The motivations for the behavior of these online citizen journalists have not been studied quantitatively or in a manner that utilizes an established social science methodology.

Purpose of The Project

The purpose of this project is to offer a theoretical basis for understanding why people in Malaysia, irrespective of professional journalistic aspirations or the possibility of adverse personal consequences, are participating in citizen journalism by reporting online their personal observations about government policies and elected officials. By using the behavioral prediction techniques of the Reasoned Action Model, this dissertation attempts to uncover the psychological and social underpinnings that guide citizen journalism intentions and the prediction of ensuing behavior, going beyond what demographic factors can explain (Lee & Chyi, 2014) and what appears in the literature. Additionally, by understanding those underlying reasons, this study aims to potentially design a theory-driven approach to encouraging greater participation in citizen journalism, thereby influencing the government in Malaysia to move toward a truer form of democracy.

Citizen Journalism Defined

Citizen journalism is described as having multiple layers that can range from the fundamental citizen responding to an "open-for-comment" opportunity, to open-source reporting and the blog house, to stand-alone citizen journalism sites, to hybrid citizen-pro journalism sites to Wikijournalism, where the readers are the editors (Kperogi, 2011; Muthukumaraswamy, 2010; Nah & Chung, 2009; Noor, 2013; Outing, 2005; Siapera & Veglis, 2012). Citizen journalists

gather news, they publish on their own, they tweet, and they provide opinions and editorial comment on matters of import (Baker & Blaagaard, 2016a). The reporting may capture a single moment (e.g., witnessing an event), be intermittent (e.g., a Twitter feed), or be regularly produced (Wall, 2015, p. 3). Whatever the practical processes of citizen journalists, a central characteristic of the concept as applied in this project is “the lack of dependence on the central presence of third party organizations” (Baker & Blaagaard, 2016b, p. 8). For the purposes of this project, the term “citizen journalism” will mean “the reporting online of personal observations of government policies and elected officials,” and will be more narrowly defined in the literature review section that follows.

Citizen Journalists as Agents of Change

The power of citizen journalists to effect change in society—political change in particular—has never been so clearly demonstrated as it was in the civilian uprisings that constituted the “Arab Spring” that rolled across northern Africa in late 2010 and early 2011 (Anderson, 2011). In Tunisia and Egypt, changes in the incumbent autocratic and nepotistic regimes occurred mainly as the result of pressure applied through news media coverage of civilian protests. In both countries, citizens behaving as journalists were a major part of the news media coverage enabled by the use of social media platforms, whether Internet- or mobile network-based (Lotan et al., 2011).

In Egypt, even members of the mainstream news media played a significant role by adapting both their sourcing and dissemination of news to social media and other online technologies. The most prolific mainstream media actor was arguably Andy Carvin of National Public Radio, who used Twitter to become a key broker of information, tweeting every day for

up to sixteen hours a day, with hundreds of tweets per day (Bruns, n.d.; Hermida, Lewis, & Zamith, 2014). Interestingly, although Carvin himself was a part of the mainstream media, the majority of his activity utilized tweets from sources that were neither mainstream media actors themselves, nor “institutional elites” (i.e., Digerati, researchers, non-media organization non-activists, celebrities, and political actors). Known as “alternative voices” in the research, the grouping of bloggers, non-affiliated and affiliated activists, and non-media organization activists, produced more than half of the tweets used in Mr. Carvin’s reporting, although this accounted for only about a quarter of Twitter sources (Hermida et al., 2014).

Multiple studies that have focused on the Arab Spring and its regime-changing uprisings demonstrate that it was accessibility to social media by the alternative sets of voices—bloggers, activists and intellectuals involved in advocacy—that resulted in change in government at the highest levels (Hermida et al., 2014; Papacharissi & de Fatima Oliveira, 2012).

Citizen Journalism and Democracy

According to Wall (2015),

Citizen journalism has become the touchstone term for the last decade precisely because it reflects an ongoing normative belief that news is connected to a potentially positive form of civic behavior, which in turn harkens toward the long-standing idea that journalism is intimately tied to democracy. (p. 12)

Much of the research in citizen journalism has been based upon a narrow view of the experiences of the democratic Western world, particularly that of the United States and Europe (Wall, 2015). Recent research has uncovered differences in the way different parts of the world perceive citizen journalism (Rodriguez, 2014), and how the very attributes of citizenship can

differ when impacted by the local exercise of citizen journalism (Khiabany & Sreberny, 2009).

The work of citizen journalists is said to be causing the emergence of a new identity of citizenship in repressive countries (Moyo, 2014).

Malaysia: Electoral Authoritarianism

Though not nearly as severe in crisis as were the countries of the Arab Spring at the time of their uprisings, Malaysia is finding its ruling national party, Barisan Nasional (BN), increasingly persuaded, in large part by the activity of citizen journalists, to discard traditional autocratic rule that favors the families and social networks of the ruling class (Chin, 2015).

Though considered a constitutional monarchy and categorized as a representative monarchy with a functioning parliament since 1963 (“Government in Malaysia,” n.d.), it is like a number of countries in the world, particularly in Asia, where democracy and citizens’ rights to freedom of expression and freedom of religion are often in conflict (W. L. Kim, 2001). Malaysia, an ethnically diverse country of 32 million people, falls into what has been termed the messy, middle ground of electoral authoritarianism. This somewhat oxymoronic term applies to countries whose elections appear to be democratic, but that are in reality indirectly controlled and manipulated, all the while giving the impression that progress is being made toward liberalization of government restrictions on religion, media, and the flow of information generally (Schedler, 2006).

The media environment. In Malaysia, almost all conventional media have been owned by political parties and their loyalists. Accordingly, they have served as a gatekeeper of news and information in a very traditional way, influencing dissemination through informal but strong relationships (Smeltzer, 2008). The country has two national television networks, six national

newspapers (three English, two Malay, and one Chinese), a single press agency publication in four languages (Arabic, English, Malay, and Chinese), eleven Internet-based news agencies, and one nationally published magazine. In addition, the larger cities have localized print media outlets, ranging from eight additional newspapers in the capital city of Kuala Lumpur and surrounding state of Selangor, to three to four local outlets in remote states (“Malaysia Newspapers & News Media - ABYZ News Links,” n.d.).

In addition to gatekeeping control of the mainstream media through ownership and loyal affiliations, any type of media expression in Malaysia is controlled by layers of legislation that give government officials power to throttle and even terminate the ability to disseminate information, further extending the ruling party’s news and information gatekeeping role. The Printing Presses and Publications Act (PPPA), for example, governs the press industry, requiring an annual permit to be obtained; these permits can be easily withheld if the government perceives the publisher’s activities to be counter to their interests or prejudicial to national security (Anuar, 2007). The Official Secrets Act (OSA) and Internal Security Act (ISA) are just two of several additional legal instruments used by the government to hold media interests in check (Azizuddin Mohd Sani, 2011).

A prime example of the willingness of Malaysian government to restrain the media involves a burgeoning, independent online news site, *Malaysiakini*, which in addition to its rapid growth in popularity, has influenced the growth of other independent sites, portals, and even radio stations broadcasting into Malaysia from outside the country. This growth created such concern that the government entered *Malaysiakini*’s offices and confiscated computers (albeit returning them days later), citing as cause the publication of a reader’s controversial letter

considered to be seditious by the government (Pepinsky, 2009). The confiscation of hard operating assets reportedly disrupted the continuity of *Malaysiakini* publications and accordingly, diminished its profitability for a time (Smeltzer, 2008; Tapsell, 2013; Weiss, 2012).

The government of Malaysia has historically throttled freedoms of mainstream journalists and news agencies in three ways (Anuar, 2007; Azizuddin Mohd Sani, 2011):

- 1) Denial of right to publish by rescinding the annual license required by the PPPA;
- 2) Fostering a sustained hostile environment through selective enforcement of the OSA and ISA that encourages mainstream media to adopt self-censorship in order to survive; and
- 3) The occasional disruption of operations through seizure of hard assets pursuant to the OSA and ISA, thereby interrupting operating continuity.

The net effect of these measures for a time was the stifling of boldness of reform journalists. To quote one leading reformist, “People got scared. The government caught hold of leaders and the movement died off. The people, including journalists, stopped pushing the boundaries after that” (Tapsell, 2013, p. 622).

Growth of citizen journalism. The persistent and largely successful constraints on media freedoms notwithstanding, there has been ongoing expansion and contraction of an alternative media movement through online citizen journalism in Malaysia since Internet accessibility and online platforms began to proliferate at the turn of the century (Nasrullah, 2012). Simultaneous with the growth of Internet technology and access was the invigoration of grassroots opposition to the government, following what appeared to many to be the contrived criminal charges against the populist leader Amwar Ibrahim in 1998. It was Ibrahim's arrest, conviction and incarceration that added fuel to the reformist movement, widely known throughout Malaysia and Indonesia as "*reformasi*" (Tapsell, 2013).

Since 1998 and the beginnings of *reformasi*, there has been development of a media freedom movement that includes an opposition-activist digital citizen journalism that operates out of resistance to the social and political environment in which Malaysians find themselves (Wall, 2015). It is defined as the "sprouting of online news and commentary, establishment of independent journalism ventures, active and vociferous media freedom non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and critical discussion inside the mainstream media on the role of journalists" (Tapsell, 2013, p. 613). This is similar to what occurred in the Arab Spring, which was "collective in nature, bringing together activists opposed to existing power structures" (Wall, 2015, p. 803).

This has not resulted, however, in a softening of governmental controls and sustained media liberalization. Rather, the Malaysian government has demonstrated recurring episodes of backlash and retaliation, consistent with its gatekeeping role, and generally coinciding with national elections held every five years (Case, 2011; Pepinsky, 2009; Tapsell, 2013). The

country is said to be descending into a “harder [form] of authoritarian rule ...[in which the] elites lose control over electoral processes, but not state power, thus prompting them to change their regime, but not to democratize” (Case, 2011, p. 439).

The media freedom movement has primarily involved professional journalists who were motivated to relocate to an online platform in order to escape government restrictions.

Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad committed in 1996 to avoid regulating or censoring the Internet, which meant the strict PPPA laws applied to print media were either less relevant or not relevant to those producing news online. Even though other laws such as the OSA and ISA were still applicable, the commitment to an uncensored Internet created a sense that online journalism would have more freedoms than print media (Tapsell, 2013).

Recognizing the shortened, though not fully restrained, reach of the Malaysian government to control online journalism, the online news site *Malaysiakini* has sought to encourage citizens to develop into citizen journalists through the creation of an organization and website designed specifically for that purpose, “<http://cj.my>.” The stimulation of online citizen journalism has been the *raison d’être* for *Malaysiakini*, and in collaboration with the International Centre for Journalists in the United States, Citizen Journalists Malaysia (CJMY) was established to train people to function as “effective citizen journalists” (Balaraman, Hashim, Hasno, Ibrahim, & Arokiasmy, 2015; Citizen Journalists Malaysia, n.d.).

Following the *cj.my* website launch in 2007, citizen journalists were submitting on average approximately 100 news items per month, and when critical or social issues arose, the production increased dramatically. CJMY has hosted conferences for citizen journalists and has conducted training sessions in the run-up to major elections. In March of 2012, CJMY hosted a

General Election Training in advance of Malaysia's 13th General Election, held in May of 2013, with approximately 50 citizen journalists attending (Citizen Journalists Malaysia, n.d.).

Citizen journalism and rise of the opposition. Throughout the previous four general (national) election cycles, opposition to the forty-year incumbent party, Barisan Nasional (BN), has grown. As citizen journalists have provided ever-increasing online coverage of the opposition, BN has seen its election wins erode. In the 2008 general election, BN for the first time lost its two-thirds majority presence in Parliament. In the 2013 general election, BN lost the popular vote for the first time ever by three-and-one-half percentage points, with the opposition, Pakatan Rakyat and its leader Anwar Ibrahim (*reformasi*), gaining almost 51%. Then-president Abdullah Badawi acknowledged that his government had “lost the Internet war, the cyber war,” stating concerning the role of online media, “We didn’t think it was important. It was serious misjudgement. We thought the newspapers, the print media, the television were important, but young people were [actually] looking at text messages and blogs” (Ahmad et al., 2012, cited in Tapsell, 2014). Loss of the popular vote notwithstanding, BN still managed to hold on to 133 out of 222 seats of Parliament, once again fueling accusations from the opposition of voter bullying, buying, and voting district gerrymandering (“Ruling coalition wins Malaysian election amid fraud allegations,” 2013; “Tawdry victory,” 2013).

Due to its continued decline in electoral results, the ruling party began to take measures to mitigate the influence of citizen reporting online in the run-up to the 2013 general election. As Bersih 2.0, a coalition of 63 non-government organizations, organized a public protest targeting reform of the Malaysian electoral system in early July, 2011, independent news portals asserted that they would face “online attacks” that would disrupt their ability to spread

independent news and information about the upcoming rally (Ahmad et al., 2012, p. 4). They cited the then-recent experience of elections in the eastern Malaysian state of Sarawak, during which two independent news source portals (*Malaysiakini* and *Sarawak Today*) incurred repeated Internet-related Distributed Denial of Service (DDOS) interruptions as the elections approached (Ahmad et al., 2012).

Since the 2013 election, there has been an uptick in policing and shuttering of political voices on the Internet that oppose the ruling party. From June of 2015 until May of 2016, there have reportedly been several incidents that portend a reduction in freedom to speak freely online:

For the first time, the government reneged on pledges never to censor the Internet and blocked websites that had reported on a billion-dollar corruption scandal implicating Prime Minister Najib Razak, including the UK-based *Sarawak Report*, news websites, and the publishing platform Medium *The Malaysian Insider*, an online news outlet in operation for eight years, went out of business as an indirect result of government blocking Politicians, journalists and Facebook users were investigated for online speech, including former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, who criticized the government in a blog post In April 2016, a 19-year-old laborer was arrested for posting comments considered insulting to the crown prince of the southern state of Johor on Facebook; in June, he was sentenced to one year in prison. (“Malaysia | Country report | Freedom on the Net | 2016,” n.d.)

Accusations of gerrymandering are already mounting in advance of the next general election, which must be held by May of 2018, but which could be held earlier in a “snap election,” a scheduling prerogative of the incumbent ruling party (“Former leader urges Malaysians to demand PM’s resignation,” 2016; “Malaysia government accused of gerrymandering,” n.d.).

The activity of citizen journalists in Malaysia over the past twenty years has clearly impacted political outcomes, most vividly in the electoral process. As the country is now in the run-up to the next general election, there is eagerness to see what new ground might be gained by the opposition.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

A critical first step in discussing the literature is to disambiguate the terms. Research has often conflated terms such as “participatory journalism,” “user generated content,” “citizen media,” “public journalism,” and others with the term “citizen journalism” (Bosshart & Schoenhagen, 2013; Wall, 2015). Domingo and Heinonen (2008) have developed a concise definition that captures the essence of the research project at hand: “Citizen journalism involves active public participation by non-journalists outside of media organizations, who can engage in news-making and news-gathering processes without traditional journalistic routines and norms” (p. 300).

Little research to date focuses on the behavioral causes underlying online citizen journalism in any context. The Reasoned Action Model in particular does not appear to have been applied to citizen journalism at all, though there are a few studies based on the RAM or the congruous framework, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, n.d.). What studies do exist relate tangentially to topics within the larger domain of media and communications, mostly addressing the nexus of media and communications with other domains.

By way of example, one study addresses health and safety behavior with media usage patterns in order to assess motivations related to concealed texting while driving (Gauld, Lewis, & White, 2014). Media impact on attitude toward behaviors that are environmentally friendly (i.e., “green buying” and environmental civic engagement) is the focus of a study that utilizes a hybrid of TPB and media dependency theory (Ho, Liao, & Rosenthal, 2015). Another study looks at interpersonal dynamics and attitudes underlying behaviors related to negative word-of-

mouth communication (Cheng, Lam, & Hsu, 2006). Two studies focus on technology adoption: Podcast adoption (Mou & Lin, 2015), and Internet non-user adoption (Peng, Zhu, Tong, & Jiang, 2012). As occurs occasionally, components of the RAM and TPB are used in tandem with other theories, such as one project that combines components of the RAM with the technology acceptance model (TAM) and innovation diffusion theory to investigate travel agency employees' behavioral intention toward innovative information and communication technologies (Cheng & Cho, 2011). Finally, a decomposed theory of reasoned action was used to study investor intention to use Internet-based stock trading (Ramayah, Rouibah, Gopi, & Rangel, 2009).

Concerning citizen journalism in particular, numerous studies relate to the consumption of citizen journalism and to areas tangential to or broadly encompassing citizen journalism (Holton, Coddington, & Gil de Zúñiga, 2013; Kaye & Johnson, 2004; Shao, 2009), but research that specifically addresses intentions and resulting behavior of citizen journalists is not to be found. So far, the body of research related to participation in citizen journalism can be generally grouped into two theoretical constructs: Social Capital and Uses and Gratifications.

Social Capital Theory and Citizen Journalism

Social capital theory (SCT) is used to explain the impact of media usage on social networks and how that influences the health and effectiveness of democracy. A leading example of research into motivations underlying citizen journalism participation from a social capital theoretical perspective is a project by Y. Kim and Lowrey (2015), which examined citizen journalism activities, defined as “producing and using social media messages that were political in nature and publicly relevant.” Part of the reason for the study was an awareness on the part of

the researchers that few quantitative studies had investigated the relationship between social network size—a component of social capital theory—and citizen journalism activities (Y. Kim & Lowrey, 2015).

Data for the study came from a survey of 348 undergraduate students at three universities in the United States. Of the respondents, 73.8 percent were women, and 26.2 percent were men. The respondents' ages ranged from 17 to 54, but skewed young ($M = 19.33$, $SD = 2.99$). Distribution of race was 86.8 percent white, 7.3 percent African-American, 3.2 percent Asian/Asian-American, and .9 percent Latinos, biracial, and others. Of the demographic variables collected, gender, age, race/ethnicity, region, and family income were controls.

For the dependent variable construct of citizen journalism activities, the researchers developed a four-point activity measure:

- Post your political message on your Facebook page
- Send a political opinion to others using a Facebook message
- Post your response on others' political views on others' Facebook pages
- Read others' political opinion on others' Facebook pages

Research questions and hypotheses aimed to investigate whether there is positive association of certain personal and social factors with citizen journalism activities. The personal factors' independent variables were (1) social media use (hours on Facebook and Twitter) and (2) civic skills, an index built on the 11-point Kirlin (2002) scale. The social factors variables were (3) network size of social networking service (number of people talked to about politics on Facebook and Twitter); (4) bonding social capital (ten items to quantify strength of existing

relationships in social media); and (5) bridging social capital (ten items to quantify interest in new relationships via social media) (Y. Kim & Lowrey, 2015).

The researchers used a series of hierarchical multiple regression analyses to test the five research questions along with their sub-hypotheses, and their findings showed that people who participate in citizen journalism tend to value public communication over relationship-building. Generally, specific relationships between both personal and social factors and politically-oriented citizen journalism activity were obvious. By contrasting social bonding capital—“connecting with close trusted acquaintances”, with that of social bridging capital—“connecting to gain new ideas and experiences” (Y. Kim & Lowrey, 2015, p. 298), it was found that the use of social media for social bonding, something most use Facebook for, strongly predicted less participation in citizen journalism online than did use of social media for bridging, something most use Twitter for (Y. Kim & Lowrey, 2015). Regardless of which platform predicted citizen journalism participation better, both personal and social factors were found to be associated with participation in politically-oriented citizen journalism.

SCT provides for thorough consideration of the social networking dynamics that influence participation in citizen journalism, but the theory does not address motivations that stem from factors beyond the social sphere. Another systematic approach to the study of citizen journalism, one that focuses on considerations outside of social networking, is Uses and Gratification (U&G). Perhaps more of a paradigm than a theory, U&G addresses media consumption and participation using three categories of personal gratifications in its analysis: content, process, and social (Mendes-Filho & Tan, 2009).

Uses and Gratifications Theory and Citizen Journalism

U&G has its roots in communications literature, and operates on the premise that communications users seek out media among competitors that fulfill their needs, leading ultimately to gratification (Rubin, 2009). The application of U&G to citizen journalism in particular is diffused: The bulk of the research has focused on the Internet in general, with a subset of uses and activities that includes social media, blogging, and user-generated content, to name a few (Liao, Liu, & Pi, 2011; Luo & Remus, 2014; Mendes-Filho & Tan, 2009). The U&G theoretical framework has not typically addressed politically-related citizen journalism specifically, except as it relates to consumption (Ekdale, Namkoong, Fung, & Perlmutter, 2010; Lin, 2014).

Motivation to produce online content. A study by Leung (2009) focused on the use of U&G to analyze a broad range of motives related to producing content for the Internet, which is what online citizen journalists do. While not specifically targeting the journalism aspect, the study is relevant because producers of citizen journalism are in fact content producers, and understanding motivations behind content generation is of interest. Research questions included “What motivates Internet users to produce content on the Internet?” and “How can demographics, gratifications obtained and civic engagement predict participation in user-generated content?”

The study measured gratifications of Internet content generation, psychological empowerment, level of content generation activity, media attentiveness, internal and external political efficacy, and interest in political affairs. The study employed a telephone survey of 23 questions with a probability sample of 798 Internet users, with ages ranging from 14 to 70.

Females in the sample were 47.3 percent, and the average age of the sample was 24.75 ($SD = 10.77$). Household income and education level were also measured (Leung, 2009).

The study used a principal components factor analysis with Varimax rotation to determine the potential groupings of twenty-three items. Seven items with extremely low loading were removed, leaving sixteen that demonstrated communality. The analysis uncovered four clearly identifiable motives for Internet users to generate content: recognition needs ($\alpha = .81$), cognitive needs ($\alpha = .75$), social needs ($\alpha = .73$), and entertainment needs ($\alpha = .67$). To quote Leung (2009),

The respondents believed that through the content-generation process, they would have the opportunity to be recognized, gain respect, publicize their expertise, learn more of the world, socialize with friends and be entertained. Internet users thrive on their immediate access to the world and it is indicative of their culture in getting experience of being both a producer and a consumer of media content. (p. 1337)

Motivation to blog. A qualitative study by Sepp, Liljander, and Gummerus (2011) used U&G theory to examine motivations of bloggers. The purpose of the study was to provide corporate marketers an understanding of blogger motivation so that they could develop ways to address bloggers—who have a substantial influence on consumers—in a more relevant and efficient way. In-depth individual interviews were held with twelve (six of each gender) experienced bloggers in the country of Estonia, which was chosen because it has a high “e-readiness,” having invested heavily in media education for its youth, 99.9% of whom have access to the Internet, and its national community of bloggers was rapidly growing at the time (Sepp et al., 2011).

Part of the reason for this study was to examine whether additional gratifications to those traditionally considered in U&G theory, process, and content might emerge, given that the Internet and blogging behavior didn't exist when the U&G theoretical framework was undergoing its most recent evolutionary modifications. As it turned out, there were multiple social gratifications identified in the interviews that had not previously been a part of traditional U&G theory, and the findings confirmed Stafford et al.'s (2004) recommendation that social gratifications be added as a companion category to the more traditional process and content gratifications. The importance of interactive behavior such as community forum, getting empathetic support, self-presentation, finding people like me, and reciprocity were all gratifications not previously available to U&G theorists, as the communication and media context was not sufficiently interactive prior to the Internet.

Motivation to use social media/Twitter. Two studies have used U&G theory to study social media usage, one of which focuses exclusively on the Twitter platform. Whiting and Williams (2013) conducted an exploratory study of gratifications related to social media usage in general using twenty-five in-depth interviews, an extremely small sample size. Frequency of mention was used to rank the themes that emerged from the interviews. Social interaction was the leading gratification theme for 88% of the respondents. Following in descending frequency of mention was information seeking (80%), pass time (76%), entertainment (64%), relaxation (60%), and five other themes with further declining frequencies of mention (Whiting & Williams, 2013).

Given that Twitter serves as a primary mechanism for citizen journalists to produce online content, another relevant study examined whether Twitter can actually gratify the human

need to connect with others. Chen (2011) utilized a 21-question survey offered to 437 people (reduced for quality to 317) via nonprobability convenience and using snowball sampling. Respondents averaged 34.4 years in age ($SD = 11.37$), and most were college educated ($M = 17.54$ years of school; $SD = 2.53$). Gender was weighted female (60.9%), and race was dichotomously coded white (80.7%) or “other”, as the sample had a lack of racial variance (Chen, 2011).

The purpose of the study was to see how people who use Twitter actively gratify a need to connect with other people specifically through the Twitter medium. The research was designed with one hypothesis: “Active Twitter use will be the strongest predictor of a gratification of a need to connect with other people on Twitter, mediated by usage of Twitter tools while controlling for age, gender, race, education, and income” (Chen, 2011, p. 757).

A main finding of the study was that spending a protracted amount of time over several months contributes more to gratifying people’s need to connect with others on Twitter than does the hours per day spent, or the quantity of specific acts of sending/retweeting messages. In other words, it was longevity, not frequent activity, which resulted in more connection. The findings counter the notion that Twitter is “just the chaotic noise that some say,” and rather support gratification of the basic human need to connect with other people (Chen, 2011; Hedman, 2016).

Motivation to share news on social media. Lee and Ma’s (2012) study of the effect of gratifications and prior experience on intent to share news on social media platforms investigated the strength of multiple gratifications on intention to share. Five factors were measured to ascertain whether there is a positive association with intention to share: (1) information seeking,

(2) socializing, (3) entertainment, (4) status seeking, and (5) prior social media sharing experience (C. S. Lee & Ma, 2012).

A survey was administered to students at a large university, with 203 usable responses collected. The respondents were to select the social media platform they used most, and answer the questions in the survey based upon their usage of that platform. This design promised a more accurate result, as respondents' answers were based on their actual usage. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) examined all relationships between the constructs. Steps were also taken to confirm goodness of fit of each model using a variety of statistical methods.

The results showed that prior social media sharing experience and socializing were the two most salient factors that influenced participants' intention to share news on social media. Standardized path coefficients between intention to share and four of the five factors were significant: information seeking ($\beta = 0.20, p < 0.01$), socializing ($\beta = 0.30, p < .001$), status seeking ($\beta = 0.17, p < 0.05$), and prior social media experience ($\beta = 0.20, p < 0.01$). Entertainment gratification showed no prediction of intention to share.

The strength of prior social media sharing may indicate that people who are used to sharing have developed habitual use, since they have already acquired capabilities that facilitate repeat behavior. As to the gratification that comes from socializing, the indication is users may feel they are virtually connected to the community as a result of sharing news stories, which supports the notion of "anticipatory socialization" where social gratifications are derived from sharing one's views and the news with others (C. S. Lee & Ma, 2012).

Social capital, U&G, and focus on social factors. The collection of studies mentioned above illustrates that behavior relating to intention to produce politically-oriented citizen journalism is socially intensive, but also provides personal gratifications from activities unrelated to the social network. From the social capital theory perspective, social factors are indeed associated with participation in politically-oriented citizen journalism. Further, both social bridging and social bonding correlate with participation in politically-oriented citizen journalism, depending on whether one uses Twitter or Facebook, respectively, to do so (Y. Kim & Lowrey, 2015).

As it relates to U&G theory, the study of motivation to produce online content showed that personal recognition and social needs were two of the top four salient gratifications for the behavior (an argument could be made that recognition is itself a social need) (Leung, 2009). In studying motivation to blog, social factors afforded by the interactive nature of the Internet were salient and significant enough to prompt researchers to propose the addition of a third category, social gratifications, to the two traditional U&G categories—process and content (Sepp et al., 2011). In researching motivation to use social media and Twitter, social interaction was the leading gratification in one study, and the other study showed that Twitter did actually gratify the need to connect with others, a social need (Chen, 2011; Hedman, 2016; Whiting & Williams, 2013). In studying motivation to use social media to share news, socializing was the strongest predictor of intention to share news in social media (C. S. Lee & Ma, 2012).

Limitations of social capital and U&G. While SCT's emphasis is the consideration of the social networking dynamics that underlie citizen journalism, U&G focuses on personal gratifications, with the recently added social gratification category to its long-held content and

process categories. U&G originated in a void of empirical understanding of media audiences in the mid-20th century, and accordingly it has largely been an attempt to describe audience behavior, not predict or change it (A. M. Lee, 2013); the same limitation can be ascribed to SCT. Neither SCT nor U&G has been called upon to provide forward-looking, predictive capabilities, the very essence of the purposes that led to the RAM. RAM has evolved from multiple theories that were designed not only to describe and explain but also predict social behavior, with the inherent hope that social behavior can be changed if the underlying causes can be known and influenced in a predictive way (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010).

Given that social interaction and a variety of personal gratifications underpin much of the behaviors that resemble producing citizen journalism online, the question arises as to why the use of the Reasoned Action Model (RAM), key components of which are personal attitude and social factors that predict behavior, has yet to be applied to behaviors related to citizen journalism. As mentioned, there appears to be only a smattering of research that focuses on topics that are tangentially related.

This is conversely demonstrated in the way that U&G theory, among other communications and media analysis approaches, has not been applied to the study of the types of behaviors to which RAM has been applied. To illustrate, U&G is not referenced in the topical index of the seminal work of either Fishbein or Ajzen in their books, most notably *Prediction and Change of Health Behavior: Applying the Reasoned Action Approach* (Ajzen, Albarracin, & Hornik, 2012), and *Predicting and Changing Behavior: The Reasoned Action Approach* (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010).

The Reasoned Action Model Approach

I have chosen the Reasoned Action Model instead of other theoretical approaches for this study for two reasons. First, it provides for the most comprehensive analysis of factors that underlie human behavior through its utilization of three primary variables (“modal variables”) that attempt to capture all factors and beliefs related to behavior: attitude, perceived social norms, and perceived behavioral control. Through its regard for perceived social norms, the RAM incorporates a social dynamics perspective as does SCT. Through its use of attitude, it considers personal motivations as does U&G. But beyond these, it regards external, contextual factors that can control behavior through its analysis of perceived behavioral control. Accordingly, its unified coverage of behavioral factors is broader than that of SCT, U&G or other behavioral theories that I can identify in the research. To quote the progenitors of the RAM:

[Our] theory is parsimonious in that it postulates only three major determinants of intentions and actions: attitudes, perceived [social] norms, and perceived [behavioral] control. These determinants are intuitively reasonable and conform to major theoretical constructs that have proved their utility over the years. Attitudes, representing personal preferences, play a major role in social psychological theories; norms serve as a central explanatory construct in sociological theorizing; and perceived control or self-efficacy is a fundamental construct in clinical psychology. (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010, p. 401)

Second, the RAM approach is unique in that it not only analyzes behavior, but also uses its analysis to prescribe and measure the effectiveness of behavioral interventions that can potentially modify the behavior under study. The RAM recognizes that human behavior can

both cause and remedy social problems in a variety of domains, and it can be influenced toward change if its underlying reasons and causes are known. Some of the social domains to which the methodology has been applied are health, safety, the environment, racism and intergroup relations, work motivation, and productivity (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010).

Until emergence of the RAM, the traditional approach to analyzing human social behavior required formulation of complex measures for each type of behavior being studied. Each class of behaviors historically involved the construction of unique sets of variables to explain behavior, or as Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) state, “a different set of explanatory constructs” (p. 1). These constructs have typically not been extensible beyond their specific behavioral domain; the construct developed for analyzing cigarette smoking is different than that developed for analyzing low voter turnout, for example. Part of the complexity of this approach is the need to consider situational and demographic factors in each analysis, contributing further to the long-held notion that analysis of human social behavior has required a bespoke approach to research design.

The framework. The Reasoned Action Model assumes that humans approach a variety of behaviors in much the same way, and that understanding and predicting human behavior need not require as complex an approach as has traditionally been used. While there are domain-specific constructs that cannot be overlooked in the analysis of any particular behavior, the Reasoned Action Model provides a unifying construct or framework that brings together these domain-specific considerations into a standardized analytical approach. It is this standardized approach that makes it possible for the RAM to be applied to the analysis of factors underlying intention to participate in online citizen journalism.

RAM-based research has demonstrated that neither demographic nor general personality traits account for much variance in any behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Rather, once the behavior of interest has been clearly defined, the three major determinants or modal variables common to human behavior—behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs, and control beliefs, can be applied to analyze and predict that behavior.

Behavioral beliefs are mediated by attitude toward the behavior—an evaluation of likely consequences of the behavior that spontaneously produces an overall negative or positive evaluation of that behavior. The influence of normative beliefs on behavior is mediated by perceived social norms, and control beliefs’ influence is mediated by perceived behavioral control. All three of these can exert influence on intention. According to Ajzen (n.d.), “As a general rule, the more favorable the attitude and subjective norm, and the greater the perceived control, the stronger should be the person’s intention to perform the behavior in question” (p. 1).

Once these three constructs have been formed, they lead to the formation of behavioral intention, which Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) define as the readiness to perform the behavior. At this point, actual control—the reality of environmental factors and the person’s skills and abilities—will mediate whether the behavior is achieved, regardless of the intensity of intention. A schematic view of the RAM approach is shown below in Figure 1.

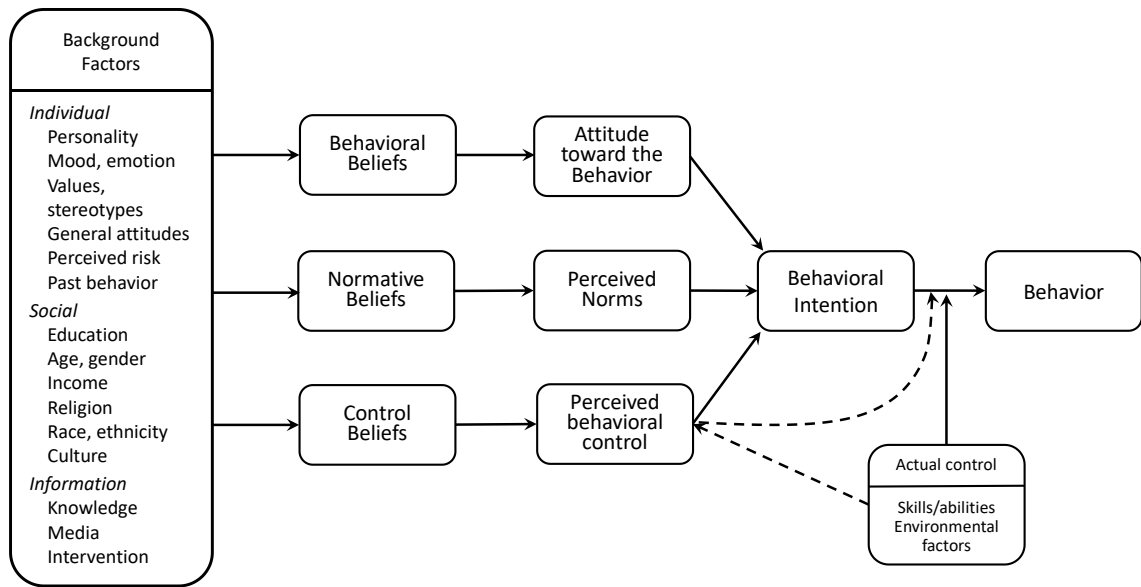


Figure 1. The Reasoned Action Model. This figure provides a schematic of components comprising the Reasoned Action Model (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010, p. 22).

Applying the RAM to Citizen Journalism

Applying the Reasoned Action Model to online citizen journalism begins with a concise definition of the behavior of interest, and then works toward the three underlying modal variables that comprise behavioral intention: attitude, perceived social norms, and perceived behavioral control. Then, behavioral, normative, and control beliefs are examined as underlying factors to the three modal variables of attitude, perceived norms, and perceived behavioral control, respectively.

Definition of the behavior. As a first step, the Reasoned Action Model approach requires that the behavior being studied is clearly defined by four attributes: the action performed, the target population whose behavior is being studied, the context in which the behavior is analyzed, and the time frame in which the study is conducted. These four defining attributes are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1

Reasoned Action Model definition of behavior using four attributes

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Definition</u>
Action performed	Reporting online personal observations of government policies and elected officials
Target	Online users
Context	Citizens' use of online and mobile platforms to report in Malaysia
Time	At any point in the future

It is important to note the precise wording of the behavior being examined: *Reporting online personal observations of government policies and elected officials*. It should be noted that this definition does not consider whether the content of reporting by Malaysian online users is factual, ethical, or of a certain quality.

Intention and likelihood of behavior. Even though the RAM specifies actual behavior (action performed) as the first measurement against which underlying factors in the model are analyzed (see Figure 1), this dissertation measures research participants' self-reported intention to perform the behavior rather than actual behavior. There are several justifications for measuring behavioral intention rather than actual behavior:

Time required to collect data. Observing actual behavior that would then be regressed against underlying factors in the RAM that are self-reported in a survey format suggests a longitudinal approach to the research, though not in a truly pre-test/post-test format. Following participation in a survey, the research participants' behavior would need to be either observed or

self-reported over a period of time, which would lengthen the time required to collect a complete set of data, even possibly requiring administration of a second survey.

Additional costs of observation. It is likely that additional costs would be incurred to observe the respective behavior of research participants. Whether observation by a third party, observation through electronic means (e.g., use of tracking bots), or self-reported in a survey, costs of data collection are greater when measuring actual behavior.

Better fit for purposes of initial research. Given that no prior research has been identified that uses the Reasoned Action Model for analyzing the drivers of online citizen journalism, this dissertation is a ground-breaking project whose purpose is partially to identify areas that merit additional focus and more narrowly targeted analysis. Purposes of this study are achieved by using a higher-level, more generalized approach that cost-effectively measures behavioral intention through analysis of self-reported data collected by a single, large-scale online survey. Were future studies to target areas of analysis more precisely using the RAM, those projects could possibly include observation of actual behavior.

Behavioral intention is an empirically validated measurement. Prior to performing any behavior under one's volitional control, there must be intent: "Intentions are the immediate antecedents of behavior" (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010, p. 17). The Reasoned Action Model asserts that intention is a reliable determinant in predicting behavior, and it is defined as "subjective probability," being the outgrowth of attitude, perceived norms, and perceived behavioral control: "In sum, on average, intentions are found to predict behavior quite well even when intention-behavior compatibility varies across studies and irrespective of whether the study is prospective

or retrospective... intentions account for a considerable proportion of variance” (Armitage & Conner, cited in Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010, p. 51).

In support of this claim, studies have shown that self-reported intention to perform behavior is arguably the best predictor of behavior. Backing up the claims of Fishbein, Ajzen, and others, there is substantial empirical support for the validity of using measurement of intention as a predictor of behavior. The following are several studies that have demonstrated a high mean intention-behavior correlation, ranging from .45 to .62: A research study in blood donation utilizing undergraduate students ($N = 141$) (Giles & Cairns, 1995), a mail survey of outdoor recreationists ($N = 395$) applied to the explanation and prediction of hunting (Hrubes, Ajzen, & Daigle, 2001), a study of undergraduate students ($N = 249$) that analyzed intentions and frequency of use of cannabis over a three month period, (Conner & McMillan, 1999). In addition, systematic reviews and meta-analyses of studies of approximately 50 domains have confirmed the validity of using intention as a predictor of behavior (Armitage & Conner, 2001; Notani, 1998).

Accordingly, this project is on solid footing in focusing on the relationship between behavioral intention and its inputs, rather than on actual behavior and inputs.

Assessment of behavioral intention. Assessment of behavioral intention for this project is achieved by using direct measurement of intention to report personal observations online. Direct measures can be expressed in multiple ways, some of which might seem synonymous at first glance. For example, the following are expressions of behavioral intent to report online:

- *I intend to* report online personal observations of government policies and elected officials

- I *expect to* report online personal observations of government policies and elected officials
- I *will* report online personal observations of government policies and elected officials

Each of these expressions, “I *intend to*”, “I *expect to*”, and “I *will*”, represent slight differences in intention, yet the distinctions highlight different degrees of commitment to perform the behavior. “I will report” represents a stronger commitment to reporting than “I expect to report”, for example, and by measuring these seemingly slight distinctions, strength of behavioral intention can be assessed at a more granular level.

Influencers of behavioral intention. In the RAM, there are three groups of personally held views about the behavior that directly influence behavioral intention: attitude, perceived social norms, and perceived behavioral control. These are known in the RAM as the modal variables or proximal variables (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010).

Attitude and behavioral intention. Attitude is defined in the RAM as one’s latent disposition or tendency to respond either favorably or unfavorably to a psychological object. For this project, the psychological object in question happens to be a particular, narrowly defined behavior: intent to report online one’s personal views about government policies and elected officials.

Measurement of attitude is best accomplished through the use of semantic differential scales. There are multiple bipolar scales that can be used, and when selecting which is the best fit, it is important to consider that attitude is a composite of instrumental and experiential factors. The instrumental dimension looks at attitude in a cognitive sense, which considers a particular

behavior in a utilitarian light. Scales that reflect this instrumental dimension have anchors such as worthless-valuable, or detrimental-constructive. The experiential perspective looks at attitude in an affective sense, and scales that reflect this dimension have anchors such as dull-exciting, and aggravating-satisfying.

When developing adjective pairs to use in semantic differential evaluation, care must be taken to ensure appropriate loading on instrumental and experiential factors that result in high internal consistency. Depending on the attitude being evaluated, a bipolar scale may intuitively appear to have relevance to the instrumental quality of an attitude, for example, but could actually load on the experiential dimension, and vice versa.

To directly measure attitude as it relates to the behavior under consideration, questions should be asked such as:

- When I report online my observations about my government's policies and elected officials, it is:

<i>Instrumental</i>							
Ineffective	1	2	3	4	5	6	Effective
<i>Experiential</i>							
Not Fulfilling	1	2	3	4	5	6	Fulfilling

This approach to evaluating attitude leads to formulation of the first hypothesis and research question in the project:

H₁ Attitude toward online citizen journalism is positively associated with intention to report.

RQ1 To what extent do the RAM's instrumental and experiential components of attitude toward online citizen journalism respectively predict Malaysians' intention to report?

Perceived norms and behavioral intention. Norms are perceived social pressure to perform or avoid a given behavior, and it is instructive to consider why perceived social pressure may influence behavioral intention. Social pressure toward behavioral intention comes from a variety of sources in a person's social network. These social referents can be individuals or groups of people who have power to reward or coerce behavior, who have role and status in society, or who are known to have certain knowledge, expertise, or achievements that lend credibility to their opinions and behavior, which then can lead to referent power—when a person desires to be like someone else (French, Raven, & Cartwright, 1959). Social referents in the Reasoned Action Model are also people who are considered to be like the person being influenced. Accordingly, the social referents in this research project are sources of influence and social pressure that potentially impact Internet users in Malaysia and their intent to report.

In describing perceived norms that stem from the influence of social referents, the difference between injunctive and descriptive norms must be considered, as they can be either congruent or contradictory. An injunctive norm is one that, it is felt, should or ought to be done based on the perception of what others (social referents) think should be done or avoided. A descriptive norm is one that is observed or perceived to be done or avoided by others. At times, an injunctive norm conflicts with a descriptive norm. For example, when a child perceives that their parents would disapprove of them smoking cigarettes (injunctive norm), but observes their

parents smoking themselves (descriptive norm), there is a contradiction between the two types of perceived norms.

To directly measure perceived norms, questions should be asked that evaluate both injunctive and descriptive dimensions, and that include referents that are either important to the research participant, or are considered to resemble the research participant. For example:

- Injunctive: “Most people who are important to me approve of my reporting online my observations about government policies and elected officials.”

This question identifies referents whose opinions are known and are likely to be people that are important to the research participant.

- Descriptive: “Most people like me report online their observations about government policies and elected officials.”

This question addresses the behavior of referents whose opinions might not be known, but whose behavior can be observed. The referent power of the behavior of people or groups that the research participant potentially wants to be like is addressed by this question.

This leads to the formulation of a second hypothesis and research question for this project:

H₂ Perceived social norms regarding online citizen journalism are positively associated with intention to report.

RQ₂ To what extent do the RAM’s injunctive and descriptive components of perceived social norms about online citizen journalism respectively predict Malaysians’ intention to report?

Perceived behavioral control and behavioral intention. Perceived behavioral control is the general sense a person has of whether they have the competence or ability to accomplish the targeted behavior. The concept is nearly identical to that of self-efficacy, espoused initially by Bandura (1977) and built upon by the research of others. The RAM approach asserts that self-efficacy and perceived behavioral control are virtually identical concepts, both referring to:

a person's perceived capability to perform a certain behavior or attain a certain goal, and both can be assessed by items that deal with ability to perform the behavior or attain the goal (under circumstances that vary in difficulty) as well as by items that have to do with control over performance of the behavior or over goal attainment. (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010, pp. 161-162)

Factors that support or impinge upon one's level of perceived behavioral control can be grouped into two subcategories of capacity and autonomy. Structuring perceived behavioral control in this way results in a hierarchical model that aids in addressing multiple factors, including one's volition, skills, resources required for the behavior, freedoms, and external constraints, among others.

Questions designed to directly measure perceived behavioral control should be patterned after the following:

- Capacity: "I am confident that I can report online my observations about government policies and elected officials."
- Autonomy: "Reporting online my observations about government policies and elected officials is totally up to me."

The following hypothesis and research question are framed using these measures of perceived behavioral control:

H3 Perceived behavioral control related to online citizen journalism is positively associated with intention to report.

RQ3 To what extent do the RAM's capacity and autonomy components of perceived behavioral control respectively predict Malaysians' intention to report?

Beliefs. In the RAM, belief is defined as the subjective probability that an object has a certain attribute. Beliefs are the underlying causal determinants of attitudes, perceived norms, and perceived behavioral control (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010).

Behavioral beliefs and attitude. Beliefs about the positive or negative likely outcomes of engaging in a particular behavior are considered behavioral beliefs. Essentially, these are assessments of the consequences of the behavior in question, whether negative or positive, and they result in the formation of a person's attitude toward personally performing the behavior. As mentioned, attitudes then mediate behavioral beliefs to influence intention to perform the behavior. The outcomes or consequences of reporting online—expressed as advantages and disadvantages—are used to formulate the following hypothesis and research question:

H4 The most important behavioral beliefs about outcomes from participating in online citizen journalism are positively associated with attitude towards intention to report.

RQ4 To what extent do the most important behavioral beliefs about possible outcomes from participating in online citizen journalism respectively predict formation of the RAM's instrumental and experiential components of attitude?

Normative beliefs and perceived norms. A person's beliefs about how a particular referent individual or group—people important to them or people similar to them—relates to the behavior in question are normative beliefs. These beliefs shape a person's perceived injunctive and descriptive norms. In order to identify injunctive and descriptive normative beliefs, research must identify survey participants' most important or similar referent individuals or groups.

As mentioned previously, injunctive normative beliefs stem from specific individuals or groups important to or like a person having certain opinions about the behavior in question. These referents might include a spouse, an authority figure such as a teacher or supervisor, or a group such as friends or a political association, and it is the opinions of these referents that potentially impact one's behavior.

In similar fashion, descriptive normative beliefs relate to particular referent individuals or groups, but differ from injunctive referents in that the individuals or groups involved are those whose behavior is observed. The opinions of these referents concerning whether the behavior should be performed might not be known. Taken together, injunctive and descriptive dimensions of normative beliefs comprise normative beliefs, and the interest in assessing those beliefs leads to the following hypothesis and research question:

H₅ The most important normative beliefs held by Malaysians about participating in online citizen journalism are positively associated with formation of perceived norms.

RQ₅ To what extent do normative beliefs about people or groups that are most important to Malaysians respectively predict formation of the RAM's injunctive and descriptive components of perceived norms?

Control beliefs and perceived behavioral control. A person's beliefs about personal and environmental factors that can either facilitate or impede attempts to carry out the behavior in question are called control beliefs. Past experience with the behavior, along with secondhand information, observation of others' experiences with the behavior, and having the resources and opportunity to perform the behavior all form the basis for control beliefs (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010).

As already briefly mentioned, these control beliefs and the factors related to them are classified in terms of capacity and autonomy. Having capacity in this sense is the belief that one has all that is needed to carry out the behavior. Such items or features that might be needed for reporting online would be affordable Internet access, personal devices, or participation in social media sites, to name a few. Having autonomy in this sense is the belief that one has a certain amount of freedom or a degree of volition to conduct the behavior. Such factors that facilitate or impede autonomy might include whether there is risk associated with the behavior, or available time to engage in the behavior.

The following hypothesis and research question address control beliefs:

H₆ The most important beliefs about factors that control participation in online citizen journalism are positively associated with the formation of perceived behavioral control toward reporting.

RQ₆ To what extent do control beliefs about factors that are most important to Malaysians respectively predict formation of the RAM's capacity and autonomy components of perceived control?

To summarize application of the RAM, the following are the key features of the approach: The model requires a tightly focused definition of the behavior being studied in order to ensure a concentrated, coherent analysis. Its use of behavioral intention as a reliable indicator of actual behavior allows for greater flexibility in research design. The duration and costs of research can be minimized, as methods do not require behavioral observation. The model isolates external variables such as actual controls on behavior, skills, abilities, and environmental factors from the attitudes and perceptions of norms and controls held by the participants, shielding the results from the influence of factors that are out of scope. Geo-cultural contextualization of critical variables through use of an elicitation survey—a unique RAM feature that can be used to allow research participants to identify the factors that are most important to them. Lastly, the model extracts data from behavioral, social, and control beliefs as part of an underlying layer of influence on those factors (i.e., attitude, perceived social norms, behavioral control) that mediate along the path toward behavioral intention. In this way, the RAM uniquely provides for what could be described metaphorically as a cellular level of analysis that supports a higher-level, systemic analysis of facts that relates directly to outcomes.

CHAPTER 3

ELICITATION STUDY

As previously mentioned, this study takes a two survey approach, using surveys that were different in design and given sequentially to two different panels of online users in Malaysia. As a feature prescribed in the RAM approach, the first survey was an elicitation survey, which took a qualitative approach in seeking out (“eliciting”) responses to open-ended questions that would inform the design of questions about beliefs for the second survey, the main survey. The unique role of the elicitation survey in the RAM approach is to identify salient modal beliefs about the behavior in question that are important to the population being considered, in this case, online users in Malaysia. Following analysis of results from the elicitation survey, the main survey, designed for quantitative results without open-ended questions, was distributed to the larger panel, having questions that were informed by responses to the elicitation survey. Both surveys were built on the Qualtrics online survey platform, and the panels for the surveys were purchased from Survey Sampling International (SSI).

Survey #1 - Elicitation Survey

It is important to discover why people hold certain attitudes at a specific point in time, and what underlies their perceptions of social norms and control. One effective way to enable this discovery is to investigate what the research participants self-identify as the most important determinants of attitudes, social norms, and control. In the RAM approach, this discovery occurs through surveying a small sample of participants that are like the participants that will take the main survey, using open-ended questions that allow participants to describe the “attitude object”

by listing what they perceive to be attributes associated with the object (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). These can be appropriately labeled salient beliefs.

Methods

Although not always required by RAM and depending on the nature of the study, eliciting preliminary responses from a small sample of participants like those to be used in the main survey can be essential to accurately defining the questions that reveal behavioral, normative, and control beliefs. By asking questions in a free-response format, participants are assumed to respond with answers that rank beliefs of greatest importance to them and that are most readily available to their memory. Typically, beliefs that are most important are those that come to mind first when responding to an open-ended question. Then, by grouping responses with similar attributes and thus identifying commonalities, it is possible to identify the groups or communities of beliefs that occur with greatest frequency (i.e., modal). Once sorted into groups, ranking of the groups by frequency and thus their respective importance guides the selection of the highest-ranking salient beliefs to be utilized as the basis for the questions in the main survey. The beliefs that emerge from this task are identified as the modal salient beliefs, and they form the basis for constructing all of the questions related to behavioral, normative, and control beliefs included in the main survey.

Data analysis and grounded theory. As the elicitation study had as its end the qualitative categorization of modal salient beliefs held by Malaysian online users, it is important to discuss the method used to identify how salient beliefs coming from the elicitation survey were grouped into belief categories. In a manner consistent with grounded theory, the approach was to inductively develop a categorized collection of behavioral, normative, and control beliefs

from analysis of the elicitation survey data, rather than to assert deductive hypotheses as to how beliefs would be organized prior to data interpretation (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; A. M. Lee, 2014). Prior to analysis of the survey data, there was no anticipation of the structure of belief categories, nor was there an expectation as to the size and number of categories coming from survey responses. Unlike grounded theory, however, the analysis of elicitation data was not iterative in terms of having multiple data collection activities. According to Corbin and Strauss (2008), “[grounded theory] research is a continuous process of data collection, followed by analysis and memo writing, leading to questions, that lead to more data collection, and so on” (p. 197). Rather, the collection of elicitation survey responses and subsequent grouping into categories occurred using a single survey.

Even though the purpose of analyzing the survey data was to develop a descriptive account of responses rather than to develop conceptual theory (a central part of grounded theory), similar to grounded theory’s use of iteration, there was an iterative approach to refining the grouping of responses into synonymic categories. This is similar to the theoretical sampling activity of grounded theory, which anticipates a “point of saturation.” In grounded theory, data sampling continues until a point of saturation is reached, which is where the emerging theory cannot be further refined (Breckenridge & Jones, 2010). In the elicitation study, rather than additional iterations of data collection, the assignment of the single survey’s answers into synonymic categories was refined iteratively, as categories were either broadened or narrowed to incorporate as many open-ended survey responses as possible, while making for an optimal number of categories to be used for the main survey. Eventually, a kind of saturation point was

reached as it was determined that category definitions could or should not be refined further, which thus excluded a number of outlying survey responses from the main survey.

Accordingly, there was only one constraint in the emergence of belief categories from the survey data: arriving at an optimal number of belief categories in order to minimize the possibility of survey fatigue on part of the participants in the main survey. As each belief category coming from the elicitation study would eventually determine the number of questions to be used in the main survey (by virtue of the RAM approach), having a large number of categories would impact the reliability and completion rate of the main survey. The more stringent the grouping of survey responses into belief categories, the larger the number of categories would be. Attention was therefore given to balancing the desire to have narrowly defined belief categories to make interpretation of the results as accurate and granular as possible, with the need to keep categories to an optimal number for purposes of the main survey.

Survey questions. The elicitation survey targeted the three belief areas of the RAM by asking the following open-ended questions (Appendix A):

Behavioral beliefs.

Q1 What do you see as the five leading advantages of using online means to report your observations about your country's elected officials, government, and policies?

Q2 What do you see as the five leading disadvantages of using online means to report your observations about your country's elected officials, government, and policies?

Q3 What other things come to mind when you think about using online means to report your observations about your country's elected officials, government, and policies?

Normative beliefs – injunctive.

Q4 Please list the individuals or groups you know of (by relation, not by name) who would approve or think you should report your observations about these matters online.

Q5 Please list the individuals or groups you know of (by relation, not by name) who would disapprove or think you should not report your observations about these matters online.

Normative beliefs – descriptive.

Q6 Please list the individuals or groups you know of (by relation, not by name) who, after a major event involving elected officials, the government, and its policies have chosen to report their observations online.

Q7 Please list the individuals or groups you know of (by relation, not by name) who, after a major event involving elected officials, the government, and its policies have chosen to not report their observations online.

Control beliefs.

Q8 Please list any factors or circumstances that would make it easy or would enable you to report your observations about your country's elected officials, government, and policies online.

Q9 Please list any factors or circumstances that would make it difficult or would prevent you from reporting your observations about your country's elected officials, government, and policies online.

Results

Survey participants. There were 71 responses to the elicitation survey using the Qualtrics platform, 23 of which were eliminated due to either being incomplete or having unintelligible answers, resulting in 48 usable responses. The average age was 34 ($M = 34$, $Mdn = 30$, $SD = 23$), and ranged from 19 to 65. 46% (22) were female, 54% (26) were male. 56% (27) had a graduate degree, 7% (4) had some graduate studies, 13% (7) had a college degree, 17% (8) had some college but no degree, and 7% (4) had completed secondary level education. 78% (37) were employed. As to religious affiliation, relevant in light of Malaysia's heterogeneous religious environment, 33% (16) were Muslim, 26% (12) were Buddhist, 19% (9) were Christian, and 22% (11) were either atheist, couldn't choose, or other.

Identification of modal salient beliefs. Each of the survey's nine questions targeting salient beliefs allowed for five answers, and participants were widely varied in the amount of open-ended answers they provided. To compare the quantity of answers, for the first question in the survey (Q1), all 48 participants provided a free text response for answer one, followed by 45 for answer two, 42 for the third, 36 for the fourth, and 34 for the fifth open-ended answer, a fairly consistent result. In contrast, for the last of the nine questions (Q9), there were 43 responses to the first answer, followed by 17 for the second, 11 for the third, 8 for the fourth, and 8 for the fifth and last open-ended answer. It could be argued that the reason for the drop-off in answers for the last question was it focused on a set of beliefs different than the earlier questions, and was by nature a more difficult area for which to think of answers. However, the data show that the open-ended answers declined linearly from the beginning to the end of the survey (Q1

through Q9), strongly suggesting that the decline was due to survey fatigue rather than the particular beliefs being asked about.

Given the wide range in answer quantities in light of suggested practices in the RAM for elicitation surveys, selection of the survey responses for purposes of grouping and ranking by modality was narrowed to the first two responses from all participants. The RAM suggests that only the first two or three responses are truly most readily available in memory: “It is possible that only the first two or three beliefs emitted are readily accessible in memory and are therefore likely to serve as the primary determinants of attitudes toward the behavior under investigation” (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010, p. 100).

These responses were grouped by commonality, and the groups then ranked by frequency. The ranking identified the most frequently occurring groups or communities of beliefs (salient modal beliefs), which were then used to guide formulation of questions for the main survey.

Behavioral beliefs. Responses to the behavioral belief advantages/disadvantages questions (Q1, Q2, Q3) identified participants’ views about the outcomes of the behavior—whether the consequences of reporting such views online would be advantageous or disadvantageous. Open-ended answers such as “improves information flows and processes,” “equal representation for all sides,” “release anger,” and “expose fraud” were depicted as advantages, and “argumentation,” “rubbish,” “instigates corruption,” are examples that depicted disadvantages in participants’ views. The leading behavioral beliefs were aligned into the groups of advantages and disadvantages and ranked accordingly. This resulted in three groups of modal salient beliefs about behavioral outcomes that are advantageous to the research participants, and

three groups of modal salient beliefs about outcomes that are disadvantageous to the research participants (Table 2, Table 3, and Table 4).

Table 2

Advantages to reporting observations online (92 total first and second answers)

<u>Category name by rank</u>	<u>Key words from responses</u>
Transparency of feelings (22 responses)	Ability to share, open, anonymity, transparency, accountability, reliability
Speed of communication (19 responses)	Fast, rapid distribution of observations
Increased knowledge (8 responses)	Know current issues, prompt update on news, open mind to know better

Table 3

Disadvantages to reporting observations online (94 total first and second answers)

<u>Category name by rank</u>	<u>Key words from responses</u>
Prospect of ruined reputation (20 responses)	Bias, ruined reputation, falsehoods, misperception, rumor, slander, wrong info
Risk of device being hacked (16 responses)	Privacy, security, spam, hacked
Potential conflict with government (8 responses)	Get arrested, conflict with authorities, threats

Table 4

Outcomes identified in elicitation survey as either advantages or disadvantages

<u>Outcome advantages</u>	<u>Outcome Disadvantages</u>
Transparency of feelings	Prospect of ruined reputation
Speed of communication	Potential conflict with government
Increase in knowledge	Risk of smartphone/computer being hacked

Normative beliefs. Questions addressing normative beliefs (Q4 - Q7) attempted to identify the participants' leading referents that influence formation of their social norms. Far and away, the leading group of referents identified as most important for approval/disapproval (injunctive), as well as those who have been observed to engage or not engage in the behavior (descriptive), were members of participants' immediate families, namely father, mother, siblings and husband/wife (99 responses). Friends, boyfriend/girlfriend, police, and NGOs also had a sufficient number of responses (42) to merit inclusion as modal salient referents in the main survey. Accordingly, there were eight salient modal persons/groups of referents that emerged as influencers of normative beliefs (in no particular order): father, mother, husband/wife, siblings, boyfriend/girlfriend, friends, NGOs and police (Table 5).

Table 5

Modal salient referent individuals or groups per elicitation survey

Friends	Father
Mother	Spouse
Boyfriend/girlfriend	Siblings
Police	NGOs

Control beliefs. Answers to the elicitation survey's questions eight and nine (control factors) show an interesting contrast between factors that make it easy to report and factors that make it difficult to report. Factors that make it easy to report were almost entirely grouped into technical or network considerations such as having sufficient Internet access, personal devices, social media platforms, and web portals. Factors that make it difficult to report were typically

described as government sting operations, repressive law enforcement, being personally tracked (surveilled), being blacklisted from traveling overseas, lack of Internet access, and affordability. By grouping these responses by commonality, as was done for behavioral and normative beliefs, there were eight groupings of modal salient beliefs about control factors (in no particular order): sufficient Internet access to report, personal devices that are needed to report, participation in social media platforms that enable reporting, sufficient web portals to report, government controls that prevent reporting, country's laws that make it safe to report, online access being too expensive to report, and Internet and mobile service being sufficiently reliable to report (62 responses in all (Table 6).

Table 6

Modal salient control factors per elicitation survey

Having sufficient Internet access
 Possession of smartphone or computer device
 Participation in a social media platform
 Availability of sufficient number of web portals
 Restrictive government controls
 Country's laws making it safe to report
 Online access too expensive
 Sufficiently reliable Internet and mobile service

Informing questions for the main survey. The salient modal beliefs identified through elicitation provided precise wording for questions in the main survey designed to assess correlation of those beliefs with the RAM's modal variables. For example, in order to test correlation between outcome advantages beliefs and formation of instrumental and experiential dimensions of attitude, the three salient modal beliefs about outcome advantages were mentioned

specifically in the main survey questions. The three salient modal belief groups that were derived through the elicitation survey analysis were transparency of feelings, speed of communication, and increased knowledge. Accordingly, three questions about those particular beliefs that were to be asked in Likert scale format in the main survey were:

- Accurate:Inaccurate “My reporting of my observations online makes it possible to be *transparent with my true feelings* about my government’s policies and elected officials.”
- Agree:Disagree “My reporting of my observations online is the *fastest way to communicate* my feelings about government policies and elected officials to others.”
- Agree:Disagree “I participate in reporting my observations online because it *increases my knowledge* of my government’s policies and elected officials.”

CHAPTER 4

MAIN STUDY

The project's main study analyzed the relationship of beliefs, modal variables and intention to report using data collected from a second survey of online users. This survey was designed using the salient modal belief categories derived from the elicitation survey.

Survey #2 – Main Survey

The survey (Appendix B) was released to a panel of over 2,000 online users purchased from SSI. If it had been possible to define a reliable demographic profile that would have allowed for generalizability to the larger Malaysian population, a smaller number of participants could have been used as a sample. However, the only demographic data pertinent to online citizen journalism that could be found for Malaysia was gathered at least partially by use of telephone surveys sponsored by government agencies or marketing firms, not valid for generalizability.

Methods

Survey questions. The survey comprised 82 questions, the first few of which attempted to directly measure behavioral intention, attitude toward the behavior, perceived norms, and perceived behavioral control. Informed by the modal salient beliefs identified in the elicitation survey, subsequent questions were designed to measure those beliefs. In all, there were six groups of questions that targeted the relationship between each of the three modal salient beliefs and their respective two components of the RAM's modal variables: behavioral beliefs and instrumental attitude, behavioral beliefs and experiential attitude, normative beliefs and injunctive perceived social norms, normative beliefs and descriptive perceived social norms,

control beliefs and capacity perceived behavioral control, and control beliefs and autonomy perceived behavioral control. A series of questions related to demographics, political orientation and involvement, and religious persuasion were added at the end of the survey for potential future use.

As a precautionary measure to ensure quality of the main survey, approximately 200 participants (10% of the 2,000 targeted for the panel) participated in a soft launch, and based on the results, only two questions required adjustments prior to the final launch of the main survey. The initial collection of responses in the main survey numbered 2,164, and upon examination, there were multiple participant responses (records) that were shown to be either substantially incomplete or contained lengthy strings of identical responses to questions (e.g., all “threes” out of a one through five Likert scale response). Suspicions about the validity of 339 of those entries resulted in their removal from the survey data, putting the number of valid responses at 1,825, roughly an 84% qualification rate.

In order to reach the target panel size of 2,000, reopening the online survey allowed for an additional 233 responses. Of this number, 38 entries were either substantially incomplete or considered suspicious for the same reasons as stated above, and their removal from the survey data also reflected the previous 84% qualification rate (coincidentally), allowing for an additional 195 responses. This brought the main survey’s qualified response total to 2,020.

Data Analysis. The main study used only the ordinary least squares method of multiple linear regression analysis for all testing of relationships between and among groups of variables. Beginning with intention to report as the dependent variable, standard linear regression was run using each of the three modal variables that the RAM showed as influencing intention to report.

As described earlier, in the RAM approach each modal variable was bifurcated, having two components. In the test, each of these two components functioned as a single variable, and they were paired as independent variables in a multiple regression against intention to report, the dependent variable. Using this approach, it was possible to determine significance of the model (F, p), to what extent the combined components explained the variance in intention to report (R^2), the extent to which each of the two components within the modal variable was respectively associated with the dependent variable (β) and the significance of the association (p). This test format was repeated for the modal variable of perceived social norms, using its injunctive and descriptive components as the independent variables against intention to report, and for analysis of perceived behavioral control using its capacity and autonomy components as independent variables against intention to report.

In similar fashion, multiple regression tests were run using the components of the three modal variables of attitude, perceived social norms and perceived behavioral control as dependent variables against their respective underlying beliefs (Figure 1). For example, in the RAM, the beliefs underlying the attitude modal variable are called behavioral beliefs, and they comprised two components, outcome advantages and outcome disadvantages. Each of these two components was made up of three items that were considered independent variables for testing. For outcome advantages, the items were: 1) transparency of feeling, 2) speed of communication, and 3) increase in knowledge. The items for outcome disadvantages were: 1) prospect of ruined reputation, 2) potential conflict with government, and 3) risk of device being hacked (Table 4).

In the test, each set of three items within the behavioral beliefs component was regressed against the two attitude components, resulting in four tests: 1) outcome advantages against instrumental attitude; 2) outcome advantages against experiential attitude; 3) outcome disadvantages against instrumental attitude; and 4) outcome disadvantages against experiential attitude.

The same technique was used to run multiple regression tests for normative beliefs. Normative beliefs comprised eight types of normative referents (Table 5). Each was considered an independent variable that was regressed against both the injunctive and descriptive aspects of perceived social norms. In this case, two multiple regression tests were run: The group of eight normative referents against injunctive perceived social norms, and the group of eight normative referents against descriptive perceived social norms.

In testing control beliefs, there were eight control factors (Table 6), each considered an independent variable that was regressed against both the capacity and autonomy dimensions of perceived behavioral control in separate multiple regression tests. Two multiple regression tests were run: The group of eight control factors against capacity perceived behavioral control, and the same group of eight control factors against autonomy perceived behavioral control.

Results

Survey participants. The average age of survey participants was 33 ($M = 34$, $Mdn = 31$, $SD = 9.6$), and ranged from 17 to 64. 51% (1,026) were female, 49% (994) were male. 51% (1,028) had a graduate degree, 7% (134) had some graduate studies experience, 17% (333) had a college degree, 13% (303) had some college but no degree, and 10% (205) had completed secondary level education. Approximately one percent had less than a secondary level

education. 78% (1,573) were employed. As to religious affiliation, 41% (820) were Muslim, 31% (624) were Buddhist, 16% (331) were Christian, 6% (122) were Hindu, and 6% (121) were either atheist, couldn't choose, or other. As to political activism and online journalism participation, 67% (1,359) voted in the last general election, and 61% (1,228) said they have reported their personal observations online in the past six months either a lot (10%) or some (51%).

Intention to report and the three modal variables. The first set of analyses regressed the variable that captures the behavioral intention of participants—intention to report, against the three modal variables that are directly associated with intention to report in the RAM, namely attitude, perceived social norms, and perceived behavioral control (Figure 2).

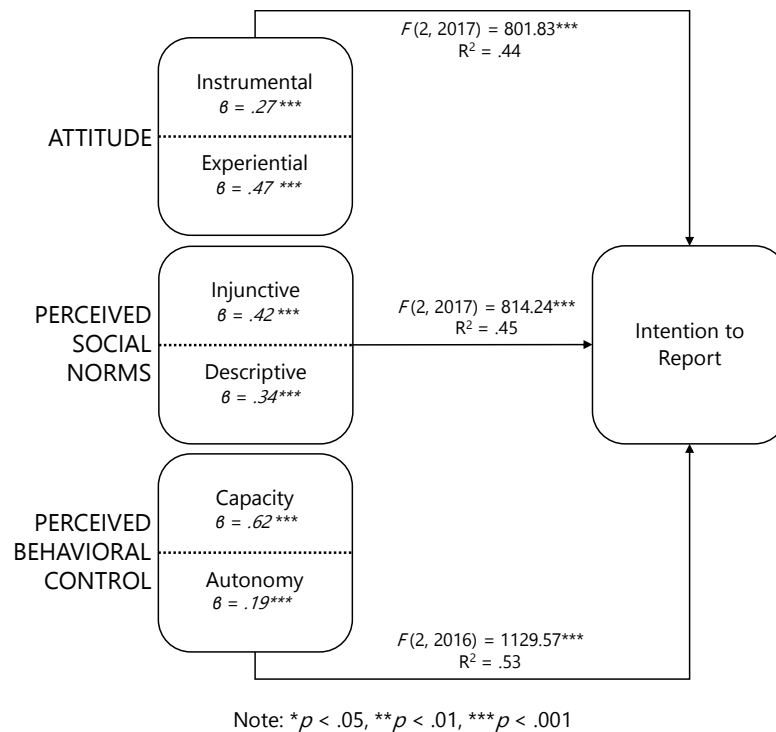


Figure 2. Intention to report and predictability of attitude, perceived social norms and perceived behavioral control. This figure shows the RAM's relationship of intention to report with its three underlying modal variables.

Intention to report and attitude. Hypothesis 1 asserted that attitude related to online citizen journalism positively influences intention toward citizen journalism reporting. Results show that when paired together in multiple linear regression, the RAM's two components of instrumental attitude and experiential, explained 44.3% of the variance in participants' intention to report. The model was significant $F(2, 2017) = 801.83, p < .001$; thus, Hypothesis 1 is supported.

Research Question 1 sought the extent to which the RAM's instrumental and experiential components of attitude are associated with participants' intention to report. The data show that the experiential component ($\beta = .47, p < .001$) was more strongly associated with intention to report than the instrumental component ($\beta = .27, p < .001$) (Figure 2). That is to say, participants were more likely to have greater intention to report based upon how satisfied (experiential) they are when reporting online than how effective (instrumental) they believe their reporting online to be.

Intention to report and perceived social norms. Hypothesis 2 posited that perceived social norms are positively associated with intention to report. The analysis shows that the combined injunctive and descriptive norms that comprise perceived social norms in the RAM accounted for 45% of the variance of intention to report, and the model was significant $F(2, 2015) = 814.24, p < .001$. Thus, Hypothesis 2 is supported.

Research Question 2 asked to what extent each of the RAM's injunctive and descriptive components of perceived social norms influence participants' intention to report. The injunctive norms ($\beta = .42, p < .001$) were shown to associate more with participants' intention to report than were descriptive norms ($\beta = .34, p < .001$) (Figure 2). These results indicate that the

perceived opinions of others (injunctive norms) were more likely to influence participants' intention to report than the observed behavior of others (descriptive norms).

Intention to report and perceived behavioral control. Hypothesis 3 stated that perceived behavioral control will be positively associated with intention to report. Multiple regression analysis showed that the model was significant $F(2, 2016) = 1129.57, p < .001$, and that the combined capacity and autonomy components of perceived behavioral control explained 53% of the variance in the intention to report. Accordingly, Hypothesis 3 is supported. Of the three modal variables underlying intention to report, this variable had the strongest association.

Research Question 3 explored the extent to which each of the RAM's capacity and autonomy components of perceived behavioral control is associated with participants' intention to report. The analysis showed that these two components varied widely in their influence. The capacity component ($\beta = .62, p < .001$) of perceived behavioral control contributed much more to intention to report than did autonomy ($\beta = .19, p < .001$) (Figure 2). This finding indicates that participants are significantly more likely to report online based upon what they believe their ability is (capacity) to engage in the behavior than they are by their sense of having volitional control (autonomy) to do so. The former speaks to having the resources required, while the latter refers to having freedom of choice and independence in making the decision to report online.

Modal variables and beliefs. The second set of analyses regressed each modal variable against its respective beliefs: attitude with behavioral beliefs (Figure 3), perceived social norms with normative beliefs (Figure 4), and perceived behavioral control with control beliefs (Figure 5).

Attitude and behavioral beliefs. Hypothesis 4 proposed that behavioral beliefs about potential outcomes to reporting online (advantages or disadvantages) positively influence attitude in its two forms, instrumental and experiential. Multiple regression analysis in two tests shows that outcome advantages accounted for 23% of the variance in instrumental attitude, and 31% of the variance in experiential attitude. The model that associates outcome advantages with instrumental attitude was found to be significant overall $F(3, 2016) = 199.84, p < .001$, as was the model that associates outcome advantages with experiential attitude $F(3, 2016) = 299.51, p < .001$ (Figure 3). Hypothesis 4 is thus supported, as it relates to the outcome advantages component of behavioral beliefs.

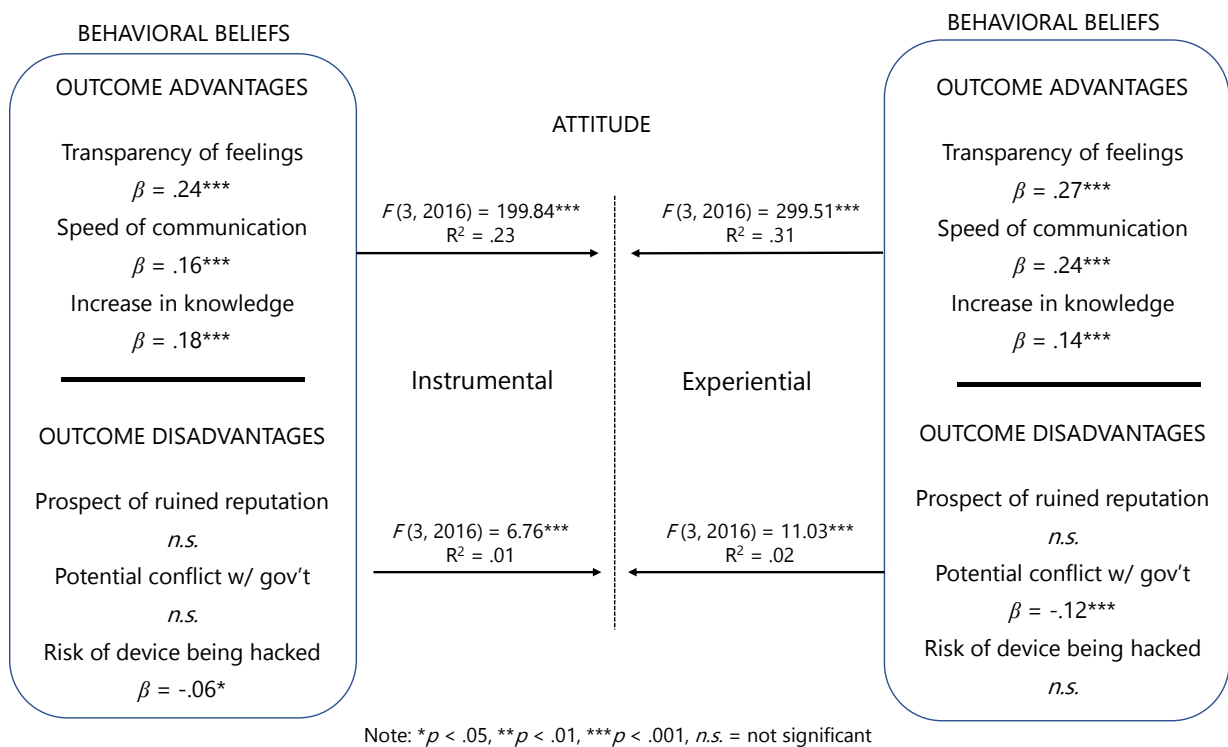


Figure 3. Predictability of Outcome Advantages and Disadvantages on Attitude. This figure illustrates the impact of behavioral beliefs on both instrumental and experiential dimensions of attitude.

Regression analysis of outcome disadvantages also provided results that support Hypothesis 4. Remarkably, outcome disadvantages accounted for 1% of the variance in instrumental attitude, and accounted for 2% of the variance in experiential attitude. The model that associates outcome disadvantages with instrumental attitude was found to be significant overall $F(3, 2016) = 6.76, p < .001$, as was the model that associates outcome disadvantages with experiential attitude $F(3, 2016) = 11.03, p < .001$ (Figure 3). Hypothesis 4 is thus supported for all components of attitude and behavioral beliefs, although the contrast between the strength of association of outcome advantages and that of outcome disadvantages with attitude is notable.

Research Question 4 inquired about the extent to which each belief about outcomes from participating in online citizen journalism influences the RAM's instrumental and experiential components of attitude, respectively. A test for collinearity was conducted which showed acceptable levels of variable inflation factors (VIF), confirming the lack of collinearity. The analysis shows that all three outcome advantages were predictive of instrumental attitude: transparency of feelings ($\beta = .24, p < .001$), speed of communication ($\beta = .16, p < .001$), and increase of knowledge ($\beta = .18, p < .001$) (Figure 3). These three advantages were also predictive of experiential attitude: transparency of feelings ($\beta = .27, p < .001$), speed of communication ($\beta = .24, p < .001$), and increase of knowledge ($\beta = .14, p < .001$) (Figure 3).

In contrast, multiple regression analysis shows that two of the three outcome disadvantages were predictive of components of attitude. The risk of a smartphone or computer device being hacked ($\beta = -.06, p < .05$) was negatively associated with of instrumental attitude,

and potential conflict with the government ($\beta = -.12, p < .001$) was also negatively associated with experiential attitude (Figure 3).

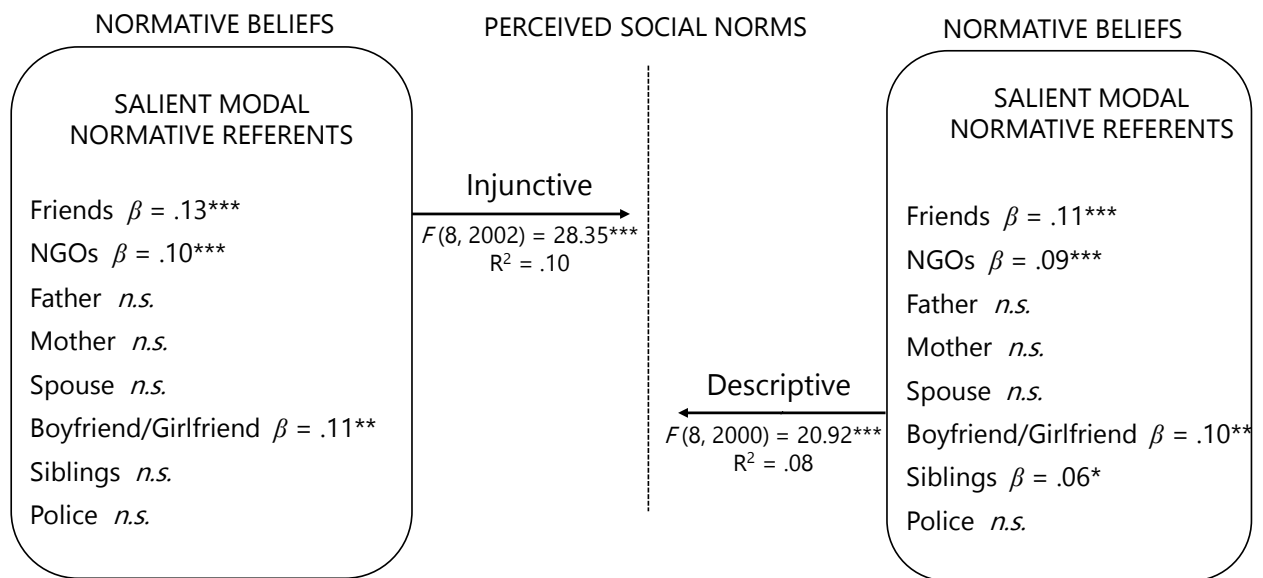
These results indicate that each of the three outcome advantages was positively associated with both instrumental and experiential aspects of attitude, with the leading advantage in both attitudinal dimensions being that one can transparently communicate their feelings when reporting online. The other two outcome advantages were not far behind in strength of association.

Conversely, there was little association of outcome disadvantages with either of the two attitudinal dimensions. Risk of smartphone or computer being hacked had a comparatively small coefficient ($\beta = -.06, p < .05$), and was only associated with instrumental attitude. The other outcome disadvantage, potential conflict with the government ($\beta = -.12, p < .001$) had a stronger association with attitude, but only with experiential attitude. These results indicate that the disadvantage of having one's smartphone or computer hacked might influence one to believe they are less effective when reporting online. Alternatively, having conflict with the government might influence one to feel less satisfied when they report online, but not necessarily less effective.

Perceived social norms and normative beliefs. Hypothesis 5 posited that the normative beliefs held by participants about reporting online are positively associated with perceived social norms. As discussed earlier, there were eight modal salient referent individuals or groups that comprised normative beliefs (Table 5).

Multiple regression analysis using the eight modal salient referents against injunctive perceived social norms shows that the model is significant overall $F(8, 2002) = 28.35, p < .001$,

with the collective of eight referents explaining 10% of the variance. The analysis using the eight referents against descriptive perceived social norms shows that the model was significant overall $F(8, 2000) = 20.92, p < .001$, and that the collective of referents accounted for 8% of the variance (Figure 4). Thus, Hypothesis 5 is supported.



Note: $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$, $***p < .001$, *n.s.* = not significant

Figure 4. Predictability of Salient Modal Normative Referents on Perceived Social Norms. This figure illustrates the impact of normative beliefs on both injunctive and descriptive dimensions of perceived norms.

Research Question 5 focused on the extent to which each of the normative beliefs is predictive of perceived social norms. A test for collinearity was conducted which showed acceptable levels of variable inflation factors (VIF), confirming the lack of collinearity. The results of multiple regression testing are mixed. Of the eight referents, three predicted injunctive perceived social norms: friends ($\beta = .13, p < .001$), people in NGOs ($\beta = .10, p < .001$), and boyfriend/girlfriend ($\beta = .11, p < .01$). Concerning descriptive perceived social norms, four of

the eight referents were predictive: friends ($\beta = .11, p < .001$), people in NGOs ($\beta = .09, p < .001$), boyfriend/girlfriend ($\beta = .10, p < .01$), and siblings ($\beta = .06, p < .05$) (Figure 4).

These results indicate that both opinions (injunctive) and observed behavior (descriptive) of friends, NGOs and boyfriend/girlfriend were important to the formation of participants' perceived social norms. Siblings had mild importance regarding perceived social norms, but only as it relates to observation of their behavior (descriptive), not their opinions (injunctive). Remarkably, not one of the family groupings—father, mother, spouse, siblings, had any association with injunctive perceived social norms, and three of the four: Father, mother, spouse, had no association with descriptive perceived social norms. There was also no association for police.

Perceived behavioral control and control beliefs. Hypothesis 6 asserted that beliefs about factors that control whether one participates in online citizen journalism are positively associated with perceived behavioral control. Using the participants' elicitation survey responses, eight salient modal control factors were identified (Table 6).

Multiple regression analysis shows that the model for analyzing control beliefs and their association with perceived behavioral control was significant $F(8, 2006) = 54.51, p < .001$, with the collective of eight factors explaining 18% of the variance in capacity perceived behavioral control. Analysis of control factors with autonomy perceived behavioral control also showed that the model is significant $F(8, 2005) = 39.49, p < .001$, with the factors explaining 14% of the variance (Figure 5). Hypothesis 6 is accordingly supported.

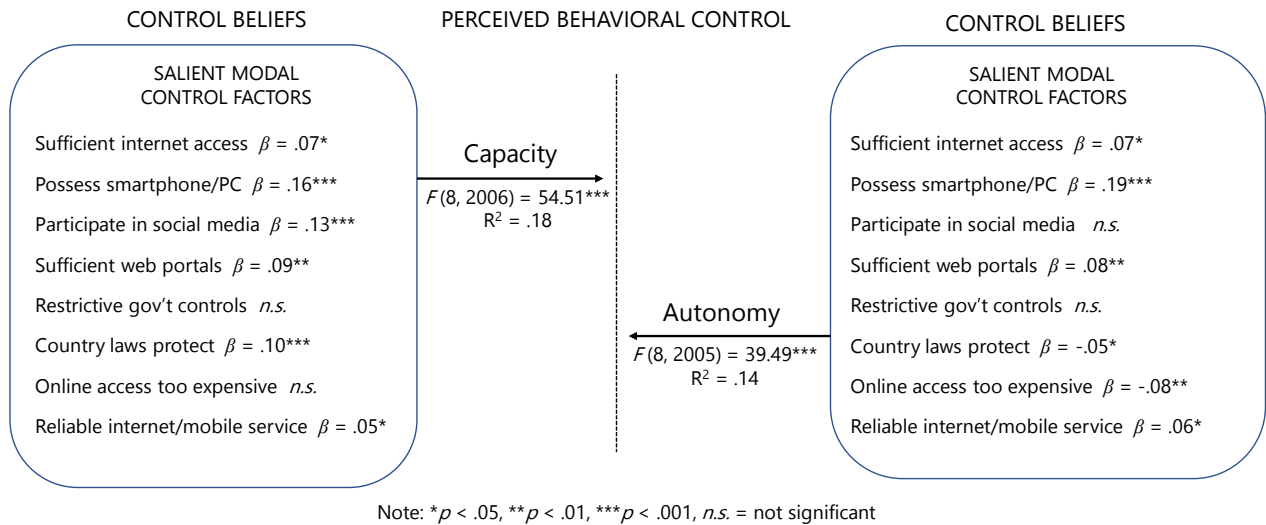


Figure 5. Predictability of Salient Modal Control Factors on Perceived Behavioral Control. This figure illustrates the impact of control beliefs on both capacity and autonomy dimensions of perceived behavioral control.

Research Question 6 asked to what extent belief about each control factor predicts perceived behavioral control. As was done for the other two sets of belief variables, a test for collinearity was conducted which showed acceptable levels of variable inflation factors (VIF), confirming the lack of collinearity. Multiple regression testing shows that, of the eight control factors, six were predictive of capacity perceived behavioral control: 1) having sufficient Internet access ($\beta = .07$, $p < .05$), 2) possessing a smartphone or computer ($\beta = .16$, $p < .001$), 3) participation in a social media platform ($\beta = .13$, $p < .001$), 4) having sufficient web portals ($\beta = .09$, $p < .01$), 5) country's laws making it safe ($\beta = .10$, $p < .001$), and 6) having reliable Internet and mobile service ($\beta = .05$, $p < .05$). Concerning autonomy perceived behavioral control, six of the eight control factors were predictive: 1) Having sufficient Internet access ($\beta = .07$, $p < .05$), 2) possessing a smartphone or computer ($\beta = .19$, $p < .001$), 3) having sufficient web portals ($\beta =$

.08, $p < .01$), 4) country's laws making it safe ($\beta = .05$, $p < .05$), 5) online access being too expensive ($\beta = -.08$, $p < .01$), and 6) reliable Internet/mobile service ($\beta = .06$, $p < .05$) (Figure 5).

These results indicate that possessing a smartphone is the most predictive control factor in association with perceived behavioral control. Whether it contributes to having volitional control (autonomy), which is slightly more predictive, or contributes to having the resources and skills required to report online (capacity), participants placed greatest emphasis on this factor among the eight.

In ranking the remaining control factors based upon whether they had significance in both dimensions of perceived behavioral control, the second-most important factor was for participants to have laws in the country that protect their ability to report online. The third most important control factor was having sufficient web portals, the fourth was having sufficient Internet access, and the fifth was having reliable Internet or mobile service.

Interestingly, participation in social media had a notable coefficient ($\beta = .13$, $p < .001$), but it had no association with autonomy perceived behavioral control. The last remaining control factor, presence of restrictive government controls, did not appear to be of much concern for participants, as it had no significance in association with either dimension of perceived behavioral control.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

There are several salient observations of the findings, five of which I have selected to discuss at a more granular level to help frame the theoretical and practical implications of applying the RAM to citizen journalism in Malaysia. Following the discussion of these observations and associated implications, I will present limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

Observations

There are a number of meaningful results that could be discussed, and five are set apart here by either offering the strongest explanation of variance in their respective regression analysis, or by having the strongest predictability. These five items are aligned with the three modal variables as follows:

Attitude. Within this modal variable and its underlying beliefs, there are three salient observations that emerge from the analysis: (a) factors that underlie intention to report are more affective in nature than they are utilitarian, as the experiential (feeling of satisfaction) more strongly predicts intention to report than does the instrumental (belief it is effective); (b) outcome advantages more strongly predict attitude toward intention to report than do outcome disadvantages; (c) transparency of feeling is the leading outcome advantage in predicting attitude.

Perceived social norms. The most striking result coming from analysis of this modal variable and its underlying beliefs is that influence of normative referents outside of family is predictive of perceived social norms, while the influence of family members is not.

Perceived behavioral control. This modal variable is a stronger predictor of intention to report than either attitude or perceived social norms, explaining more of the variance in intention to report (53%). Also, its capacity dimension of perceived behavioral control is by far the leading single variable to predict intention to report among all components of the modal variables ($\beta = .62, p < .001$).

Attitude and intention to report.

Affective vs. utilitarian. The findings show that both of the RAM's experiential and instrumental components of attitude are statistically significant ($p < .001$) and predictive of intention to report, and that the experiential component of attitude ($\beta = .47$) is more predictive than the instrumental component ($\beta = .27$). To shed light on how these components are measured differently, it is helpful to note the wording of the questions used in the main survey to measure them. The question that measures the experiential is, "When I report online, I feel a sense of satisfaction." The question used to measure the instrumental is, "When I report online, I believe it is effective." The experiential question calls out feelings of satisfaction, an affective notion, while the instrumental question focuses on whether the behavior is believed useful, a utilitarian notion. Thus, the contrast is shown between affect—the conscious subjective aspect of an emotion, and the utility of reporting online.

This contrast and the lean toward the affective suggests that online users in Malaysia feel better (more satisfied) by reporting online than they believe that their reporting is useful (effective). I propose this is so because it is easier to assess personal feelings that come from reporting online than it is to know the degree to which one's reporting online brings about desired results such as increased awareness of others or political change. To bring forward an

aspect of the definition of citizen journalism that I decided upon for this project, citizen journalism involves “active public participation by non-journalists outside of media organizations ...” (Domingo & Heinonen, 2008, p. 300). Given that this definition includes public participation, the degree to which one’s contribution makes a difference in the political discourse is likely to be obfuscated by the other contributions in the “citizen chorus” of journalism, and not until there is an effect identified as the result of citizen journalism focused on a specific cause can a respective sense of effectiveness be known.

Alternatively, if reporting online about government policies and elected officials involves expressions that are passionately felt, the mere expression itself can bring about a feeling of satisfaction. This is the very thing that is measured in the survey question for the experiential dimension of attitude. This feeling of satisfaction might occur regardless of whether one knows the effectiveness of their reporting online. It can be viewed possibly as a type of catharsis, providing fulfillment in itself as a form of protest. As was stated in one analysis of media and civil unrest during the American protest era of the mid-20th century, “[Protest] may be an end in itself, fulfilling its end in its beginning. As such, the protest is a temporary and transitional behavior, a form of catharsis. Its consequences may neither be fully anticipated nor adequately comprehended” (Reid, 1955, p. 147).

It should be noted that satisfaction from reporting online could also be felt by knowing that it is effective, which means that feeling satisfaction from reporting online and believing in its effectiveness are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The findings here only go so far as to say that the feeling of satisfaction in reporting by online users in Malaysia is more strongly associated with intention to report online than is the belief that doing so is effective. By

increasing the level of satisfaction that online users in Malaysia would get from reporting online, participation in reporting online should increase.

The strength of outcome advantages in formation of attitude. In the RAM approach, attitude is formed by underlying behavioral beliefs about whether the potential outcomes are positive (advantages) or negative (disadvantages). The most important outcome beliefs are identified by survey participants through their responses to the elicitation survey. The result is there are three outcome advantages and three outcome disadvantages, six in all.

The data show that these outcome advantages provide a fairly strong explanation of the variance in attitude, $R^2 = .23$ for instrumental and $R^2 = .31$ for experiential. By contrast, outcome disadvantages provide little explanation of variance, $R^2 = .01$ for instrumental and $R^2 = .02$ for experiential (Figure 3). The contrast is worth noting.

Considered individually, all three outcome advantages—transparency of feelings, speed of communications and increase in knowledge, have notable associations with both instrumental and experiential components of attitude. Conversely, there are only two outcome disadvantages that have any association at all with attitude: potential conflict with government, associated with experiential attitude, and the risk of one's personal device being hacked, which is associated with the instrumental dimension of attitude. The remaining outcome disadvantages have no significance when regressed against either instrumental or experiential components of attitude.

The results clearly show that there is significantly more belief that there are positive potential outcomes than there is belief that there are negative potential outcomes. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the formation of attitude underlying intention to report is mostly a

matter of considering the benefits and advantages for the Malaysian online user. Concern over potential disadvantages does not appear to play much of a mitigating role.

The prominence of transparency of feeling as an outcome advantage. Of the three outcome advantages identified by survey participants, transparency of feeling is the strongest predictor of attitude. For the instrumental component of attitude, transparency of feelings ($\beta = .24, p < .001$) outranks increase in knowledge ($\beta = .18, p < .001$) and speed of communication ($\beta = .16, p < .001$) in association. For the experiential component of attitude, transparency ($\beta = .27, p < .001$) outranks speed of communication ($\beta = .24, p < .001$) and increase in knowledge ($\beta = .14, p < .001$) (Figure 3).

This prominence of the notion of transparency suggests that Malaysian online users may believe that the public discourse of government policies and elected officials is lacking in transparency, and that reporting online is a means to counter a perceived opacity. If true, this would be a reasonable response to the well-publicized view held by Malaysia's ruling party that the news media should function as a collaborative extension of the government to help promote and encourage adoption of its policies (Tapsell, 2013).

The perception of a lack of transparency was brought to the fore in the financial crisis that struck Malaysia and most of Southeast Asia in 1997:

It was only when the GDP growth registered a negative 6.8%, the Ringgit [Malaysian currency] depreciated over 30% against the US dollar, and public funds such as the Employee's Provident Fund were used to bail out some companies related to those in the ruling elite and prop up the share market, that people began to cry out for more transparency and information. (W. L. Kim, 2001, p. 68)

Continuing beyond the 1997 crisis into subsequent national elections, it was asserted by some that the ruling party considers that the mainstream media has a social responsibility to assist the government in a sort of collective project of nation building (Muhamad, 2016), which encourages positive support of government policies and elected officials, while discouraging transparent discussion and criticisms:

[The ruling party has] impeded the Malaysian electorate's democratic right to freedom of information. Through an investigation of mainstream and Chinese media coverage of the 2004 elections, it can be observed that the Malaysian press overwhelmingly presented a sympathetic, and often flaunting, bias in favor of the incumbent [ruling party] while providing insufficient coverage of the views of or even demonizing the opposition parties. Like other ruling entities of developing countries, the [ruling party] government justifies its intrusion over the mass media by invoking the need for national stability and security in order to successfully lead the Malaysian nation-state toward modernization, development, and economic prosperity. (Anuar, 2007, pp. 25-28)

As recently as 2010, then Malaysian Prime Minister Najib stated that the “symbiotic relationship between the press and the government is absolutely critical for our future and development as a nation” (Tapsell, 2013, p. 616). From this, it may be that Malaysian online users view the symbiotic relationship between the press and government as one that conflicts with transparent reporting, thus creating greater need and opportunity for citizen journalism to provide balance.

Perceived social norms and intention to report.

Family influence and the construct of perceived social norms. I was surprised to find that the opinions and behavior of family members, as part of the participant's most important social referents influencing injunctive and descriptive social norms, do not show a strong association with perceived social norms in the study's findings. Family members identified by the elicitation survey are father, mother, spouse, and siblings. Referents identified outside the family are friends, NGOs, police and boyfriend/girlfriend (assuming the latter are not included in family). Of these eight, three that are outside of family have the highest level of predictability relative to formation of both injunctive and descriptive norms—friends ($\beta = .13/.11$, injunctive/descriptive), NGOs ($\beta = .10/.09$, injunctive/descriptive), and boyfriend/girlfriend ($\beta = .11/.10$, injunctive/descriptive). A fourth referent group, siblings, has low predictability limited to descriptive norms ($\beta = .06$), and barely clears the bar for statistical significance ($p = .045$).

This delineation in influence between those inside the family and those outside suggests the possibility that participation in citizen journalism, as shaped by perceived social norms, is negotiated mostly outside of family relationships. The use of the RAM approach and this measurement of social norm components supports the findings of studies in social capital theory that show that, as mentioned earlier, participation in citizen journalism values public communication more than relationship building (Y. Kim & Lowrey, 2015). Stated in the parlance of social capital theory, in Malaysia, bridging capital (connecting to gain new ideas and experiences), appears to be a more influential factor for those that intend to report online than bonding capital (connecting with close trusted acquaintances). If true, this would confirm why

the social referents assumed to be most close and trusted (family) have less association with perceived social norms as it relates to reporting online.

Perceived behavioral control and intention to report.

Capacity is the strongest predictor of behavioral intention. The variance in behavioral intention of Malaysians to report online is explained more by perceived behavioral control ($R^2 = .53$) than by either of the other two modal variables—attitude ($R^2 = .44$) and perceived social norms ($R^2 = .45$). Perceived behavioral control is a matter of both capacity—"do they have the resources that are needed?", and autonomy—"can they fully decide for themselves whether or not they report online?"

The degree to which citizens report online is affected by whether there are both the essential resources—access to technology in particular, and freedom to do so. In the RAM approach, these factors are captured by the notions of capacity and autonomy within perceived behavioral control. In the main survey, capacity is measured by Likert scale agreement with the statement, "I am very confident in my ability to report online," and autonomy is measured by level of agreement with the statement, "Whether or not I report online is totally up to me."

In comparing the measurement of capacity with that of autonomy, a clear distinction is seen. The association of capacity ($\beta = .62, p < .001$) with intention to report is substantially stronger than the association of autonomy with intention to report ($\beta = .19, p < .001$). This means that Malaysians' confidence in their ability to report is much more likely to determine intention to report than their sense of volitional control.

Theoretical Implications

A primary motivation for this dissertation is to offer a theoretical basis that explains the participation of Malaysian online users in citizen journalism, and to use that basis to prescribe behavioral interventions that could potentially bring about greater levels of participation.

I have already discussed the limitations in predictive capability of theories and models commonly applied to analysis of media and communications phenomena—those of social capital theory and Uses and Gratifications (U&G) in particular. These two theories with others have been used widely to research motivations for consuming and producing online content, blogging, the use of social media/Twitter, the sharing of news on social media, and the associated differences between bonding and bridging capital, among other things. While these theoretical constructs have added much to the body of knowledge, none is able to offer as comprehensive a theoretical basis for explaining the combination of factors that influence behavioral intention as the RAM.

Concerning U&G in particular, recent studies have shown that the effects of gratifications on outcome variables such as intention and use are limited (Leung, 2009; Luo, Chea, & Chen, 2011; Namkee Park, 2010; Namsu Park, Kee, & Valenzuela, 2009; cited in Lin, 2014, p. 129). But, in one instance, U&G has approximated the RAM's capability to assess behavioral intention by combining with the cognitive-affective-conative framework (CAC) in a hybrid approach (Lin, 2014). Cognition points to “knowledge, opinions, thoughts, perceptions and beliefs about the object” (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, pp. 11-12), affection is “a person's feeling toward some objects, persons, issues or events” (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, pp. 11-12), and conation is defined as “the part of mental life having to do with striving, including desire and volition” (Flexner

Houck, 1987, p. 422; cited in Lin, 2014). This hybrid approach, in which CAC plays a critical role, simulates the RAM's three modal variables: cognition is similar to RAM's attitude, affection parallels the RAM's social norms, and conation touches on factors that comprise the RAM's behavioral control. This model also proposes that attitude mediates between the effects of all gratifications and intention. In the RAM, attitude mediates along the path between behavioral beliefs and intention.

In using much of the same concepts that are part of the RAM, the U&G-CAC hybrid study found association of the five gratifications coming from media consumption with attitude: passing time, entertainment, relaxation, escape, and local news consumption, explaining 46% of the variance (Lin, 2014). However, the study showed limited effects of gratifications that were hypothesized to predict intention.

Potential of the RAM approach. This project is the first to apply the Reasoned Action Model to examine why Malaysians participate in citizen journalism and offer theory-based recommendations on how to encourage greater participation. Even with a somewhat narrow statistical approach using only multiple regression analysis, the findings have confirmed the potential of the RAM theory for use in the study of citizen journalism, irrespective of cultural, economic, or political context. The findings here are presented in the context of the Malaysian electoral authoritarian form of government, at a time when the rise of citizen journalism in the country appears to be effecting political change. This study is especially timely in light of the upcoming general election either in 2018 or yet in this year, if a snap election is called.

By using the RAM approach for this dissertation, explanations have emerged for why Malaysians intend to report online, and by influencing those underlying motivations, prediction

of behavioral change can be made. Through the use of behavioral intention, modal variables, and underlying beliefs, the analysis has uncovered complex and interrelated sensitivities of Malaysian online users to the projection of participating in online citizen journalism.

Examination of attitude and behavioral beliefs reveals that the three behavioral beliefs identified through the elicitation survey are all predictive and important—transparency, speed of communication, and increase in knowledge, with transparency being the most predictive. By studying perceived social norms and normative beliefs, it is now understood that the opinions of others (injunctive norms) are more important than observed behavior (descriptive), and that opinions of non-family social referents have significantly more predictability in the formation of social norms than those of family members. Finally, by dissecting perceived behavioral control and control beliefs, it is clear that the more Malaysian online users believe they have the resources and access they need, the more confidently they believe in their ability to report online, and the greater their intention to do so. To further confirm the fit of the RAM theory to citizen journalism, the explanation of variance in intention to report for each of the three modal variables are all at or above 44%, with one variable, perceived behavioral control, accounting for 53% of the variance.

As seen, application of the RAM has simplified and synthesized what has not been known about online citizen journalism in Malaysia, and in so doing has created opportunities for behavioral interventions that could potentially increase participation.

Practical Implications

Moving from the theoretical to the practical is often a challenge, and that seems to be the case here in identifying practical measures by way of behavioral interventions that might

increase Malaysian online users' participation in citizen journalism. If behavioral interventions can be prescribed that successfully target an increase in values for either the modal variables or their underlying beliefs that predict intention to participate in citizen journalism, that intention should increase and potentially influence the country's governance towards a truer form of democracy.

Prescribing behavioral interventions. Opportunities for behavioral interventions come from the salient observations presented in the discussion above. To demonstrate the RAM's approach in targeting specific beliefs for behavioral intervention, I first rank modal variables by their explanation of variance in behavioral intention, then proceed to identify whether either of the two components within the variables are most predictive. Once that leading modal variable component is identified, beliefs underlying that component are examined to determine whether any of them have sufficient predictability. Upon that determination, practical behavioral interventions that would potentially influence those beliefs, their respective modal variables and, in turn, behavioral intention, are considered. Not all beliefs identified as targets here will trigger the design of a behavioral intervention, as much depends on whether contextual elements indicate that such interventions would be effective.

Perceived behavioral control. Of the three modal variables in the RAM, the one with the greatest explanation of variance in intention to report is perceived behavioral control ($R^2 = .53$). Of its two components, capacity shows the greatest predictability ($\beta = .62, p < .001$), significantly stronger than the other component, autonomy ($\beta = .19, p < .001$). Underlying capacity perceived behavioral control are eight control beliefs, five of which are significant statistically and are sufficiently predictive to consider as candidate targets for behavioral

interventions. Ranked by greatest predictability, these control beliefs are: 1) possession of smartphone ($\beta = .16, p < .001$), 2) being able to participate in social media platforms ($\beta = .13, p < .01$), 3) having laws that protect the participant ($\beta = .10, p < .001$), 4) having sufficient Internet access ($\beta = .07, p < .05$), and 5) having reliable Internet/mobile service ($\beta = .05, p < .05$).

Smartphone and sufficient, reliable Internet access. Three of the five select control beliefs (ranked 1, 4, and 5 by predictability) relate to having access to technology that enables participation in online citizen journalism, and the research indicates that these three factors already reflect a healthy environment in Malaysia.

The obvious essential condition for people to report online is to have affordable and reliable devices and access services that connect them to the Internet and to one another. Malaysia is considered to have excellent Internet access for the region, although urban areas enjoy much greater availability than do rural areas, and the competitive open market for mobile service providers makes for a high quality of service and affordability (“Malaysia | Country report | Freedom on the Net | 2016,” n.d.). An estimated 86% of Internet users in Malaysia gain access through use of their smartphone, and the most popular means of Internet access is mobile broadband (PC/laptop with WIFI or broadband cellular modem), recently estimated to be at 87% (Malaysia Internet User Survey, 2016).

A pronounced and steady uptake in Internet access and citizen reporting online came from an aggressive initiative in 1997 by then prime minister Mahathir Mohamad to provide affordable Internet access to the public. The concomitant promise by the PM that the Internet would be free from censorship was an important inducement (Tapsell, 2013). Subsequently,

Internet penetration has arrived at an estimated 24.1 million in 2015 (78% penetration), more than quadrupling from an estimated 5.8 million in 2012 (20% penetration), and from 1.7 million in 2008 (6% penetration) (Social Bakers, 2013, cited in Tapsell, 2014; Malaysia Internet User Survey, 2016). As discussed earlier, this increase in Internet penetration has also enabled an increase in online citizen journalism (Balaraman et al., 2015; Case, 2011; Nasrullah, 2012; Pepinsky, 2009).

These control factors reflect an appreciable correlation with capacity perceived behavioral control, which underlies intention to report. However, given the high penetration of Internet access (78%), the large percentage of the population that has smartphones (91%), and the fact that 86% of Internet users access it via their smartphone, it does not appear on the surface that there would be a behavioral intervention that would improve penetration of smartphone ownership and the affordability and reliability of Internet and mobile access for Malaysia's online users.

What should not be ignored is the size, in terms of raw population numbers, of the balance of Malaysians that are not part of the Internet/smartphone scene. The number of people in Malaysia that do not have Internet access (22%) is an estimated 6.8 million, and the number of people that do not access the Internet through a smartphone (14%), is estimated to be 3.9 million. These are large numbers, and if accurate, represent potential citizen journalism contributors that are not currently participating. Obviously, it can't be known how many of these would participate if they did have Internet access or a smartphone, as they might choose to be off the grid, so to speak, or just not interested. But, given the opportunity to add potential citizen

journalists from these large groups of people, a behavioral intervention that would target these non-users should be considered.

Prior to prescribing such an intervention to increase penetration in these areas, research would be needed to identify the reasons for the unreached population. For example, if there is a digital divide between rural and urban areas in Malaysia, with the rural population having less opportunities for access, an appropriate intervention would be to increase affordable, reliable Internet access penetration in rural areas. Whether there are such factors preventing potential online citizen journalism that can be remedied, it is important at least for purposes of this study to identify the potential for increase in Internet and smartphone penetration as an opportunity for behavioral intervention.

Participation in social media platforms. This control belief ranks second in predictability among the five select control beliefs, and the research reflects a positive environment for social media participation in Malaysia. Statistics show that Internet users in Malaysia have an average of four social media accounts. 80% of users have visited social media sites, and of those, 97% have a Facebook account. Users say they spend almost 19 hours a week online, and 80% of online users say they “are hooked” on social media (Malaysia Internet User Survey, 2016). By using the Malaysia Internet User Survey’s 24 million estimated users from 2015, this means that there were 18.7 million people (78% of users, 62% of general population) that owned a Facebook account (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2016). This participation in Facebook approximates that of the United States, in which 66% of the general population are said to own a Facebook account (Statista, 2017).

Given the healthy penetration of Internet usage and participation in social media sites among the general population in Malaysia, there appears to be little room for behavioral interventions that would increase social media participation.

Having laws that protect participants. Among the five select control beliefs, this ranked as the third most predictive of capacity perceived behavioral control. There is no question that the increase in politically oriented citizen journalism led to the dramatic results of both the 2008 and 2013 general elections in Malaysia (Tapsell, 2014). The ruling party lost its two-thirds majority of the parliament in 2008 and lost the popular vote in the 2013 general election, and it appears to some that the ruling party has since begun to apply pressure on individuals and NGOs in an attempt to throttle the influence of citizen journalism. Mention has already been made of specific steps alleged to have been taken by the ruling party to discourage opposition citizen journalism, and there are indications that steps are presently being considered by the government to amend the Communications and Multimedia Act—the governing legislation for all forms of communication—to “punish social media misuse,” and to require registration of blog site owners (“Malaysia | Country report | Freedom on the Net | 2016,” n.d.).

The findings of this dissertation support the notion that online users in Malaysia who consider participating in citizen journalism are somewhat fearful of conflict with governmental authorities, and appear to be interested in either knowing that the country’s laws as they now exist will protect them, or enacting new laws that would do so. Lending support to this concern is the result from analysis of another belief in the RAM model—a behavioral belief identified as an outcome disadvantage: potential conflict with government. Participants identified this specter ($\beta = .12, p < .001$) as the only outcome disadvantage that predicts formation of the experiential

attitude modal variable. Though outside of the modal variable currently being discussed, which is capacity perceived behavioral control, it does bear relevance here as confirmation from another part of the RAM structure that this is a legitimate concern from more than one perspective.

A successful behavioral intervention that addresses this belief would need to ameliorate the concern of participants that they will have legal protection that ensures their capacity to participate in citizen journalism. As with matters of legal consequence in any context, only case law and the record of prior judgments could provide a suggestion as to whether the legal system (“law”) will protect citizen journalists in Malaysia. Given the history of the ruling party’s apparent use of longstanding legal provisions that cite national security in order to quell opposing political voices, it is doubtful that these concerns could be meaningfully addressed through legal means in the near term.

It should be mentioned that there might be other means to provide protection for citizen journalists. Even though the leading belief under present consideration specifically states “having laws that protect participants,” I suggest that the focus of this belief is the protection, not necessarily the laws. So, absent legal protection, there might be other means to provide protection, such as technological capabilities like VPN or data encryption. Protection might also be achievable by having means to provide citizen journalism contributions anonymously.

Whether based in technology or identity removal, there is the possibility that behavioral interventions could be prescribed that would increase protection for citizen journalists beyond the legal system.

Perceived social norms. The modal variable ranked second in accounting for variance in behavioral intention is perceived social norms ($R^2 = .45$). Its injunctive component ($\beta = .42, p < .001$) is more predictive of intention to report than its descriptive component ($\beta = .34, p < .001$). Underlying the leading perceived social norms injunctive component, then, are the eight normative referents identified in the elicitation survey, three of which are significant and demonstrate positive correlation: friends ($\beta = .13, p < .001$), boyfriend/girlfriend ($\beta = .11, p < .01$), and NGOs ($\beta = .10, p < .001$). Of the five remaining normative referents, four are part of the family members construct, and the fifth is police, none of which are significant.

Friends, boyfriend/girlfriend, NGOs. It is helpful to understand the nature of the question asked in the main survey that assesses this normative belief. The question for each of the eight normative referents is a five-value (1-5) Likert scale agreement question that, in the case of friends as the referents, is stated, “My friends think I should definitely/definitely not report online.” This scale runs in the same direction as the Likert agreement question for the dependent variable, perceived social norm—injunctive: “Most people who are important to me approve when I report on line.” This attempts to measure how friends who think the participant should report online correlates to whether people who are important to the participant approve when the participant reports online.

Given that it is the perceived opinions of these non-family normative referents that are shown to be predictive of formation of injunctive perceived social norms, behavioral intervention should target the communication of opinions related to citizen journalism between participants and each of these referent groups, if possible. But there are challenges in doing so, particularly for friends and boyfriend/girlfriend. Designing interventions that would stimulate friends and

boyfriends/girlfriends to discuss their opinions about citizen journalism more freely with one another in order to increase their participation might seem foolhardy. Perhaps future studies can determine how to motivate participants toward greater participation in citizen journalism by tapping into the influence of friends and significant others.

NGOs are a different matter, however. At the end of 2013, there were almost 53,000 NGOs registered in Malaysia (International Center for Not-For-Profit Law, 2017). I wonder whether the NGOs of this large number that are involved in the political sphere understand the level of influence they have as a social referent for citizen journalists in Malaysia; it is notable that the correlation coefficient for NGOs is almost on par with that of friends and boyfriend/girlfriend. A behavioral intervention that might have some success here would be to identify NGOs that are involved in the Malaysian political scene, communicate this research finding, and provide assistance to them in leveraging their influence toward greater participation in citizen journalism. NGOs such as SUARAM (Suaram, n.d.) are focused on related issues such as human rights violations and functioning as a watchdog for government behavior vis-à-vis constitutional freedoms. Perhaps an NGO could even be established specifically for the purpose of encouraging citizen journalism in Malaysia.

I must point out that caution has to be observed by any NGO, existing or new, that actively participates in the politics of Malaysia. NGOs must comply with the requirements of the Societies Act and other similar restrictions or face criminal charges. Whether they comply appears to be at times a highly subjective matter for political officials and the courts to decide, with known occurrences of inconsistent court rulings that inject concerns and confusion (International Center for Not-For-Profit Law, 2017). There are restrictions on political activities

if they are deemed to be incompatible with the security interests of Malaysia, maintenance of public order, and/or morality. There are also restrictions on assembly, and Internet censorship is alleged to be routinely practiced (International Center for Not-For-Profit Law, 2017).

Attitude. The modal variable ranked third (and last) in accounting for variance in behavioral intention is attitude ($R^2 = .44$). The experiential component ($\beta = .47, p < .001$) is measurably stronger in predictability of intention to report than the instrumental component ($\beta = .27, p < .001$). Underlying the leading component experiential attitude, then, are the six behavioral beliefs, three outcome advantages and three outcome disadvantages, as identified by the elicitation survey results. Of these six beliefs, four are significant and predictive of experiential attitude. The three outcome advantages are all predictive: transparency of feelings ($\beta = .27, p < .001$), speed of communication ($\beta = .24, p < .001$), and increase in knowledge ($\beta = .14, p < .001$), but only one of the outcome disadvantages, potential conflict with the government ($\beta = -.12, p < .001$) is significant and predictive of experiential attitude, being negatively associated. I have grouped these four leading beliefs into two groups for purposes of discussing behavioral interventions:

Speed of communication and potential conflict with the government. These two leading behavioral beliefs are quite similar to other leading beliefs that have already been addressed. I regard speed of communication as a technical characteristic of a communications medium, and therefore closely related to the leading control beliefs such as possession of a smartphone and sufficient, reliable Internet access. Even though speed of communication has appeared through elicitation in a different part of the RAM topology (leading behavioral belief—outcome advantage) within the attitude modal variable, interventions suggested for the leading control

beliefs would be applicable to it, and vice versa. As with the leading control beliefs, there does not appear to be room for improvement in the speed of communication, so a behavioral intervention is not suggested here. Likewise, potential conflict with the government mirrors the leading control belief that is addressed earlier, having laws that protect. In both cases, no behavioral interventions are suggested.

Transparency of feeling and increase in knowledge. These two leading beliefs are closely related, as they both speak to participants having confidence that what they discover through their participation in citizen journalism is true. I suggest that one reason the transparency of feelings is the strongest behavioral belief in predicting experiential attitude is a growing need for increased transparency in online reporting to counter what is being perceived as a polluted discourse in citizen journalism's contribution to the political process. Increase in knowledge requires that what is learned is thought to be factual, and that also speaks to notions of transparency.

The general election of 2008 could be considered a high watermark for citizen journalism's influence on the electoral process in Malaysia, if only based upon the admission of the ruling party that they "lost the war, the cyber war" (Abdullah Badawi as quoted by Ahmad et al., 2012, p. 74). Events leading up to the subsequent general election in 2013, however, may have caused a setback in the confidence felt by opposition citizen journalists, notwithstanding continuation of gains as illustrated by their victory in the popular vote. The ruling party indicated that the 2013 election would be Malaysia's first "social media election", and a concerted effort to engage new media in support of the cause resulted in "increased mobilization of political supporters through Facebook and Twitter. What followed was described as a

‘cyberwar’, involving ‘cybertroopers’, fake Twitter accounts, deliberate misinformation and increased paid mobilization of online participants for direct political causes” (Tapsell, 2014, p. 43). Pro-government bloggers gained prominence, and their compensation by the ruling party was said to approximate \$3,100 per month, with larger payments going to bloggers that had celebrity status. Then-prime minister Najib garnered almost 1.2 million Twitter followers, though 53% of them were shown to be inactive (0 tweets, 0 followers, or suspended). The leading block (UMNO) within the ruling party reportedly had a “cybertrooper” staff of 45 full-time workers, 175 part-time workers, and 750 volunteers in a group dedicated to disseminating pro-government messages. Workers were said to make approximately \$1,500 per month to monitor and respond to blogs and social media sites (Tapsell, 2014).

To counter these well-funded and structured measures by the ruling party, the opposition had its own organized efforts at leveraging the Internet and social media, using “professional” contributors to citizen journalism discourse. They were not able, however, to provide as much funding for its cause, and had a financial and image disadvantage to the ruling party (Gomez, 2014).

Accordingly, it seems reasonable to suggest that Malaysian online users have a growing sense that the citizen journalism environment has become polluted by political strategists and paid participants, thereby diluting their sense of the effectiveness of grassroots citizen journalism efforts. To restate part of the definition of citizen journalism used for this research: "Citizen journalism involves active public participation by non-journalists outside of media organizations, who can engage in news-making and news-gathering processes without traditional journalistic routines and norm" (Domingo & Heinonen, 2008, p. 300). The insertion of organized and paid

efforts to shape public opinion online is contradictory to the notion of participation by non-journalists and amateurs. What began as a groundswell of citizen journalism that gave voice to the opposition in the face of perceived corruption and nepotistic policies of the ruling party, and which brought about change in at least two general elections, is potentially compromised in the eyes of Malaysian online users.

If it is true that the citizen journalism discourse is increasingly perceived as polluted in the minds of Malaysian online users, and thus is prompting a heightened interest in transparency, it would seem that knowing that there are initiatives to ensure that citizen journalism has a level playing field would encourage a greater sense of transparency and truth in the citizen journalism discourse. As for interventions that would apply to this behavioral belief, two possibilities come to mind: 1) legislation that would limit the hiring of online social media participants in electoral campaigns, and 2) the rise of watchdog and advocacy groups with related technology that fact-check advertisements and commentary on social media platforms.

Although an idyllic, perhaps impractical suggestion, a limit on paid participation in politically-related social media at election time would be akin to limits on campaign contributions, a concept that has been debated in free democratic nations for decades, and which has been implemented in varying degrees in several countries, notwithstanding loopholes and subtleties. Opinions vary as to whether these types of limits are effective, or are truly enforceable and complied with. In the United Kingdom, no political party is able to spend more than 30 million dollars (USD) on political campaigns in the year prior to an election (Waldman, 2014). Implementation of this intervention would not only require legislation to pass through the Malaysian parliament—a legislative environment that has admittedly become more favorable to

the opposition with each of the three most recent general elections, but would also require establishment of processes and agencies that would ensure compliance with the funding restrictions. This is clearly an unlikely scenario.

Concerning the second potential intervention, watchdog groups and technology that fact-check comments, news and advertisements on social media sites, the rise of such groups and tools is gaining momentum globally, especially in the aftermath of the 2016 presidential election in the United States amidst speculation of inappropriate social media influence by political interests in foreign countries. While conventional media advertising has been subject to scrutiny of such watchdog groups for several election cycles in the U.S., there is nothing in place that focuses on truth in advertising and discourse on social media. “With online ads, ‘you can go as narrow as you want, as false as you want and there is no accountability,’ said Craig Aaron, president and CEO of Free Press, a public interest media and technology advocacy group” (Angwin & Larson, 2017). There is at least one free press interest that has developed an Internet browser plug-in that will automatically monitor political advertisements on social media by collecting political advertisements based on algorithms and display them to the user for evaluation upon log-in (Angwin & Larson, 2017). Facebook itself has recently taken several initiatives to “reduce false news and hoaxes on Facebook” (Shukla & Lyons, 2017), and shut down approximately 470 falsified accounts that were used to purchase over one hundred thousand dollars’ worth of advertising related to controversial issues that they deemed to be divisive. The accounts and related purchases were made by a foreign company known for using “troll” accounts to provide commentary and posts on social media and online news sites (Shane & Goel, 2017).

Setting aside the unlikelihood of funding restrictions for paid political participants, if there were to be an increase in bona fide watchdog groups and related technologies that fact-check social media sites for accuracy, it is possible that such an intervention would increase Malaysian online users' belief that reporting online is becoming more transparent and factual, thus potentially increasing the value of their experiential attitude modal variable, which in turn would predict an increase in intention to report.

It should be noted that this type of intervention is not typical for the RAM approach, which focuses on reshaping beliefs through individualistic methods (Ajzen et al., 2012). However, though outwardly appearing to be a social or external intervention, one could argue that participants' individual beliefs would increase from their knowing that there is an increasing level of accountability in online political discourse through external measures.

Figure 6 below summarizes the ten selected leading modal salient beliefs and their potential for behavioral interventions.



Suggestion for behavioral intervention	Leading belief	Leading modal variable / component	
Penetration already at high levels but large numbers still without Internet access and smartphone. Research might identify causes that can be remedied with targeted interventions	Possession of smartphone	Perceived behavioral control – capacity	Intention to report
	Sufficient Internet access		
	Reliable Internet		
	Participation in social media		
Doubtful impact of legal protections given history of press freedoms; protection via technology (i.e., VPN, encryption) and anonymous participation is possible	Having laws that protect citizen journalists		
			
Requires additional study	Friends, boy/girlfriend	Perceived social norms – injunctive	
Communicate findings to existing NGOs, possibly create new NGO to promote citizen journalism	NGOs		
			
Funding limits/ watchdogs and website monitoring	Transparency	Attitude – experiential	
	Increase in knowledge		
Penetration already at high levels but large numbers still without Internet access and smartphone. Research might identify causes that can be remedied with targeted interventions	Speed of communication		

Figure 6. Summary of Behavioral Intervention Suggestions. This figure maps suggestions for behavioral interventions to the leading RAM beliefs and their linkage with modal variables.

Entertainment-education, a one-size-fits-many intervention. Given that participation in citizen journalism is available to the public at large, it is easy to imagine interventions that would use mass media to influence the beliefs that underlie intention to participate. Mass media methods include conventional messaging approaches such as advertisements (electronic and print), signs, posters, and fliers distributed in public places, to name just a few. And, given that citizen journalism participation is not limited to any demographic—age, gender, level of income or education, etc.—demographic targeting of the messaging is not a consideration. The use of mass media as a behavioral intervention makes sense, especially given the opportunities for distribution that abound via the Internet. There are an estimated 3.2 billion Internet users in the world, and 8.8 billion YouTube videos are viewed every day (World Bank Development Impact Evaluation (DIME), 2017).

The use of media for behavioral intervention has been attempted in a variety of ways over the last half-century, with mixed results. According to the World Bank, millions of dollars are spent every year producing behavioral modification campaigns, only some of which have been effective. Those that have been ineffective are “unconvincing, lack inspiring narratives, and are communicated through outmoded and uninteresting outlets such as billboards and leaflets.” Reviews have shown these efforts have minimal effect, if any, on long-term behavioral modification (World Bank Development Impact Evaluation (DIME), 2017). There is, however, a growing body of research that shows that the use of one particular form of media, entertainment, can be effective in bringing about behavioral change.

Simplemente Maria. What began as a television soap opera in South America in the late 1960s (a “telenovela”) became the seedbed for a growing worldwide interest in the use of

entertainment media to stimulate behavioral change. *Simplemente Maria* has been considered the most popular television program of all time in South and Central America, spanning the borders of multiple Spanish-speaking countries, having a narrative and plotline centered in Peru (Singhal, Obregon, & Rogers, 1995).

A classic Cinderella story, the central character, Maria, is an immigrant from the mountains of Peru to the big city, where she is hired by a wealthy family as domestic help. During the daytime, she works as a maid and housekeeper, but in the evenings she takes adult literacy classes. She is also taught how to sew by the mother of her literacy instructor, and eventually becomes a highly successful fashion designer, eventually moving to Paris where her success continues.

The telenovela highlights the plight of rural migrants to urban areas, and focused on education-development themes such as the liberation of migrant women, more just treatment of domestic maids, and the value of hard work. The show was so popular that, when the final episode was broadcast in Mexico, it garnered higher television viewing ratings than the World Cup Soccer Championship Games (Singhal et al., 1995). Going far beyond popularity, ratings, and significant increase in advertising revenues, there were unintended effects that were claimed to validate the effectiveness of entertainment media for purposes of behavioral modification: There was a rise in interest in sewing, and since Maria was trained on a Singer sewing machine, Singer made \$20 million from sales of their brand of sewing machine. Enrollment in literacy classes swelled, and national governments established programs to promote adult literacy programs, especially for housemaids. Homeowners demonstrated increased sensitivity and

concern for their domestic workers and many employers began to call their domestic workers “Simplemente Maria” (Singhal et al., 1995).

The findings related to *Simplemente Maria* are primarily anecdotal, being conducted through interviews many years later (no research records were kept). Subsequent research of producer Miguel Sabido’s efforts in telenovelas throughout Latin America appeared to validate the effectiveness of behavioral intervention in that context. Over a span of seven years, Sabido produced one entertainment-education telenovela per year with the intent to educate viewers about development topics. It is claimed that all productions met premeditated educational-development objectives, and that the telenovelas’ messages were directly related to behavioral change: *Ven Conmigo (Come With Me)* at the time of its broadcast in 1975-76 was claimed to encourage 840,000 adults to enroll in adult literacy classes, and *Acompdfiame (Come Along With Me)* took credit for 562,464 Mexicans visiting government family planning clinics. The registration of over 2,500 Mexican women as voluntary family planning workers was also credited to Sabido’s productions (Nariman, 1993; Sabido, 1981).

Slow adoption elsewhere. Based on these claims, it was initially thought that entertainment-education would spread rapidly to other world regions, but the uptake has been slow. Reticence has persisted in most other countries due initially to a lack of academic research regarding the behavioral modification claims coming from the Latin American broadcasts. Details on how to design and produce entertainment programming (soap operas in particular) have not been readily available, policymakers have not been convinced they can produce effective programming, and there is doubt that the typically high production costs for

entertainment-education can be offset by advertisers who might think it risky to associate their products with programming dealing with sensitive issues (Singhal, Rogers, & Brown, 1993).

There is, however, theoretical support for the use of entertainment-education media for behavioral intervention. It is becoming increasingly apparent that the use of prosocial messages embedded in television programs that are regarded as merely a form of entertainment actually influences viewers' awareness and attitudes toward the issues those programs cover (Moyer-Gusé, 2008). Researchers have speculated that

the insertion of socially responsible messages in entertainment media is a potentially powerful way of affecting [social] behavior because the 'selling' of a particular behavior isn't as obvious as it may be in a public service advertisement, and thus, audiences may not be as likely to resist the message. (Brown, Steele, & Walsh-Childers, 2002, p. 459)

As it concerns health behaviors, exposure to health-related messaging embedded in entertainment has resulted in action and behavioral change, even when the exposure is of short duration. In a 2001 study utilizing a survey of 3,719 participants, over half of viewers of primetime and daytime drama programming reported that they had learned something about a disease or how to prevent it from watching episodes their viewing activity. At least 64% of respondents that were minority viewers indicated they had changed health behavior after hearing about a disease or health issue on a TV show (Freimuth & Quinn, 2004).

Among the theories applied are two that are most prominent in terms of dealing with overcoming resistance to behavioral change: Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) (Bandura, 2001) and the Extended Elaboration Likelihood Model (E-ELM) (Slater & Rouner, 2002). SCT espouses four sub-processes that govern educational learning, a key component of which is

motivation, a factor that is influenced by self-efficacy and outcome expectancies. Self-efficacy (akin to behavioral control) and outcome expectancies are part of two of the three modal variable concepts contained in the RAM.

The increased attention to theoretical analysis has led to greater consideration by world bodies of the development of entertainment-education. The World Bank launched its Entertainment-Education program in May of 2016 to “explore the use of entertainment-education and, more generally, how mass media behavior-change campaigns can be designed to change perceptions of social norms, achieve adoption, and sustain healthier behavior” (World Bank Development Impact Evaluation (DIME), 2017). The Bank is applying research methodology to evaluate the impact of efforts such as the use of a Nollywood (Nigeria) movie to promote financial savings among entrepreneurs, the impacts of the MTV Shuga drama on risky sexual behavior and gender-based violence, the use of social-norms campaigns to encourage families to enroll girls in primary school, the relative effectiveness of radio spots versus printed narratives to promote adoption of solar lanterns in rural areas, and the impacts of including entertainment education in in-school life skills programs to reduce bullying and to prevent drug and alcohol consumption among young people. So far, nothing has emerged that would be perceived as encouraging participation in citizen journalism.

As a suggestion for behavioral modification in Malaysia, why not consider a video series that could be viewed either by broadcast or online streaming that portrays outcome advantages and disadvantages of reporting online (attitude)? This would feature a storyline involving the influence of friends, boyfriends, girlfriends, and NGOs on intention to report (perceived social norms), and that portrays a rural Malaysian whose online reporting is enabled by possession of a

new smartphone, subsequently being discovered by peers and political activists from the “big city” of Kuala Lumpur (perceived behavioral control).

If that seems far-fetched, consider the recent major television network launch in the United States of a new weekly television series, called “*Wisdom Of The Crowd*.” Based on an Israeli television show of the same name, the script is inspired by the notion that “a million minds are better than one,” and it portrays a wildly successful tech entrepreneur who sets aside financial gain to fund a cutting-edge crowd-sourcing hub that he hopes will solve the crime of his own daughter’s murder in San Francisco. Portrayed as an unintended result within the program’s script is the impact it has on crime-solving at large in San Francisco (Petski & Petski, 2017). The pilot show garnered the biggest audience for a scripted series on that particular Sunday night (Otterson & Otterson, 2017).

Producing such an entertainment-education series in Malaysia would undoubtedly have high costs. If financial challenges could be overcome by advertising revenues and possible funding by political parties or NGOs, it seems plausible that an effective script and cast could be assembled to bring about an entertainment-education behavioral intervention that encourages greater participation in citizen journalism by addressing several of the selected leading beliefs emerging from the study.

Limitations and Future Research

The application of the RAM to citizen journalism in this project has resulted in a few remarkable discoveries. The very high explanation of variance (67%) when the collective of modal variables and their respective components are regressed against intention to report is a special result. The uniqueness of this result is seen when contrasted with results from a 2001

meta-analysis of 185 independent tests on prediction of behavioral intent which showed that, across a variety of behaviors, the average variance explained using the same variable construct was 39% (Armitage & Conner, 2001). There are opportunities for further scrutiny, however.

Control for other variables. The demographic profiles of research participants were not considered in the analysis of the survey data, as the project focuses on application of the RAM, which does not directly integrate demographics in its analytical approach to behavioral prediction:

It is generally recognized, of course, that variations in demographic characteristics do not cause differences in behavior. Demographic variables segment the population along certain dimensions and reveal differences in behavior among different subgroups, but by themselves they cannot explain these differences. (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010, p. 233)

At a fundamental level, however, certain demographic features are related to the formation of behavioral, normative, and control beliefs of participants, and understanding how those externalities relate to the model might help design behavioral interventions that would serve to improve intention to report.

The theoretical tradition of the RAM maintains that the influence of demographics is captured within the expressions of the three modal variables and, if correct, controlling for demographic variables would not yield qualitatively different results. That said, multiple hierarchical regression analyses would offer a test of the theory by controlling for demographics such as age, level of education, gender, employment status, voting frequency, opinions about the most recent election, frequency of consuming online news, and frequency of reporting views online. Controlling for religious type and devotion would be particularly interesting and relevant

in the heterogeneous religious environment of Malaysia. All of these variables have been captured in the main survey, have the potential to focus on a deeper set of analytical results, and are available for future analysis as an opportunity to confirm the efficacy of the RAM.

Potential for path analysis and structural equation modeling (SEM). I have acknowledged that the statistical method used here to apply the RAM to citizen journalism in Malaysia occurs somewhat narrowly in the exclusive use of multiple regression analysis, even if there is an agreed justification for the approach. This is ostensibly the first exclusive application of the RAM approach to the media and communications field and to citizen journalism in particular, and the stated objectives of this initial research are believed to be served by a broad, high-level statistical view of variables and their interrelationships. What has been uncovered only by multiple regression analysis provides a rich opportunity for further analysis with more selective focus and in much greater depth.

The RAM approach is ideal for path analysis and SEM, given its hierarchical multi-path structure. To illustrate, the modal variable of attitude that underlies intention to report is itself a bifurcated value, comprising both instrumental and experiential dimensions. Underlying those two attitudinal components is a set of variables that comprise behavioral beliefs, containing three outcome advantages and three outcome disadvantages, six values in all. To summarize this layout, six belief variables are linked to two attitudinal variables, which are then linked to intention to report (Figure 7). Accordingly, there are numerous pathways that could be analyzed, an ideal application for path analysis or SEM.

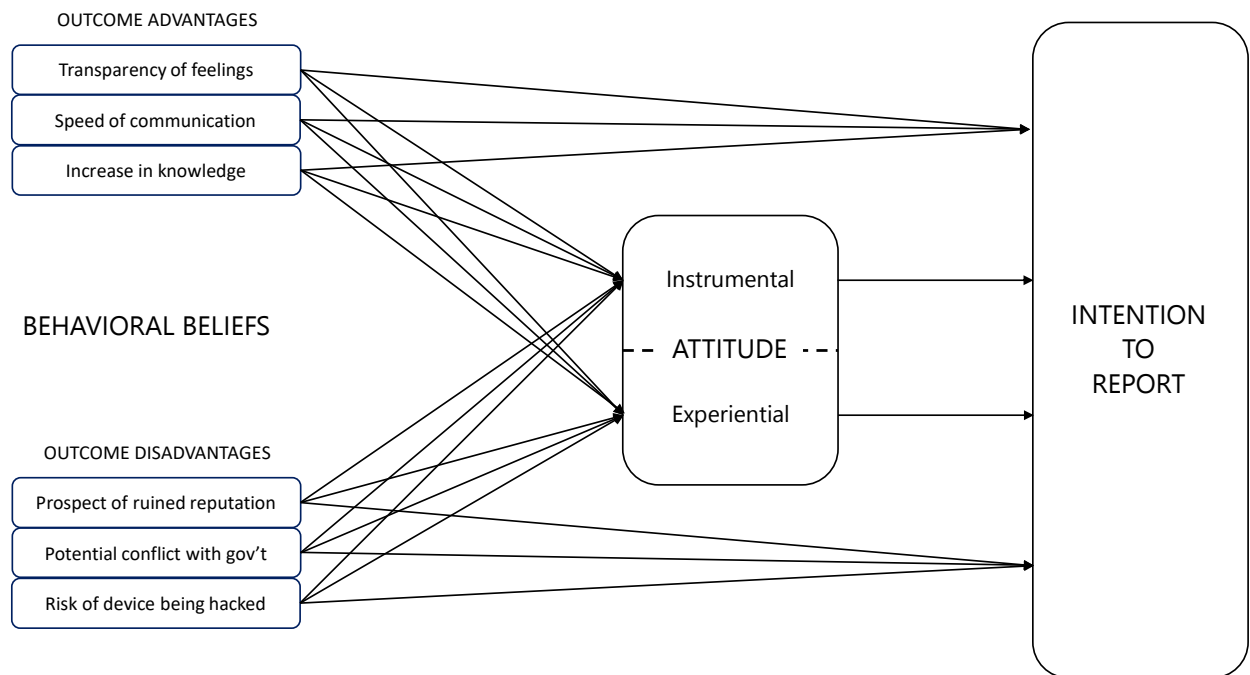


Figure 7. Multiple Paths in an Isolated Case of RAM Variables. This figure illustrates the multiple paths of analysis between and among intention to report, attitude and behavioral belief variables within the RAM structure, leading to use of path analysis and SEM approaches.

Using such methods might well provide a clearer analysis of these associations. For example, the strong association with the capacity dimension of perceived behavioral control is not manifest in the association of variables that underlie capacity. Perceived behavioral control explains 53% of variance in intention to report and is the strongest predicting modal variable (Figure 2), yet the eight salient modal control belief variables (sufficient Internet access, possess smartphone, etc.), when taken together, only explain 18% of the variance in the capacity dimension of perceived behavioral control (Figure 5). Path analysis/SEM would have the potential to bring to the fore a truer understanding of relationships between and among variables.

English survey questions in the Malaysian context. Any language spoken throughout the world is not identical in all locations, due to nuances of dialect and vernacular that develop

over time. It has been said, though attribution is uncertain, that the English and the Americans are two peoples separated by a common language. Such might be the case between the English spoken in America and that spoken in Malaysia. The questions for the surveys were developed in American English and offered to Malaysian online users ($N = 2,020$) via the Qualtrics online survey platform. No steps were taken to confirm the intent of the questions based on Malaysian understanding and use of English, which could have been done using professional linguists from Malaysia.

For example, the survey question that measures the capacity dimension of perceived behavioral control through use of a Likert scale response is, “I am very confident in my ability to report online.” The phrase “my ability” could mean different things, depending on context. The phrase could refer to one’s personal skills in using a smartphone, navigating a social media platform, and/or having persuasive command of the language. Alternatively, it could mean to the survey participant that there are sufficient technical resources and Internet access to enable them to report online. It should be noted that the research intent of the survey question was to capture the latter meaning related to technical resources and access, but there clearly is a possibility of conflation of meanings in the question’s current wording. Future studies should carefully examine the constructs of English survey questions for the Malaysian context through professional linguistic assistance, if at all possible.

Effectiveness of behavioral interventions. The RAM was borne out of a need to explain and predict human behavior in order to prescribe interventions that would alter the course of destructive behaviors (Fishbein, 2008; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, 1977, 2008, 2010; Fishbein & Cappella, 2006). Key to successful implementation of the RAM approach is the

design of such interventions based on empirical analysis, as well as the measurement of the effectiveness of those interventions over time. This project's use of the RAM ends with only the suggestion of behavioral interventions that would increase participation in citizen journalism, and in that, falls short of the full RAM methodology. Future studies should include the final step of the RAM approach, which is to implement and then measure the effectiveness of prescribed behavioral interventions on a longitudinal basis.

Several other aspects of the analysis here warrant further attention in a future study. For example, the high explanation of variance for perceived behavioral control and intention to report ($R^2 = .62$) is far from the explanation of variance between the underlying control beliefs ($R^2 = .18$ for capacity and $R^2 = .14$ for autonomy). It is possible that other factors comprise perceived behavioral controls that were not captured in the survey data, even though control beliefs were identified by the survey participants themselves in the elicitation phase.

Generalizability constraints in the RAM approach. A consideration that might make for different results in future studies related to the topic of this dissertation is whether there are changes to any of the four components that are specific to the RAM's foundational design for this study. As was mentioned at the outset of the dissertation, the RAM approach requires that the behavior under examination be precisely defined by four characteristics: the action performed, the target, the context, and the time (Table 1). If any of these four were to be different, it's possible that beliefs would change and their impact on modal variables would be different, resulting in different outcomes.

As a reminder, this study precisely defines the behavior being studied as "reporting online personal observations of government policies and elected officials." The narrowness of

focus on government policies and elected officials restricts the findings of this study to that type of reporting. This means that the results are not generalizable to reporting on other types of reporting, such as business or technology news, even though they might be similar. Similarly, if the context were to be different, perhaps Egypt or Turkey, or the target were to change to Twitter users only (for example), the beliefs that are formed by background factors (Figure 1) unique to those countries and targets are likely to differ, resulting in discoveries different than those found in this Malaysia study.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The RAM is demonstrated to offer an effective theoretical basis for analyzing behavioral intention related to citizen journalism participation by online users in Malaysia, with notable correlations between intention to report and multiple underlying variables. The modal variables of attitude, perceived social norms, and perceived behavioral control are all significant and noteworthy in their explanation of variance in intention to report (67%). Using the analysis as a basis for prescribing behavioral interventions that might improve intention to report has resulted in a variety of suggestions.

Out of the ten leading beliefs selected through ranking by predictability, several behavioral interventions are suggested which include communicating findings of study to NGOs showing their influence on citizen journalists, creating an NGO for the purpose of promoting citizen journalism, legislation that would limit funding for hiring of social media contributors in political campaigns, and the emergence of watchdog groups and technology to validate online political discourse. Another intervention—entertainment education, is suggested as a broad approach that could impact almost all of the leading beliefs. Additional behavioral interventions could arise from research into means of increasing the Internet penetration and use of smartphones, and the consideration of non-legal means to provide protection of citizen journalists.

Future studies of citizen journalism that use the RAM will hopefully combine a greater granularity in focus with more sophisticated statistical analysis methods, and will thus be able to

prescribe and measure the efficacy of behavioral interventions, further proving the RAM's effectiveness as a theory-based approach that is discipline- and context-agnostic.

The prospects for using the RAM to increase participation in citizen journalism in Malaysia are real and promising. This study has captured survey data from over 2,000 Malaysian online users and has attempted to understand the reasons behind whether and to what extent they intend to participate in citizen journalism, with the end in mind that their participation could possibly increase through behavioral interventions. The study has put forth a strong theory-based analysis that explains and predicts reasons for intention to participate in citizen journalism, and a limited number of behavioral interventions have been suggested as a means to stimulate growth in citizen journalism. If there were to be such growth, it would likely continue the erosion of electoral authoritarianism and bring about neutralization of the traditional news and information gatekeeping role of the ruling party that has long characterized the country's form of government since independence from Great Britain in 1957.

As mentioned at the beginning of this dissertation, much of what we know about citizen journalism has been interpreted through the lens of the democratic Western world, and different parts of the world perceive citizen journalism differently (Rodriguez, Clemencia, 2014; Wall, 2015). Notions of what citizenship means in Malaysia are being impacted by the increase in citizen journalism activity there, giving rise to the potential for Malaysians to embrace a new identity of citizenship (Khiabany & Sreberny, 2009; Moyo, 2014). This study is the first of its kind in a country that appears to be on its way to a form of democracy that not only tolerates but embraces press freedoms. This is especially important as the traditional news and information

gatekeeping role in Malaysia continues what appears to be a migration from the institution of the ruling party to online citizen journalists.

APPENDIX A

ELICITATION SURVEY

Please take a few minutes to tell us what you think about using an online method (computer or personal communications device) to report your observations about your local and national elected officials, government and its policies.

For now, we are only thinking about matters related to your elected officials, government and its policies, and are not thinking about other popular items that are discussed online. For example, economics, business, international affairs, sports, crime, entertainment, technology, weather, visual and performing arts, literature, medical, scientific, and technological matters are outside of the scope of this survey.

There are no right or wrong answers, so please list the thoughts that come immediately to mind. You should write each thought on a separate line.



Q1 What do you see as the five leading advantages of using online means to report your observations about your country's elected officials, government and policies?

- ☐ 1. _____
- ☐ 2. _____
- ☐ 3. _____
- ☐ 4. _____
- ☐ 5. _____



Q2 What do you see as the five leading disadvantages of using online means to report your observations about your country's elected officials, government and policies?

- ☐ 1. _____
- ☐ 2. _____
- ☐ 3. _____
- ☐ 4. _____
- ☐ 5. _____



Q3 What other things come to mind when you think about using online means to report your observations about your country's elected officials, government and policies?

- ☐ 1. _____
- ☐ 2. _____
- ☐ 3. _____
- ☐ 4. _____
- ☐ 5. _____

Concerning using online means to report your observations about your country's elected officials, government and policies, there might be individuals or groups who would think you should or should not perform this behavior.



Q4 Please list the individuals or groups that are important to you (by relation, not by name) who would approve or think you should report your observations about these matters online.

- ☐ 1. _____
- ☐ 2. _____
- ☐ 3. _____
- ☐ 4. _____
- ☐ 5. _____



Q5 Please list the individuals or groups that are important to you (by relation, not by name) who would disapprove or think you should not report your observations about these matters online.

- ☐ 1. _____
- ☐ 2. _____
- ☐ 3. _____
- ☐ 4. _____
- ☐ 5. _____

Sometimes, when we are not sure whether to do a certain thing, we look to others to see what they are doing.



Q6 Please list the individuals or groups that are important to you (by relation, not by name) who, after a major event involving elected officials, the government and its policies, have chosen to report their observations online.

- ☐ 1. _____
- ☐ 2. _____
- ☐ 3. _____
- ☐ 4. _____
- ☐ 5. _____



Q7 Please list the individuals or groups that are important to you (by relation, not by name) who, after a major event involving elected officials, the government and its policies, have chosen to not report their observations online.

- ☐ 1. _____
- ☐ 2. _____
- ☐ 3. _____
- ☐ 4. _____
- ☐ 5. _____



Q8 Please list any factors or circumstances that would make it easy or would enable you to report your observations about your country's elected officials, government and policies online.

- ☐ 1. _____
- ☐ 2. _____
- ☐ 3. _____
- ☐ 4. _____
- ☐ 5. _____



Q9 Please list any factors or circumstances that would make it difficult or would prevent you from reporting your observations about your country's elected officials, government and policies online.

- ☐ 1. _____
- ☐ 2. _____
- ☐ 3. _____
- ☐ 4. _____
- ☐ 5. _____

Please tell us a little bit more about yourself ...



Q10 What is your year of birth? (Example: 1990)

Q11 What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- ☐ Less than secondary level completion
- ☐ Completed secondary
- ☐ Some college, no degree
- ☐ College degree
- ☐ Some graduate level, no degree
- ☐ Graduate degree
- ☐ Doctoral degree

Q12 What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female



Q13 Which statement best describes your current employment status?

- ☐ Working (paid employee)
 - ☐ Working (self-employed)
 - ☐ Not working (temporary layoff from a job)
 - ☐ Not working (looking for work)
 - ☐ Not working (retired)
 - ☐ Not working (disabled)
 - ☐ Not working (other, please describe briefly below)
-

Q14 Would you describe yourself as

- ☐ Extremely non-religious
- ☐ Somewhat non-religious
- ☐ Neither religious nor non-religious
- ☐ Somewhat religious
- ☐ Extremely religious
- ☐ Can't choose

Q15 How would you describe yourself in religious or spiritual terms?

- ☐ I am a Muslim
- ☐ I am a Buddhist
- ☐ I am a Hindu
- ☐ I am a Christian
- ☐ I am a Judaist
- ☐ I am an Atheist
- ☐ I am something other than the above choices
- ☐ Can't choose

Q16 Did you vote in the last election?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

APPENDIX B

MAIN SURVEY

This survey is designed to measure your views about reporting your observations online of your government, its policies and elected officials. Please answer the following questions as best as you can, knowing that there are no right or wrong answers. All answers are good answers provided they are truthful, even though at times they may feel like your best guess. Also, please remember that the topic of this survey is the reporting observations of government policies and elected officials, even though some questions may not specifically make mention of it.

I believe that when I report my observations online about my government's policies and elected officials, it is

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ineffective:effective	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
satisfying:not satisfying	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Most people who are important to me approve when I report my observations online about my government's policies and elected officials.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Agree:Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Most people that are like me report their observations online about the government's policies and elected officials.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Likely:Unlikely	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I am very confident in my ability to report my observations of government policies and elected officials online.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
True:False	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Whether or not I report my observations online about government policies and elected officials is totally up to me.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Agree:Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In the future, I intend to report my observations online about government policies and elected officials.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Likely:Unlikely	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In the past six months, I have reported my observations online about government policies and elected officials.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
False:True	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

My reporting of my observations online makes it possible to be transparent with my true feelings about my government's policies and elected officials.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Accurate:Inaccurate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

My reporting of my observations online is the fastest way to communicate my feelings about government policies and elected officials to others.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Agree:Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I participate in reporting my observations online because it increases my knowledge of my government's policies and elected officials.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Agree:Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

When I report my observations online, my personal reputation will be ruined because I might be misunderstood.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Likely:Unlikely	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

There is a chance of having a conflict with governmental authorities when I report my observations online.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strong chance: No chance at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I am afraid that when I report my observations online about government policies and elected officials, my computer or mobile device might be intentionally hacked.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very afraid: Not afraid at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

It is important to be able to report one's observations online about government policies and elected officials, no matter the consequence.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Agree:Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

This is how the following people or groups that are important to me think about me reporting my observations online about government policies and elected officials:

	Definitely report	Maybe report	Definitely not report	N/A
Friends think I should	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
NGOs think I should	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Father thinks I should	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mother thinks I should	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Husband/Wife thinks I should	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Boyfriend/Girlfriend thinks I should	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Siblings think I should	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Police think I should	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

When it comes to reporting my observations of government policies and elected officials, I want to do what my friends think I should do.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ n/a

When it comes to reporting my observations of government policies and elected officials, I want to do what NGOs think I should do.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ n/a

When it comes to reporting my observations of government policies and elected officials, I want to do what my father thinks I should do.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ n/a

When it comes to reporting my observations of government policies and elected officials, I want to do what my mother thinks I should do.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ n/a

When it comes to reporting my observations of government policies and elected officials, I want to do what my husband/wife thinks I should do.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ n/a

When it comes to reporting my observations of government policies and elected officials, I want to do what my boyfriend/girlfriend thinks I should do.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ n/a

When it comes to reporting my observations of government policies and elected officials, I want to do what my siblings thinks I should do.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ n/a

When it comes to reporting my observations of government policies and elected officials, I want to do what the police think I should do.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ n/a

Most of my friends report their observations online about government policies and elected officials.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ n/a

Most NGOs report their observations online about government policies and elected officials.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ n/a

My father reports his observations online about government policies and elected officials.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ n/a

My mother reports her observations online about government policies and elected officials.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ n/a

My husband/wife reports his/her observations online about government policies and elected officials.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ n/a

My boyfriend/girlfriend reports his/her observations online about government policies and elected officials.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ n/a

My siblings report their observations online about government policies and elected officials.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ n/a

The police report their observations online about government policies and elected officials.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ n/a

When it comes to reporting your observations online about government policies and elected officials, how much do you want to be like your friends?

- ☐ Very much
- ☐ Some
- ☐ Very little
- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ n/a

When it comes to reporting your observations online about government policies and elected officials, how much do you want to be like NGOs?

- ☐ A lot
- ☐ Some
- ☐ Very Little
- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ n/a

When it comes to reporting your observations online about government policies and elected officials, how much do you want to be like your father?

- ☐ A lot
- ☐ Some
- ☐ Very Little
- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ n/a

When it comes to reporting your observations online about government policies and elected officials, how much do you want to be like your mother?

- ☐ A lot
- ☐ Some
- ☐ Very Little
- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ n/a

When it comes to reporting your observations online about government policies and elected officials, how much do you want to be like your husband/wife?

- ☐ A lot
- ☐ Some
- ☐ Very Little
- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ n/a

When it comes to reporting your observations online about government policies and elected officials, how much do you want to be like your boyfriend/girlfriend?

- ☐ A lot
- ☐ Some
- ☐ Very Little
- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ n/a

When it comes to reporting your observations online about government policies and elected officials, how much do you want to be like your siblings?

- ☐ A lot
- ☐ Some
- ☐ Very Little
- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ n/a

When it comes to reporting your observations online about government policies and elected officials, how much do you want to be like the police?

- ☐ A lot
- ☐ Some
- ☐ Very Little
- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ n/a

I have sufficient Internet access to report my observations online about government policies and elected officials.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree somewhat
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Disagree somewhat
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Can't choose

I have the personal devices I need (computer, smartphone or other mobile device) to report my observations online about government policies and elected officials.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree somewhat
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Disagree somewhat
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Can't choose

My participation in a social media platform (facebook, twitter, instagram, etc.) enables me to report my observations about government policies and elected officials.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree somewhat
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Disagree somewhat
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Can't choose

There are a sufficient number of web portals that I can access that enable me to report my observations about government policies and elected officials.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree somewhat
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Disagree somewhat
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Can't choose

There are government controls and threats that prevent me from reporting my observations about government policies and elected officials.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree somewhat
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Disagree somewhat
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Can't choose

My country's laws make it safe for me to report my observations about government policies and elected officials.`

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree somewhat
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Disagree somewhat
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Can't choose

Online access is too expensive for me to report my observations about government policies and elected officials as much as I would like.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree somewhat
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Disagree somewhat
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Can't choose

Internet and mobile service in my country is sufficiently reliable for me to report my observations about government policies and elected officials as much as I want.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree somewhat
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Disagree somewhat
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Can't choose

Having affordable and reliable Internet access is important for me to report my observations about government policies and elected officials.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree somewhat
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Disagree somewhat
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Can't choose

Having my own device (computer, smartphone or other mobile device) is important for me to report my observations about government policies and elected officials.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree somewhat
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Disagree somewhat
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Can't choose

Using social media platforms (facebook, twitter, instagram, etc.) is important for me to report my observations about government policies and elected officials.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree somewhat
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Disagree somewhat
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Can't choose

It is important that there are reliable and secure web portals for me to use to report my observations about government policies and elected officials.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree somewhat
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Disagree somewhat
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Can't choose

It is not worth it to report my observations online about government policies and elected officials if it causes me to be in conflict with the government.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree somewhat
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Disagree somewhat
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Can't choose

I would report more of my observations online about government policies and elected officials if there were laws that would protect me more.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree somewhat
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Disagree somewhat
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Can't choose

Less expensive online access would cause me to report my observations more.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree somewhat
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Disagree somewhat
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Can't choose

Internet and mobile service in my country is sufficiently reliable for me to report my observations about government policies and elected officials as much as I want.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree somewhat
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Disagree somewhat
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Can't choose

Please tell us a little bit more about yourself ...

What is your year of birth? (Example: 1990)

What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- ☐ Completed secondary
- ☐ Some college, no degree
- ☐ College degree
- ☐ Some graduate level, no degree
- ☐ Graduate degree
- ☐ Doctoral degree

What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

Which statement best describes your current employment status?

- ☐ Working (paid employee)
- ☐ Working (self-employed)
- ☐ Not working (temporary layoff from a job)
- ☐ Not working (looking for work)
- ☐ Not working (retired)
- ☐ Not working (disabled)
- ☐ Not working (other, please describe briefly below) _____

Did you vote in the last election?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

In the last national election, how fair was the media coverage of candidates and political parties in their campaigns?

- ☐ Quite fair
- ☐ Somewhat fair
- ☐ Somewhat unfair
- ☐ Quite unfair
- ☐ Can't Choose

On average, how often do you use your computer or smartphone to get political news and information?

- ☐ Several times a day
- ☐ Several times a week
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ Less than once a week
- ☐ Can't choose

Generally speaking, how often have you contacted the media to express your views?

- ☐ Have done it frequently
- ☐ Have done it occasionally
- ☐ Have wanted to but have never done it
- ☐ Have never done it

Generally speaking, how often have you expressed political views using your computer or smartphone?

- ☐ Have done it frequently
- ☐ Have done it occasionally
- ☐ Have wanted to but have never done it
- ☐ Have never done it

Would you describe yourself as

- ☐ Very non-religious
- ☐ Somewhat non-religious
- ☐ Neither religious nor non-religious
- ☐ Somewhat religious
- ☐ Very religious

How would you describe yourself in religious or spiritual terms?

- ☐ I am a Muslim
- ☐ I am a Buddhist
- ☐ I am a Hindu
- ☐ I am a Christian
- ☐ I am a Judaist
- ☐ I am an Atheist
- ☐ I am something other than the above choices
- ☐ Can't choose

During the last year, did you make some personal sacrifice or adjustment to lifestyle as an expression of religious observance?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Del Guynes was born in Kuala Lumpur in the Federation of Malaya, to Americans working under foreign missionary visas with the non-Malay people. Three months after his birth, the Federation of Malaya gained independence from Great Britain, and a few years afterward, the nation of Malaysia was established. At the age of seven, his family moved to the United States, where he attended schools in the Dallas, Texas area, and in Springfield, Missouri. He obtained a B.A. in Communications at Evangel University (College) in 1978, and continued on to graduate studies at the University of North Texas (North Texas State University) and the University of Colorado at Boulder, where he earned an M.S. in Telecommunications in 1982. Subsequently, Del had a lengthy career as an engineering and business executive in the media and communications industry, assisting in the development of competitive telecommunications initiatives abroad, fostered by the global deregulation of the telecommunications industry. After becoming an adjunct faculty member of the Communication Arts department at Southwestern Assemblies of God University (SAGU) in Waxahachie, Texas in 2009, Del established a Texas-based IT consulting company, providing a wide range of IT program management services and resources to the media and communications industry vertical. In 2012, he was appointed dean of the newly created College of Music and Communications Arts at SAGU, where he has continued since beginning the UT Dallas ATEC PhD program in January of 2012. For over 35 years, Del has been an ordained minister with the Assemblies of God movement, and throughout his career has served bi-vocationally in music and pastoral leadership at churches and related higher education institutions in Colorado and Texas.

CURRICULUM VITAE

DEL GUYNES

SUMMARY OF CAREER ACTIVITIES

More than 30 years in a diverse blend of high technology business and higher education initiatives, specializing in the media and communications fields. A multi-disciplinary generalist that has driven results through the efforts of blended teams for development of new business, business transformation, and implementation of higher education programs and structures. A strong interdisciplinary academic foundation underlies broad experience in management of cross-functional and cross-cultural teams. Extensive international development activities and travel have created a rich network of professionals and academics abroad.

CAREER HISTORY

- Southwestern Assemblies of God University – Waxahachie, Texas / Adjunct Faculty, Dean of College of Music and Communication Arts 2009-Current
Began as interim department chairperson for Communication Arts, teaching communications and technology courses. Appointed dean of new College of Music and Communication Arts in 2012
- Crystal Eye Technologies, LLC – Red Oak, Texas / Founder, Sr. Partner 2010-Current
Founded IT professional services company specializing in OSS/BSS consulting for the Media and Communications industry vertical
- Xavient Systems - Simi Valley, California / Vice President, Client Engagement 2009-2010
Led the company's client engagement practice at T-Mobile of Bellevue, Washington
- Charter Communications - St. Louis, Missouri / Vice President, IT 2006-2009
Served as part of a transformation initiative reporting to the CIO; led the management team for major OSS/BSS initiative
- Bureau of Communications and Computer Services (BCCS) – Illinois / Program Manager 2004-2006
Part of the leadership team for "The IT and Telecommunications Rationalization Program" - the reorganization of state IT resources and infrastructure targeting opportunities for cost reduction
- Jones International – Englewood, Colorado - Multiple roles spanning 18 years 1987-2004
Jones Knowledge / Vice President, International Business Development: Responsible for the development of a global channel strategy for localized sales and recruitment of online university students, with emphasis on Asia and the Middle East
Jones Cyber Solutions / Vice President, International Business Development: Responsible for the development of product strategy, strategic alliances and penetration of global markets
Jones International / Integration Officer, Office of the CEO: Provided integration support for activities of Jones companies as new business opportunities crossed company boundaries
Jones Intercable / Program Manager, Telecommunications Services: Program Manager for the launch of switched residential telephone service and internet access in the Washington, D.C. market, and development of competitive telecommunications services in all Jones serving areas

EDUCATION

M.S. Telecommunications, University of Colorado, 1982

B.A. Communications, Evangel College, 1978