Public Service Social Media Priming Towards Gaining the Trust of Youths

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ABSTRACT

Social media has vastly proliferated and become a vital platform for political parties, businesses and consumers to disseminate their organisation's interests and agenda. The public service of Malaysia too has benefited from social media as a strategic communication medium in disseminating government policies and building a relationship with main stakeholders namely the public it represents. Youths as dynamic assets to communities, leverage on social media as a powerful communication tool to transmit their ideas and opinions to a large audience. However, despite the engagement and communication between the government and youth in social media, the government failed to garner the trust of youths due to the difference of communication wavelengths and understanding which results in disinterest and disinvolvement of youths towards government's communication content. Youths are forced to look for new ways to obtain information and shy away

from engaging in government social media. Therefore, this study aims to justify that the adoption of social media priming helps the public service of Malaysia to improve its social media communication towards gaining the trust of youths. The study analyses and identifies the use of keywords, symbolic representations and the types of content being communicated by the public service that indicates the approach used in gaining youths' trust. This study applies a thematic qualitative textual analysis that can be best used to interpret and analyse the unique and latent meaning embedded within the texts posted by KBSMalaysia Facebook page, a public service representative sample. The finding shows that words that are the most direct, simple and attractive can have the most profound impact. The study also points out that the public service is seen as lagging in their usage of input seeking, where it does not focus greatly on two-way communication engagement. Therefore, this study provides a better understanding of conducting the right social media priming approach through the use of meaningful words. With genuine content and connections in social media, the public service can achieve its desired policy objectives to be better communicated with the public in a valuable way and have a long-term approach and relationship which will increase the public's trust not only in the aspect of accountability and credibility of the public service but also to the service delivery rendered by them.

Keywords: Social Media Priming, Symbolic Representations, Public Service, Types of Communication Content, Trust, Youths

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Due to the advancement of technology, particularly communication technology, social media has vastly proliferated and morphed into a vital platform for political parties, businesses and consumers to disseminate their organisation's interests and agenda. Thousands of social networking sites have been developed as online platforms and are being used by people to establish social networks or social relations with other people for connections and engagements. The outgrowth of social media has forever changed human communication and interaction, permitting people to communicate using smart mobile devices anytime, anywhere.

The public service of Malaysia too has benefited from social media, as it is a strategic communication medium in disseminating government policies and initiatives as well as engaging the public at large. Social media allows the public service, especially government officials to build a relationship with the main stakeholders namely the public it represents [1]. It provides a common interface between the government and the public to communicate with the function of building relationships and gaining the public's trust towards them. Additionally, engaging the public in the government's decision-making process through the exchange of information is a pivotal value and priority in Malaysia's democratic society. Hence, it helps in improving the transparency of decision makers particularly the government and its policies [2].

As the backbone to the government, the public service serves the purpose of breaking down the national vision into tangible outcomes through the public service transformation policies. As such, the government must always put the public's well-being and comfort as a priority. The focus must be on the people and inclusivity with the increased participation of the public to uphold the public service's credibility. In addition, during the 16th Civil Service Premier Gathering (MAPPA), the civil servants are advised to prepare a conducive environment to back the growth of the digital economy and enhance the service delivery system for the business community and society. This can be done by improving their competency and capabilities so that the public service can act as service facilitators in enhancing connectivity in accordance with the adoption of digital economy. This includes the adoption of digital technology such as social media, Internet of Things (IoT), big data analytics and cloud computing so as to improve the public service delivery system, which will form the civil servants' actual working environment in the future.

Therefore, the advancement in ICT holds the promise of a better positioning for the public service to engage with the public through a variety of communication mechanisms including social media [3]. In order to encourage and engage relationships and increase trust between the public service and the public, particularly the youth, the public service needs to

gauge the level of digital readiness by utilising social media approaches at its best to emphasise on speed and agility. Himelboim, Lariscy, Tinkham and Sweetser [4] argued that social media provides the possibility to fulfil the need for social interaction involving information and opinion sharing. Thus, social media has become the main platform for online interactive engagement and governments are grabbing this opportunity to boost public trust levels. In relation to the previous argument, Nadzir, Othman and Kamaruddin [5] asserted that there is also a suggestion on the need for the government and the public service to understand better the impacts they can achieve through social media to prioritise targets and establish effective policies. Hence, both the government and the public service needs to adapt to, learn from and shape the ways on how social media transforms public value creation [6].

1.1   Research Background

The use of social media in the public service has become a significant trend in engaging public participation and trust, as it provides deep insights into the needs of the public, thus helping the public service to move closer to them. The priorities and content dissemination in social media is driven according to public needs rather than just informing on the government's events and services. According to a report by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as well as previous studies in this field of study, it is found that social media has a significant impact on government and public service, and suggested that it should be used strategically to reach the public more effectively [6] [7].

Therefore, with the current characteristics of openness, participation, engagement and interactive communication offered by social media, improvements to the structure of the public sphere are ever-available [8] all of which associates to relationship building. Thus, the excellent use of social media by the public service in the public sphere has improved on two-way and multiple-way communication between the interactivity of the public service and the public, all of which enhances youth engagement and trust. Furthermore, as the use of social media has empowered the public, governments have been entrusted and compelled to listen and engage

with them in an extraordinary degree [9]. According to Karakiza [10], communicating with the public is not just about delivering a message but also encompasses getting feedback, complaints and criticism from the audience hence addressing and resolving arising issues in a specific time frame, closing the gap of bureaucracy between both the government and the public.

The successful adoption of social media has made this possible where the public is no longer in a passive role by which through connectivity, their voices are being heard and they have a fair share in contributing ideas and visions in the government's decision-making. In addition to this statement, the successful adoption of public service social media depends on public trust and their acceptance of using and connecting to it [11]. Furthermore, Hao, Zheng and Zeng [12] concluded that trust is a key concern that develops public willingness to participate and interact with the government and use its services. Khan, Zairah and Rahim [13] pointed out that access to the right information includes accessibility and reliability of information, and unreliable information could affect the user's perception of trust towards the service. Thus, the importance of building and gaining public trust is the key factor towards the success of communication in public service. Efficient public service delivery and precise information delivered through social media that meets the expectations of youth will create the perception of a positive image and form trust towards the public service that in consequence, will embed in their values and reflect their norms.

In the vast proliferation of ICT as an effective communication medium, the public, particularly the youth, prefer to communicate and interact with individuals, communities, businesses and government agencies through interactive online engagement tools such as social media. Social media is deemed to be the most significant communication tool for younger generations, providing multiple platforms to transmit their ideas and opinions to a broad audience. It is easy to see why youths utilise social media to the extent they do as social media provides quick and mobile access to engaging and exciting content. Youth engagement in organisations

and communities with the abundance of social media is considered less significant in comparison to the attractive and vibrant content within the world of social media. Through social media and engagement online, youths are able to not only obtain information but also be part of the government's decision-making process to ensure inclusive youth empowerment to which their ideas and opinions are heard. Youths are a dynamic asset to their communities, providing open-minded and fresh ideas regarding government policies, and political, cultural and social issues.

Albeit the successful approach of the public service social media depends on the public trust and their acceptance of using and connecting to it, there is little deliberation and study done to examine the Malaysian public service's social media approach. Academic investigation on how the Malaysian public service could gain the trust of youths and influence the youths willingness to participate and interact with the government and therefore, use its services, is lacking [13]. Even with the increased attention and consideration in using social media done by governments across the world as well as despite the acknowledgement of successful implementation of government social media initiatives towards public trust, its acceptance among the public including youth is still a serious issue and has not been sufficiently addressed in previous studies [13]. Though several studies have been conducted to investigate the relationship of trust between people and the government, the result of this trust relationship as cited by Khan et al. [13] has been inconsistent to which some indicate positive results in some instances and negative in others.

1.2 Problem Statement

One of the most significant challenges in public service communication is providing meaningful content that stirs the users' reaction. Such content is about creating meaningful pieces of information, stories and insights with the purpose of attracting and retaining an audience. The government has lined up and delivered better services through multiple programs and initiatives to improve the quality of life of its public. The announcement of these services is transmitted to various communication platforms mainly via social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter to ensure take-

ups that will benefit the public. However, the public service of Malaysia is continuously addressing the issue of fewer take-ups on government programs and services amongst youths due to the deficiency in providing a comprehensive and strategic social media communication plan to reach out its audience. The question to focus on is, has the public service employed a comprehensive strategic communication plan for government policies and information to the public at large? Or, is the dissemination of information targeted towards the wrong audience?

In addition, Nadzir et al. [5] revealed that most government agencies post information related to public awareness on their Facebook page while most public comments are targeted to the posts regarding promotions. DePaula and Dincelli [14] also highlighted how users are more engaged by the effective and symbolic nature of social media content rather than the more serious and emotionally unbiassed government information. Nevertheless, most social media users are challenging the status quo of how the Malaysian public service is effectively using social media as a powerful engagement tool by perceiving any dissemination of information with regards to the Malaysian public service is instead rhetorical, too formal and more favourable towards expressing their political views and influence.

However, despite the engagement and communication between the government and youth on social media, it lacks youths' trust due to the difference of communication wavelength and understanding that is the disparity of conversation between government social media administrators and their audience, particularly the youths. The youths' interest and participation towards government's communication content is lacking due to the different understanding and the misinterpretation of what and how the information is being communicated. For instance, according to Penney [15], social media users such as Facebook users are responding to fun and private issues rather than formal government information thus influencing the users' poor participation and disregard towards government social media content. Likewise, Sandoval-Almazan and Gil-Garcia [16] claimed that popular social media technologies such as Facebook are

systematically driven for emotional responses, and it is unlikely for deliberated or rationalised interactions and discussions in most government social media content. Seemingly, youths are forced to look for new ways to obtain and evaluate credible information from the government and shy away from engaging the government through public service social media pages.

Thus, a relevant way to improve social media communication between the public service and youths to increase their trust through interactions on the public service's social media pages is via conducting the right priming approach. Social media priming refers to the effects of social media communication content on public judgments or behaviour related to the content that is processed. Through social media priming, social media communication content, with the use of right and meaningful words accompanying it, will influence and increase youths' trust, judgment and behaviour towards the content they have processed. Therefore, to accomplish these goals, this study aims to justify that the adoption of social media priming helps the public service of Malaysia to improve its social media communication towards gaining the trust of youths. This study attempts to fill the gap and contribute to the field's academic literature by presenting a thematic qualitative textual analysis of the public service social media content in Facebook through a representative sample of a public service agency that will study the keywords embedded within texts in public service social media posts that help to gain youths' trust, to analyse the symbolic representations used in public service social media posts embedded within texts that help to gain youths' trust and to identify the types of content being communicated by the public service towards gaining youths' trust.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Social Media and the Public Service

Social media are Internet-based applications designed to facilitate and expedite social interaction and relations as well as for using, developing and diffusing information through a digital society. According to [17], social media builds on many of the same concepts and technologies of Web 2.0 and serves as the creation and exchange point of user-generated content. The emerging trends of social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest and many others that carry the concept of the real-time web, allow users to contribute and share contents therein getting instant feedback and responses from other users. The arrival of such social networking sites is changing the traditional landscape of public engagement due to the disruption in information and communication patterns caused by those sites [18]. Based on O'Reilly's argument [18], it is presumed that social media has become the vital online platform for organisations, political parties, businesses and consumers to disseminate their organisation's interest and agenda. Therefore, the government and the public service too have been utilising and leveraging on social media as one of the strategic communication mediums by embarking on greater and broader engagement with various stakeholders in disseminating government interests, policies and initiatives. Government officials seek to leverage on social media platforms to improve services and communication with the public particularly to the parts of the population that beforehand are difficult to reach and underrepresented [19]. Research on the use of social media by the government argues that these communication platforms would provide the government with the opportunities to fulfil primary democratic goals of transparency, citizen participation and engagement [20] [21].

As a platform that is progressively utilised, social media enables both the government and the public service to seek for more views, have greater engagement and at the same time deliver messages to the public with the aim of gaining public opinion, participation and trust. It is therefore seen as a new and promising ground for the government and the public service to engage youths who are regarded as being at the forefront of the social

media uptake [22]. Thus, the public service mainly takes the advantage and opportunity to engage youths via social media to gain their trust. However, many organisations including the public service struggles to successfully use social media in garnering youths' trust [23] and based on this assumption, it can be assumed that the struggle is due to the diversity of purposes, wants and needs where not every youth using social media uses it in the same way and for the same purpose.

Therefore, while the public service has recognised social media as an essential information source and outlet, the researcher is compelled to study and explore that more knowledge is needed on how the public service can use social media as part of their strategic communication method of engaging youths' trust based on related and past studies.

2.1.1 The Role of Social Media in The Public Service

The public service uses social media as a communication medium and to plan activities as well as to seek new ideas for development and feedback on existing government activities [24]. According to Nadzir et. al [5], social media promotes a positive perception of government through the dissemination of information by providing a platform for citizen and government interaction. In addition to the statement, social media that functions as a computer-mediated communication tool makes the government more accessible, available, and relevant to the users, while offering the users more opportunities to become actively engaged in government processes [25], promote transparency, and transfer best practices among government agencies [26]. In another study of social media-based public engagement, Lee and Kwak [27] emphasised that the public sector has been advised to use social media strategically to improve public service delivery and boost citizen engagement. This emphasis is again supported by Nadzir et al. [5], in which with the Web 2.0 technologies, the government and the public service has the advantage of creating awareness on e-government services, disseminating information and communicating with citizens to understand their needs, thus improving citizen engagement. Based on these studies, it is assumed that not only do these engagement strategies come in the form of soliciting user-created

content through welcoming citizens' feedback and contribution but as a means for the government and the public service to give an immediate response to those suggestions and take necessary actions.

Social media becomes the primary channel of online interactive participation and governments are grabbing this opportunity to boost citizen engagement be it in political or social affairs. As Benkler [28] suggested, social media allows citizens to present ideas and visions without being subject to the corrupting influence of money and politics. The suggestion can also be about the influence of media owners or media stakeholders. Therefore, with the current characteristics of openness, participation, engagement, interactive communication and connectivity offered by social media, it contributes to improving the structure of the public sphere [8] which is associated with relationship building. Thus, the good use of social media by government agencies in the public sphere has improved the two-way and multiple-way communication between the interactivity of the government and the public that enhances citizen engagement and trust. The study believes that in no small extent, positive use of social media networking sites by the public service would integrate better communication functions that will advance the public service betterment and enhance public value.

Besides allowing the public service to communicate the government's information, boost the services, and gather feedback and ideas about government operations with the public, Bertot et al. [7] argued that the nature and adoption of social media by huge sections of the population indicate that social media could also be used for distributing government operations' critical information. To a large extent, it contributes to crisis communication where positive uses of popular social networking sites support government officials to communicate with the public during times of crises in the area of crisis management communication [29]. The dissemination of the government's critical information, however, needs to be undertaken and monitored with caution and guided by a regulating principle of social media ethics and guidelines to guarantee positive uses of this technology. In Malaysia, the government through its central agency

had published the Usage Policy for Social Media Ethics in Public Service to ensure the positive use of social media between government agencies and its officials. It also establishes the flow and dissemination of information that is transparent and prudent, subsequently portraying a positive image of the public sector [2]. Seemingly, this usage policy upholds ethical social media usage within the public service and serves as a basis to monitor social media content and its impact.

2.1.2 *Risks and Challenges to The Public Service Use of Social Media*

The government use of social media to communicate with the public and citizens can be less effective when derived from a malfunctioning network and communication strategy. With regards to gatekeeping, [30] have asserted that without the gatekeeping of traditional media, the effective use of social media requires of governments and organisations to not only control the content but to be alert at all times in the control of timely delivery of content and its recipient. As good as it seems, governments and organisations are facing challenges and risks in building and maintaining their reputations through ineffective use of social media wherein negative or irrelevant information can reach the audience and potentially create negative perceptions within minutes. Himelboim et al. [4] also found that while advances of communication technology particularly social media open the platform to public communication, building relationship and trust would be very challenging without the non-verbal cues of face-to-face communication.

Therefore, relevant studies suggest that since online communication and deliberation can be not thoroughly checked and hence is subject to misinterpretation by the sender and receiver, in this case referring to the government and the audience whereas unlike face-to-face communication, misinformation or misunderstanding of information can quickly be confronted and corrected by both parties. In another study by [31], they assert that although governments in most countries have leveraged the use of social media, the apparatuses of developing regulating policies, strategies and protocols of effective use and social media ethics developed by countries have remained unpopular or randomly enforced in usage, thus

it has created a gap between citizens who use them for diverse activities compared to the government that only slowly responded to their potential benefit. Thus, according to the previous assertion, the act of responding according to certain interest practised by some governments would contribute to the government's ineffective use of social media to which providing immediate responses and feedback to the public are highly crucial.

Though the Malaysian public are highly connected online with about 89.3% visiting social networking sites, with a majority of 97.3% of them owning a Facebook account [32], they are exposed to potential threats and ambiguities intended to deceive, mislead or harm them directly or indirectly by creating and disseminating fake news and sophisticated disinformation on public service policies and initiatives. Furthermore, there is a growing concern about how government social media information is often being misunderstood and misinterpreted by the public either due to misleading information such as deception, rumours, propaganda circulated by bad actors, or only by the incapability of government social media administrators in bridging the language gap between themselves and the users, mainly the youth. Indeed, when there is communication, there is a possibility of misinterpretation. The primary concern is how the meaning of the public service social media posts is generated and conveyed to the understanding of its target audience in such a way to thus avoid them from being misled and reduce misinterpreted information from simply and swiftly being circulated to millions of users who possibly can make mistaken judgments and pursue inconsiderable actions. Therefore, this study presumes that just as the public service has a responsibility to collect and disseminate information to the public, it must also guarantee that information is presented to the public in its entirety, maintaining transparency and at the same time maintaining certain confidentialities towards sensitive information that may change the content or interpretation. It is also the responsibility of the public service to ensure that the information received by the public is accurate and reliable to maintain public trust.

2.2 *Youth and Social Media*

The different forms of sociality in social media offers various significant functions to its users including communication, entertainment, building and maintaining relationships as well as serving as a platform for knowledge sharing and information. These functions are treasured by youths as avid social media users as reported in different studies that are carried out domestically and internationally [33] [34] [35]. As the forefront of social media users, youths also leverage on new opportunities offered by social media for active interaction and social participation through online engagement, and online sharing practices through simple social features. Amongst the important and more straightforward functions in social networking sites are Facebook, with features of group memberships and cause functions, and Twitter with its retweet function and the like button in Facebook and YouTube that supports 'micro-participation' [36] which refers to each other's participation and sharing in a convenient and efficient manner.

In a study done by the Pew Research Center, 88% of youth aged 18-29 in the United States use at least one social media site where 81% subscribed to Facebook, 64% to Instagram, 40% have Twitter accounts, and 29% adopts LinkedIn. In a relating study, it also indicates that 74% of American youth use Facebook daily [37]. Similarly, Malaysia's internet usage rose from 71.1% in 2015 to 90.1% in 2017, comprising of the age of 15 years and above with 86.3% of mainstream internet activity namely social networking sites [38]. Mun, Li, and Fernandez [39] pointed out that the main factor as to why the Malaysian youths use social media is due to its function as peer-to-peer communication to which social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter offer an ideal opportunity for youth to communicate, socialise and connect with their peers. In addition, it is to be noted that not only social media allows youth to share their comments and opinions, it also allows them to share their work or content created like videos, images and many other materials. Thus, social media fulfils the youths' interests and needs for relationship development and provide them with unique

opportunities to become avid media participants. The significant utilisation of social media amongst youths also refers to information seeking and educational purposes [40]. In a study to explore Malaysian university students' usage of social media, Hamat, Embi and Hassan [40] asserted that social media's communicative and collaborative function permits students to interact, work together and learn from one another. Hence, it serves a social learning purpose. Presumably, based on all studies mentioned above, it is notable that youth use social media for real-time communication and with 24/7 availability, want immediate feedback in an environment where all information disseminated by social media is mostly targeted toward youths and their generation where youths today are used to information finding them, and not the other way around.

2.2.1 The Lack of Youth Acceptance and Interaction in Public Service Social Media

Though social media plays a vital role in public service engagement, youth acceptance is still an issue due to the lack of awareness and participation, and lack of popularity [41]. Mergel [42] pointed out that what is doubtful is how replies to the changing communication demand to use social media in a meaningful, interactive and collaborative manner can be addressed by government organisations. In conjunction to this, there is a constraint in developing trustworthiness and sincerity with one another whereby indications commonly found in face-to-face communication such as facial expressions, body language and reactions are absent within the use of computer-mediated communication such as social media mediums [43]. Therefore, both the public service and the public are facing challenges to seek and establish trust. Furthermore, Li and Suh [44] mentioned that even though social media functions through user-generated content which include content creators and content reviewers, the content of information are sometimes viewed with scepticism when referring to its credibility and believability. This type of information suffers from a lack of professional gatekeepers or social media administrators to monitor content.

Thus, youths are forced to look for new ways to obtain and evaluate credible information from the government and shy away from engaging

the government through the public service social media pages. Technically, the ineffective approach of computer-mediated communication via social networks can defeat the purpose of having effective public communication strategies such as gaining the trust of the public with meaningful narratives and expressive content that can attract emotional attention compared to just visual attention.

2.3 *Gaining Youths' Trust Through the Public Service Social Media*

The public service through its service delivery system plays a crucial role in ensuring that the public's diversified needs and aspirations are met. The successful adoption of social media has made this possible where the public is no longer in a passive role by which through connectivity, their voices are being heard and they have a fair share in contributing ideas and visions in the government's decision-making process. In this regard, the successful adoption of public service social media depends on public trust and their acceptance of using and connecting to it. Thus, the importance of building and gaining public trust is the key factor to the success of communication in the public service.

Also, by engaging the public through social media, the public service may engage a greater audience and command credibility with its public upon the trust that is established through the engagement between the public service and the public [45]. Therefore, there is a logical order for increasing social media-based public engagement where Reddick, Takeoka and Ojo [46] suggested a framework for government's double loop learning to enhance the public service quality through the use of social media platforms. As such, from the social media engagement and gradual participation online, Charalabidis, Loukis, Androutsopoulou, Karkaletsis and Triantafillou [47] explained that governments as in the public service are being offered highly significant capabilities to collect valuable information, knowledge, ideas and opinions from modern society that is well known to have diversified and complex needs and issues. It can be relatively valuable to build trust and gain more acceptance and confidence in their policies. Furthermore, reaching a high level of engagement between the government and the public implies not only that the government publishes information

on social media, but the public must also be encouraged to give feedback on the government's social media posts [8].

On the contrary, Song [48] stated that the public trust could also be jeopardised by social media information and content that are outdated, less participatory or frequented by repeat users to which such matters will create mistrust and disrespect to the public service. In this respect, the above argument is supported by Bonsón and Royo [49] in which they argued that there is no relationship between the level of government activity in social media and public engagement and suggested that even if the government increase its posts in channels such as Facebook and Twitter, it does not necessarily produce higher levels of public engagement. Similarly, Haro-de-Rosario et al. [8] asserted that research has shown that social networks are still mainly used in transmitting messages and Vrana and Zafiropoulos [50] also concluded that social media activity is mainly based on one-way communication with low levels of interactivity.

All these arguments nonetheless come to an agreement that the public service engagement through social media has proven that its openness and accessibilities are beyond expectations where through constant communication and interaction they have established themselves as trusted sources of information to their publics. However, the public service must understand how they can both gain and lose trust through the use of social media channels of communication and through content that is not newsworthy and valuable to the public. Communicating with the public is not just about giving a message but also about getting feedback, complaints and criticism from the audience hence addressing and resolving those issues in a specific time frame, closing the gap of bureaucracy between both the government and the public. Hence, there is always room for improvement based on the types of information or content posted on social media. By providing this type of engagement with openness and greater transparency, the public service builds trust and reassures accountability and credibility enabling the public to access the quality, adequacy and effectiveness of their service delivery.

2.4 Social Media Priming

Numerous studies have shown that priming in mass communication and psychology affects the public's opinion and real-life decisions. It varies from people's perception or people's behaviour and judgement related to a particular stimulus or content material. For instance, the domain of priming includes media priming which refers to how people would resort to acting violently based on the exposure of media violence. It also consists of political news coverage where it starts to use priming effects for moral and ethical issues that evaluate public's perception of political parties or politicians. Therefore, in other domains such as social media, priming is suggested to be one of the most potent factors of positioning and connecting in the web era particularly social media [51].

Though this study finds that there are limited studies and research on social media priming related to gaining youths' trust, there is a random web survey that can provide helpful guidance in analysing social media effects. The study indicates that online social networking might play a crucial role in social connections which influences the formation and maintenance of social capital [52]. Based on the random web survey of college students, the authors suggested that Facebook use is certainly related to life-satisfaction, social trust, civic engagement and political participation that enhance the social capital of individuals. In addition, as social media platforms become the primary platform of the way people interact with one another and with information, social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter are low-cost tools that can promote the formation of social connections by providing a convenient platform that can be accessed anytime [53].

However, Doyle and Lee [54] suggested that social media is rapidly converting the balance of power in the public relations field where before new media, the power mostly relies on the authority of organisations that control a brand or information that is accessible to the public or any given consumer. Today, as the public and consumers have a louder and direct voice, the control of information whether by public relation organisations or any other related entities are no longer relevant because the communication between organisations and the public are centred on social media feeds

such as posts and comments [54]. Furthermore, Chiou and Lee [55] asserted that the popularity of social networking sites provides a supporting means of establishing and maintaining social connections by reaching large audiences as well as increasing the frequency of communication. Therefore, the priming of social media affects message reception and shapes perception and attitudes towards an issue, people, organisations and many other aspects of life. As for the public service, social media priming determines the perception and opinions of the public and social media users at which they could be positively or negatively impacted.

2.5 *Agenda-Setting Theory*

In this study, the researcher adopts the Agenda-Setting Theory and the priming approach, an extension to the theory, which are deemed to be relevant to the study of social media priming. The adoption of this theory depicts how public service through its social media communication can influence and persuade the public's perception and behaviour based on the content they produce.

The Agenda-Setting theory is first established by journalism professors Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw which explains the role of media in shaping public opinion to which the news media mainly wields the ability to tell the audience not "what to think" but "what to think about". The theory represents a back-to-the-basics approach to mass communication research which denotes that the focus of public attention derives from the issues determined by the media's news coverage [56]. It signifies the agenda-setting process and cause-and-effect chain of influence from the media agenda, the public agenda and the policy agenda [57] particularly political discussion in mainstream media such as newspapers and television [58].

Further studies of this theory had later developed two additional concepts, framing and priming, the extension of agenda-setting theory in which McCombs and Shaw [59] referred to the notion that people need media support in shaping political reality. As the media sometimes are unsuccessful in telling the audience on what to think but they are impressively successful in explaining to the audience what to think about

to which they make some issues more salient and audiences pay greater attention to those issues and regard them as more important. However, McCombs [60] used to say that the media does more than that to the extent that they influence what we think. This is referring to the process of framing, a contextual perspective in which news is embedded [57] which suggests the interpretative meaning attributed to events and ideas [58]. Priming, on the other hand, denotes how cognition is shaped through the role of available information. The media coverage to specific issues serves to prime its frequency in the rise of public consciousness [61]. Priming also refers to the activity of the media through a content that is vividly readable and visualised in offering values and standards by which objects of the media attention can be judged.

In the context of social media, agenda-setting through the social sharing of information might help to balance some of the consequences of audience fragmentation and informational selectivity, therefore helping to dispense a particular agenda to the broader public [62]. As social media is increasingly considered to be the primary source for the public service to disseminate information, the architecture of social networking sites such as Facebook is a considerable focus where with the right agenda, any contents and topics that are popular receive more shares and uptakes that reflects the agenda-setting effect.

Therefore, in the study of the public service social media priming approach towards gaining youths' trust, the researcher adopts this theory due to the forms of textual narratives and the latent meanings used by KBSMalaysia Facebook page in setting their agenda that regards to youth engagement and empowerment that is disseminated via its communication content. Therefore, the theory helps the researcher to understand better and to use it as a guideline to complete this study.

2.5.1 Priming Approach

This study adopts the priming approach as it aligns with the character of social media as an independent domain for the public service to interact and communicate with the public, especially the youth. It assesses the message through social media posts embedded within texts that indicate

the approach of gaining youths' trust. In social psychology, priming refers to the technique by which exposure to a particular stimulus influences a specific response to the following stimulus, without guided consciousness or intention [63]. It derives from semantic knowledge that relates to cognitive psychological questions whereby the initial presentation of a set of words enables responses to semantically related words [64]. In agenda-setting, priming has become an exciting approach in evaluating the effects of media agenda-setting on public opinion and government policy [65]. Priming makes certain issues and attributes more salient and more likely to be accessed in forming opinions just as what social media does. Even though there is a hot debate on the applicability of priming theory in the world of social media [66], some evidence exists to suggest that priming theory may still be a powerful tool in the internet-based era [51]. As there is no great number of literature directly studying priming that relates to social media, there are some that can offer guidance in the analysing of the priming approach and its effects. The research performed by Mandel and Johnson [51] found that even a subtle prime like a page background has a significant impact on the participant's choice. However, according to Doyle and Lee [54], priming grasps that the human brain likes to use shortcuts, and it can also imply the same on how they interpret a new piece of information [52].

The method of priming applied to this study is semantic priming where it concerns the study of meaning in language and texts. It relates to the processing of a word that is sometimes affected if earlier words are semantically related to it and Foss [67] asserted that theorists have investigated the model of lexical access, memory organisation and sentence processing through semantic priming. Based on previous studies, the effects of priming in semantic facilitation in lists and sentences are swift in rising time and are reasonably rapid in decay time to which three experiments are conducted, and the result found that semantic relationships within words differ when words occur in sentences rather than lists [67]. Similarly, Weingarten, Mcadams and Hepler [63] stated that the methods of priming include various forms of supraliminal and subliminal presentation of words

linked to a concept of behaviour or goal.
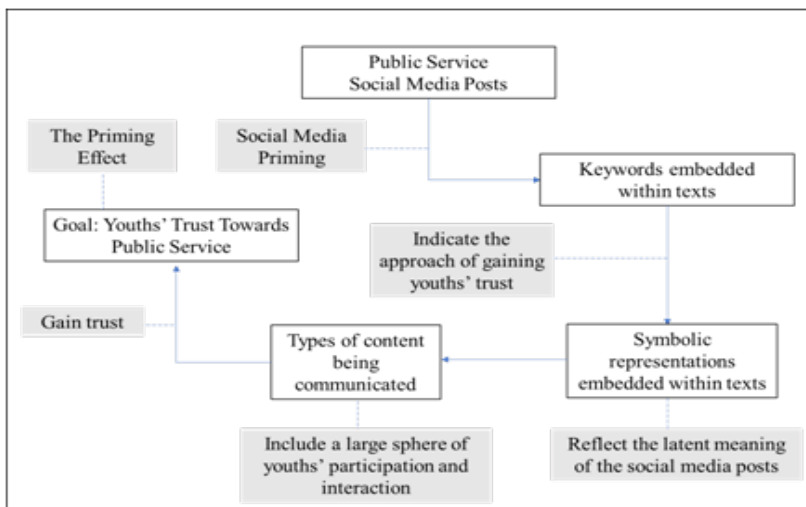
2.6 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework Study on Public Service Social Media Priming Towards Gaining the Trust of Youths

The conceptual framework as illustrated above describes how the public service uses social media as a means to disseminate information and interact with the public particularly the youth. The adoption of social media priming relies on the use of specific keywords embedded within texts in social media posts that indicate the approach of gaining youths' trust. The public service social media posts may adopt a distinctive way of disseminating information that is represented symbolically within the texts. The keywords or texts used in social media posts reflect the latent meaning in a particular post. The researcher aims to identify the types of content being communicated by the public service to gain youths' trust that will include a large sphere of youth participation and interaction, and as a result of the social media priming approach, the goal to gaining youths' trust towards public service is achievable. Therefore, as asserted by some researchers, priming sets a significant effect and goal that will change one's opinion, thoughts and behaviour towards something or someone

[67] [51] [63] by which this study investigates the use of meaningful and symbolic representation of texts in public service social media posts that will gain youths' trust.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study applied a thematic qualitative textual analysis method that can be best used to interpret and analyse the texts of Malaysian public service social media posts to gain youths' trust. The primary data gathering or context units in this study is the unique and latent meanings embedded within texts of KBSMalaysia Facebook posts with matters involving youth engagement and empowerment under the leadership of its minister who is a youth himself, YB Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman. This study has selected KBSMalaysia Facebook page as a public service sample representative for some reasons. First, youth empowerment is an important and debatable subject not only in Malaysia but in every part of the world by which it refers to the process where young people increase the capability, empowerment and representation to make decisions and implement change for the betterment in their lives and other people's lives. Secondly, the idealism and voice of youths are exceptionally powerful that it should be empowered through constant communication with decision makers, namely the government and the public service.

In this relation, youths as avid social media users will speak out on issues about social change. Therefore, since the new government of Pakatan Harapan took over the administration after the 14th General Election in May 2018, the Malaysian youth are looking forward to experiencing more representation in government's policy and its implementation through youth empowerment. Lastly, as the key to youth outreach and with nearly 110,000 people who follow and like KBSMalaysia Facebook page to date, there will be more possibilities of participation from the public and the youths are more likely to engage in the public service-to-youth social media interaction that will help this study to analyse the data and determines codes and categories. Thus, this would be an excellent opportunity for the

researcher to oversee and observes the priming of the social media posts and content via KBSMalaysia Facebook posts.

3.1 Qualitative Textual Analysis

As content analysis provides a flexible method for analysing text data [68] and is useful for a variety of researchers such in the field of literature, history, journalism, psychology, political science, education and so on. It aims at finding the accuracy of the meaning of specific messages. The flexibility, however, is lacking a firm definition and procedure that have potentially limited the application of content analysis. As Hsieh and Shannon [69] asserted, the differentiation of content analysis is generally limited to categorising it as primarily a quantitative versus qualitative research method. Furthermore, the authors also explain that the current applications of content analysis are attributed to three distinctive approaches; conventional, directed and summative, which are used to interpret meaning from the content of text data.

On the other hand, textual analysis refers typically to the analysis on a text where researchers make an educated and sophisticated guess at the meanings and interpretations within texts and language from a particular content such as newspapers, videos, magazines, film and many others. According to McKee [70], textual analysis refers to a methodology that gathers and analyses information in academic research and disciplines by interpreting the meaning of texts by taking into account that there is no such thing as a single and correct interpretation of any text. The reason is that there are large numbers of possible interpretations to which some will be more likely than others in particular circumstances. In media studies, textual analysis is done not to claim that a text is an 'accurate' or 'inaccurate' representation as well as not to claim that it 'reflects reality' as there is no simple, single representation of reality against which a researcher could measure the newspaper story or film, against it in order to judge how 'accurate' a representation is [70]. The text is anything written, visual and spoken that serves as a medium of communication which includes books, newspapers or magazine articles, speeches, official documents, websites, social media posts, musical lyrics or films [71].

McKee [72] also added these representations of meanings in texts derived from the differences that operate at a variety of levels, for instance, differences in value judgements where even in the simplest level, cultures may attribute dissimilar levels of value to things around them that in a way will affect one's understanding and interpretation of the meaning of texts. Kuckartz [73] on the other hand, referred qualitative text analysis as a form of analysis in which an understanding and interpretation of the text serve more roles than in conventional content analysis in which is more limited to the supposed 'manifest content'. Moreover, qualitative text analysis is interested in the text itself, notably based on the text in its entirety to which even after categories have been assigned, the text itself such as the wording of the statements is relevant and also plays an important role in the preparation and presentation of results. Therefore, qualitative text analysis entails that the units of text are to be mapped onto a set of possible meanings by which the correct interpretation will then be inferred from local coherence among adjoining sentences [74]. The text can then be interpreted and understood without additional contextual knowledge, thus, the subject's or author's or speaker's meaning is expressed entirely in the text passage.

3.1.1 *Thematic Qualitative Textual Analysis*

The adoption of thematic qualitative textual analysis which is deemed to be the most relevant in this study is due to the numerous research projects that have been proven and tested and are described in the literature review in various forms, such as a detailed 'example of a content-reductive analysis'. A wide range of methods can be found regarding how to construct the categories with which thematic analysis can be conducted, ranging from creating the categories inductively using the data, to creating the categories deductively based on an underlying theory from the field or the research questions [73]. In most cases, a multi-stage process of categorising and coding is used. Therefore, in the initial stage of the analysis, the researcher understands that data is coded roughly along with important categories, which, for example, have been derived from the general guidelines and description used in data collection. The number of categories in this first

stage is fairly small and manageable to which it does not usually include more than 10 to 20 main categories.

In the next stage, Kuckartz [73] explained that categories are further developed and differentiated based on the data. Therefore, the researcher coded the entire data set again, analysed them based on categories, and prepared them for analysis. The more elaborate category structure assembles a basic structure for the research report. By comparing and filtering sub-groups of interest, the category-based analysis gains sophistication, complexity, and explanatory power. However, modifications have to be made according to themes and sub-themes.

3.2 Research Sampling

In this study, purposive sampling is deemed to be the most suitable method. Purposive sampling uses the researcher's judgment in selecting cases or in deciding cases with a specific purpose in mind in which the selected cases rarely represent the entire population [71]. In addition, Palinkas, Horwitz and Green [75] asserted that purposive sampling involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are exceptionally knowledgeable about or with experience in the interest phenomenon. In regards to this statement, the importance of availability and willingness to participate as well as the ability to communicate experiences and opinions in a clear, expressive and reflective manner. As it is synonymous with qualitative research, researchers apply purposive sampling techniques as a series of strategic choices about who, where and how they do the research which the samples will imply and tie to the objectives set [76]. As the qualitative method is intended to achieve a depth of understanding, purposive sampling uses the judgement of the researcher on which the qualitative method places primary emphasis on saturation by obtaining a comprehensive understanding by continuing the usage of the study sample until no new substantive information is developed [75].

The study uses purposive sampling that is presumed to be appropriate in selecting unique cases of social media posts that are subjective and

written with latent meanings. Therefore, in this study, the posts in the KBS Malaysia Facebook page have been selected as the study sample due to its importance towards providing information on Malaysia's youth engagement and empowerment within the specific time frame given to conduct this study.

3.3 Research Framework

The success of textual analysis depends greatly on the processes of character building and coding. Therefore, to ensure this study is constructed efficiently, the researcher adopted the general process of thematic qualitative textual analysis modelled by [73].

3.3.1 Reading and Interpreting the Text

The pragmatic aim of every content or textual analysis are ultimately to lessen the complexity while complying to a certain research-based perspective. Passages of texts are carefully read and described and classified according to theoretically interesting characteristics. Thus, some characteristics of the original text are disregarded because they are not related to the research questions. A hermeneutic approach is a central principle in the research process of textual analysis where text can only be interpreted as the sum of its parts and the individual parts can only be understood if the researcher follows the whole text [73]. It begins with prior understanding when the text is approached with some pre-defined notions and assumptions about its meaning and then read the text in its entirety. The hermeneutic approach will stimulate and inspire the development of a systematic qualitative textual analysis. According to Margo and Joy [77], researchers could work through the text with an open mind and will gain a better understanding of the text by using hermeneutics approach. Thus, it will likely change some of his or her original assumptions.

In this study, the researcher thoroughly read through the KBSMalaysia Facebook posts which involve youth engagement and empowerment by exploring and interpreting the text data that indicate approaches used in gaining youths' trust.

3.3.2 Category Building

In the qualitative textual analysis, the term 'category' refers to a result of classification of texts in order to form a concept, make comparisons and helps a researcher to decide the classification of a given observation or event. Based on empirical data, categories are developed according to topics the researcher wants to address. Krippendorff [78] argued that text data or textual units are connected. Therefore, the text may be assigned to more than one category. The textual units may overlap since they are assigned to different categories that eventually become correlated due to the similarities in the assignation of the text units.

In the next step of the study, the text data or textual units were categorised accordingly in order to guide the data collection. Thematic categories are developed based on the text data obtained from posts in the KBSMalaysia Facebook page that are related to the determined variables and research questions. The thematic category is an important process in the qualitative media content analysis method. Themes are patterns across the text data that are important to the description of a phenomenon and are associated with a specific research question and later become categories for analysis [79]. Categories are patterns or themes that are directly expressed in the text or are derived from them through analysis [69]. Then, relationships among categories are identified.

This study, therefore, stipulated three (3) primary themes to categorise the unique and latent meanings embedded within the texts of the selected KBSMalaysia Facebook posts and to analyse the data for the coding procedure. The three (3) primary themes are (i) the categories of keywords used by KBSMalaysia that help to gain youths' trust; (ii) the category of symbolic representation embedded within texts that help to gain youth' trust; and (iii) the category of types of content being communicated that help to gain youths' trust. Once all the categories are identified, the text data will be saved. Each thematic category will be grouped and summarised for data analysis. However, during the data collection process, the researcher has developed new categories based on the texts analysed. After that, the summary of each thematic category is reviewed for assessment upon which

the data collection process is completed.

3.3.3 Coding

In content analysis, the primary coding process is to organise extensive quantities of text into lesser content categories. According to Ahmad and Buyong [80], content analysis entails a set of categories that coders will use to assign numeric values of media texts. In the process of coding, researchers using this analysis method will create and develop a coding scheme to assist coders in deciding and analysing the content accordingly. A coding scheme is a translation device that organises data into categories. A coding scheme includes the process and rules of data analysis that are systematic, logical, and scientific. The development of an excellent coding scheme is vital in ensuring the reliability of researches using content analysis.

In this study, the researcher accessed the text data according to the analysis and research guideline. The data is coded by assigning it to evaluative categories in which this step involves the process of reducing the influx of information presented in the selected social media posts. However, during data collection, the researcher has developed new coding based on the texts analysed. Therefore, this study has coded the unique and latent meanings embedded within texts of the selected KBSMalaysia Facebook posts based on the three (3) primary themes mentioned above.

3.4 Data Collection and Data Analysis

The next step is the data collection procedure in which the presentation of data collection involves tables and text. As the data is in textual forms, the researcher collected the data by using a pre-set thematic categories based on existing and modified guidelines and empirical component by DePaula and Dincelli [14] and DePaula, Dincelli, and Harrison [81], that began with deductive coding whereby the coding system is pre-determined, and the texts or keywords that used to gain youths' trust are carefully identified and coded in a modified coding sheet. The data is then developed into several inductive categories wherein new categories are developed directly using the text data. Hence, the researcher has developed the categories in

a deductive-inductive manner. The guidelines and summary of thematic category definitions and pre-determined coding are presented in Table 1 and Table 2 respectively.

This study intended to use only KBSMalaysia Facebook posts that are primarily related to youth engagement and empowerment. The data comprises of words or texts used by KBS that help to gain youths' trust. The data variables are presented in the form of table and texts categorised and extracted into the coding sheet and are presented in a descriptive and narrative form after it is formulated in the table structures. The modified coding sheet was developed according to the study needs, building on the advantage of existing schemes, as well as tailoring it to the researcher's needs. Minor alterations and enhancements for the coding sheet are made to match the data collection obtained for this study.

TABLE 1

Guidelines and Summary of Definition for Symbolic Representations of KBSMalaysia Facebook Posts

Symbolic Representation	Remarks
Favourable Presentation	Positive image, self-presentation, self-referential language of gratitude and compliments that induce attributions of likability.
Political Positioning	Expressing or taking a stand on political issues and values.
Symbolic Act	Expressing greetings, congratulatory messages, condolences and compliment to others.
Marketing and Promotion	Presentation of speech, message and another form of communication with the intention to market and promote initiatives or events.

TABLE 2

Guidelines and Summary of Definition for Types of Content Being Communicated by KBSMalaysia Facebook Posts

Types of Communication Content	Remarks
Information Provision	Content on policy, operations and events.
Input Seeking	Requesting feedback and opinion from social media users.
Image and Branding Presentation	Social affiliations and networking that portray good reputation.
Social Sharing	Informative content that may be of interests to others than its policy.

3.5 Research Reliability and Validity

When conducting research, the analysis developed by the researcher could be ambiguous, diffused and non-observational. A central concern towards evaluating and establishing good measuring aspects in research such as truthfulness, credibility, believability or findings that are influenced through reliability and validity [71]. Reliability refers to the consistency or dependability in which it applies to a measure when similar results are obtained over time and across situations. It is the degree to which measuring aspects are free from error and therefore yield consistent results. According to Neuman [71], validity suggests truthfulness to which it refers to the suitability of an idea that fits into reality.

Therefore, the reliability in this study is measured by using a pilot study first on a thematic qualitative textual analysis with guidelines that initially developed by DePaula and Dincelli [14] and DePaula, Dincelli, and Harrison [81]. This pilot study has extended to replicate the measuring aspects from researchers. Therefore, the researcher has identified the measuring aspects from past literature to be used in this study and will be cited in the next chapter. In addition, the researcher also found new indicators or categories and has compared them to the existing ones. For example, based on the modified coding sheet protocol, the researcher has

coded an initial total of social media posts from the selected sampling and coded the data according to a pre-set thematic category. After that, an additional category is developed directly using the text data. From the pilot study, it can be assumed that the reliability of the study can be improved over time as long as the same definition or category is used or the new definition or category developed may or could be better to distinguish from past studies.

Based on the modified coding sheet protocol developed by the researcher, the reliability of the study is enhanced through the coding process in which the data is coded into a pre-set thematic category in which the researcher referred to it as theme and sub-themes. Then, the researcher did another round of coding process based on the data found in the sample; the sub-themes are further developed and differentiated in accordance with the main themes. Therefore, the researcher analysed the data based on the modified and newly developed sub-themes. Based on the pilot and actual study, the researcher has observed consistency in every construct of the coding process, and the reliability of the study has improved over time as the same guidelines and summary of definition are used. Therefore, this reliability process in this study has been achieved and proven and, the scores achieved by the same researcher but at different points of time can be compared through a standard inter-rater reliability check procedure.

As for validity, the study has applied Cresswell [82] member checking process to validate and determine whether the findings are accurate or not. It is a process in which the researcher asks one or more participants or informants to check the accuracy of the account and to identify if the same result or meaning is obtained. In order to ensure the validity of the coding process, two informants are used to code the data while the researcher examined and tallied the data coded by them. Therefore, in this study, the reliability and validity of the findings are proven to be consistent with the previous findings in which the public service use of social media is found to mostly serve through social media priming via symbolic representations and the types of communication content.

4.0 FINDINGS

A total of 28 KBSMalaysia Facebook posts on youth engagement and empowerment have been reviewed and analysed within 100 days from the day YB Syed Saddiq bin Syed Abdul Rahman minister has sworn in as the 18th Youth and Sports Minister dated July 2nd, 2018 until October 9th, 2018. The total number of posts analysed are 28 and comprised of posts related to youth engagement and empowerment, compiled throughout the 100 days of the data collection period. Initially, the total number of posts selected is 49, but after the coding process, the researcher discovered some posts are not irrelevant to youth engagement and empowerment due to the influx of information on event announcements and activities of stakeholders

4.1 The Keywords Used to Gain Youths' Trust

Throughout the 28 posts, a total of 56 keywords were identified and used by KBSMalaysia Facebook that indicates the approach of gaining youths' trust. The study found that some of the keywords identified were repetitively used in KBSMalaysia Facebook posts. The selection of keywords used by KBSMalaysia shows that they are associated with the notion of gaining youths' trust and the keywords identified were based on the researcher's interpretation and understanding of the meaning of the word 'trust'. In this study, the word 'trust' does not necessarily define as believe, acceptance of truth or any other definition that is limited to the meaning of faith or assurance, but rather referring to the reliability of the public service sector to meet the needs and aspirations of the people. It refers to the way the public service through social media communication would reflect the importance of youth empowerment and aspiration to be part of the government's decision-making process that may gain youth confidence towards the public service sector. Based on the findings, the researcher observed that the pattern of keywords appeared in KBSMalaysia Facebook posts appeared more than once and it shows a strong indication of gaining youths' trust. Therefore, the researcher chose the keywords that are saturated and are repetitively used in the Facebook posts as shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3

Summary of Saturated Keywords Identified in KBSMalaysia Facebook Posts

Keywords	Length of Alphabet	Count
Memperkasakan	13	5
Aspirasi	8	5
Pembangunan	11	4
Hala tuju	8	4
Progresif	9	3

As shown in Table 3, there are five saturated keywords identified; namely "*memperkasakan*", "*aspirasi*", "*pembangunan*", "*hala tuju*" and "*progresif*" that are repetitively used in KBSMalaysia Facebook posts. The study found that the most used keywords are "*memperkasakan*" and "*aspirasi*", with each appeared five times within the 28 posts analysed, followed by the keywords "*pembangunan*", and "*hala tuju*", which appeared four times respectively. The keyword "*progresif*" is the least ued keyword amongst 56 keywords identified.

The keyword "*memperkasakan*" conceives the meaning 'empowerment' that is strongly deemed to reflect the approach of gaining youths' trust. For example, the keyword "*memperkasakan*" was found in a post entitled '*Persatuan Belia Perlukan Rombakan Menyeluruh*', that calls for the need to revamp youth associations in Malaysia in order to vindicate a more neutralised process in managing those associations without having politicians to spearhead it. Therefore, the keyword "*memperkasakan*" refers to the reliance of KBS' pledge and ability to revamp youth associations that strengthen freedom of speech and expression to its members and to maintain youth empowerment in all aspect. The relevant sentence is shown below:

"*KBS bertekad untuk memperkasakan lagi persatuan belia. Dengan pemerkasaan persatuan belia, saya percaya tiada lagi anak muda yang akan diabaikan.*" (Para. 12)

"*KBS bertekad untuk memperkasakan lagi persatuan belia. Dengan pemerkasaan persatuan belia, saya percaya tiada lagi anak muda yang akan diabaikan.*" (Para. 12)

The study also revealed the keyword "*aspirasi*" as one of the most used keywords in KBSMalaysia Facebook posts. The keyword articulates the desire or hope of achieving something, in which within the context of this study, the keyword signifies the aspiration or hopes of the public service sector. It implies KBS' efforts to empower youths' participation and involvement in government's policy-making and the nation's future direction. The keyword "*aspirasi*" was also identified in a post entitled '*Agenda #YouthPower Terus Diperkasakan!*' which calls for youths to participate in academic discourse to inculcate a culture of critical thinking as urged in the ministry's open debate stated in the sentence below:

"*Seiring dengan aspirasi Menteri Belia dan Sukan, YB Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman, beliau mahukan penglibatan anak muda sebagai pengkritik dan pembuat dasar menerusi perbincangan ilmiah yang diadakan seperti program ini.*" (Para. 1)

4.2 The Use of Symbolic Representations in Public Service Social Media

TABLE 4

The Symbolic Representations Used in Public Service Social Media Posts Embedded Within Texts That Help to Gain Youths' Trust (KBSMalaysia Facebook Posts)

	Favourable Position	**Political Positioning**	**Symbolic Act**	**Marketing and Promotion**	**Networking**
Total	15	6	7	9	5
Grand Total	42				

Table 4 presents the use of symbolic representations found in KBSMalaysia Facebook posts throughout the research period. The most frequent symbolic representation used in the selected Facebook posts

belonged to the sphere of *favourable presentation*. It conceives a positive image and good presentation of the ministry especially with the presence of its minister and deputy minister in youth engagement and empowerment programmes. Besides depicting the ministry's continuous effort in upholding the agenda of youth empowerment through its "YouthPower" campaign, the portrayal of both minister and deputy minister's strong characters, principles and stances towards youth agenda have created impression management. It gains likability thus create a positive image of the individuals involved, contributing a good reputation for the ministry. For example, *favourable presentation* also depicts a self-presentation and self-referential language of gratitude and acknowledgement that compliments oneself, but in regards to the way the ministry appreciates youths, the post entitled, '*Belia Aset Terpenting*' was likely to induce attributions of trustworthy and likability amongst social media users as stated in the phrases below:

"Menjadi penentu kepada hala tuju global, golongan belia atau orang muda merupakan aset terpenting sesebuah negara dan kumpulan masyarakat ke arah kemajuan yang lebih berdaya saing dan progresif."
(Para. 1)

The study also developed a new sub-theme termed networking that seemed to be a distinct and significant sub-theme under the symbolic representations. This newly developed sub-theme is conveyed in the sample phrases that reciprocate social media users' collaboration and participation via activities such as organising forums for discussion, gaining feedback or seeking ideas.

4.3 The Types of Content Being Communicated in Public Service Social Media

TABLE 5

The Types of Content Being Communicated in Public Service Social Media Posts Embedded Within Texts That Help to Gain Youths' Trust (KBSMalaysia Facebook Posts)

	Information Provision	Input Seeking	Image and Branding Presentation	Social Sharing	Campaign Movement
Total	14	1	5	21	2
Grand Total	43				

Table 5 presents the types of content being communicated in KBSMalaysia Facebook posts throughout the research timeline. A total of 43 posts resemble the types of content communication have been coded according to the pre-determined sub-themes. The study discovered that the most used type of content being communicated by KBS is *social sharing* which was presented in 21 mentions, followed by *information provision* with a total of 14 mentions. A total of five text phrases represented the *image and branding presentation* were identified. Upon collecting the data, the researcher developed a new sub-theme termed '*campaign movement*' which had no theoretical or previous literature basis but seemed to be one of the important sub-themes for the types of content being communicated by the public service.

As stated in Table 5, *social sharing* topped the list as the most used types of content being communicated in KBSMalaysia Facebook posts which reflects other informative content besides the ministry' policy. This content provides information related to the aspiration and mission of the ministry in empowering youth agenda that would gain the knowledge and trust of its social media users, particularly the youths. *Social sharing* is recognised as the most used types of content due to the variety of

messages given which do not contain information exchange, but additional knowledge on political, economic and social messages in order to gain youths' trust. However, it does not include formal information such as the ministry's operation and policies.

For example, in a post titled '*Belia Aset Terpenting Negara*', the post implies the characteristic of *social sharing* where KBS deputy minister points out important messages such as the importance of having local communities to partake positive perception towards youths. He conveys the message while speaking at the Malaysia-South Korea International Youth Exchange Programme and mentions that youths are the government's strategic partners in steering the nation in the right direction. The relevant phrases are presented below:

"*Hadir di majlis penutup dan makan malam program ini, Timbalan Menteri Belia dan Sukan, YB Steven Sim menekankan bahawa masyarakat kini perlu mengatur persepsi yang positif terhadap golongan anak muda serta mengakui bahawa mereka adalah sebenarnya 'rakan strategik' dalam menetukan hala tuju sesebuah negara.*" (Para. 2)

The study also developed a new sub-theme termed campaign movement and the result shows that it is the fourth most used types of content being communicated in KBSMalaysia Facebook page with a total number of two mentions. The term conceives a primary means for engaging youth and it acts as an awareness tool and to rally youth support and participation through targeted and concise social media messaging. For this study, campaign initiative such as the #YouthPower movement creates youth participatory effort in order to champion the youth empowerment agenda.

5.0 DISCUSSION

5.1 *The Keywords Used by Public Service Social Media to Gain*
Youths' Trust

Based on the researcher's interpretation and understanding of the meaning of the word 'trust', the keywords identified are presumed to be associated with the approach of gaining the youths' trust. The word 'trust' in this context refers to the public service reliability in meeting the aspirations and the needs of the people, in which it refers to the way the public service, through social media communication, could gain the youths' confidence in upholding youth empowerment and aspirations. In addition, to fit the background and requirement of study, the meaning of the word 'trust' is interpreted based on the sample texts or phrases obtained from KBSMalaysia Facebook page as a sample of public service representation that indicate how the public service acknowledge the importance of youth involvement and inclusivity in the government's decision-making process.

The phrases or keywords used to describe something or situations depend on the connotation and denotation meanings of each presented word. In this study, one the objective is to study the way public service social media gains the youths' trust based on the keywords used in their social media posts. As trust relies on the integrity, authenticity and ability of an organisation to communicate and gain the confidence of an individual based on a written medium, the keywords that indicate the approach to gain the youths' trust in the selected KBSMalaysia Facebook posts are used and demonstrated in a way that they have the youths' best interests in mind.

By conducting the right social media priming approach to describe something or a situation, the selection of meaningful words used by the government or the public service sector may strike their readers for various reasons, to which words that are the most direct, simple and attractive can have the most profound impact. The meaning of words could come in both connotative and denotative meanings. Connotation refers to the meaning that marks along the cultural meanings that become attached to words and other forms of communication. A word's connotation involves the

symbolic, historical and emotional matter connected to it. Therefore, the study found that the use of words with connotative meanings would be more relevant and relatable to the target audience thus influencing their attitudes and behaviour in line with the public service desires. However, the public service, especially the social media communication team shall abide by the changes that occur in the social media sphere and the communication wavelength that comes within it, thus shall tackle any gaps that will hinder the engagement and trust between the public service and youths. This can be accomplished by ditching the conventional use of big, bombastic and lengthy words that might confuse or wrongly interpreted by the target audience.

Denotation, on the other hand, refers to the literal or explicit meaning of words or phenomena that it is presented straightforwardly, but the meaning of the words themselves could be meaningless. The use of connotative and denotative words can cause contradictions that change the actual meaning of the word. The way words are used, or the context in which they are used will play on the mind of the target audience to achieve the desired results. However, it is worth remembering that in some occurrence, the public service social media administrators need to be more mature in disseminating information via social media in which they need to use the right words carefully and to adopt either informal or formal words according to the right occasion or environment.

As the literature of past studies has suggested, trust relies on the integrity, authenticity and ability of an organisation to communicate and gain the confidence of a person based on what is written, said and shown. As [83] argued, the meaning of a communication is determined by the understanding of a viewer, listener or reader of his experience with the communication's stimulus. Although this can be achieved through the effective use of meaningful keywords, based on the data examined, however, much of the posts are not entirely made up of meaningful keywords that could effectively stimulate youth attention and participation due to the one-way communication that occurred in most of the KBSMalaysia Facebook page posts. This relates to the less proficiency of utilising the input seeking theme under the types of content being communicated by KBS. Therefore,

the intentional use of meaningful keywords under the pretext of input seeking would help the public service to gain more youth participation and trust toward public service social media.

Therefore, a great deal of social media priming through the adoption of the right keywords posted in social media involves discovering the connotations of objects and symbolic phenomena. Furthermore, the actions and dialogue of characters in the texts that the meanings of these words may impact the audience and connecting these meanings to social and cultural ideas as well as other concerns would influence readers or social media users' perception and preference towards the social media owner.

5.2 *The Use of Symbolic Representations in Public Service Social Media*

The second research objective of analysing the symbolic representations used in public service social media have been attained whereby the study found that there are 42 symbolic representations revolving around the themes of favourable presentation, political positioning, symbolic act, marketing and promotion, and networking in the majority of messages posted by the public service (which referred KBS as a sample representative). These symbolic representations are found in discussions and information related to KBS' events, policies and initiatives. This is consistent with previous findings that the government or public service use of social media mostly presents symbolic representations that regularly include favourable presentations, marketing and promotions as well as symbolic act [14] [81]. However, it should also be noted that favourable presentation tops the list as most phrases in the selected posts implied a positive image and good presentation of the ministry especially through the presence of its minister and deputy minister in youth engagement and empowerment programmes and events. The positive image is manifested through the presence of the minister, particularly through YB Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman as a prominent brand to KBS. Most information posted with regards to the minister characterised the self-presentation as used in a study on public sector branding and marketing as proposed by [84].

As previously indicated, the natural environment of social networking sites as one of the avenues for marketing such as Facebook allows individuals and organisations to market and promote products or services to their followers and thus, gaining the followers' trust and attention. From the analysis of selected KBSMalaysia Facebook posts, the use of social media in public service serves as a marketing and promotional tool of its policies, events and initiatives. The distribution of messages follows a certain pattern to which the study found that the agenda of youth empowerment is leveraged through this marketing and promotional strategy which provides some factual information related to the initiative as it attempts to develop a significant brand and to highlight consistent efforts on events or programmes that are available to youths.

Based on the explanation above, the need to explore and analyse the public service social media posts to detect connotative meanings, patterns and trends is imperative to enable the public service to understand the vast amount of information generated and provide insights into the perception, trust and confidence of the public. Thus, the use of symbolic representations in public service social media conceives the awareness of meeting the democratic ideals of public service transparency as an essential aspect for effective government relations in scrutinising the growing mistrust amongst citizens in this age of information [25]. Through the public service social media priming approach, the latent meaning of certain text postings would reflect the symbolic representations embedded within it. As a result, the effect of social media priming would lead youths to trust the public service sector further.

Presumably, social media offers a great opportunity for the government and public service sector to communicate and disseminate information in an open, truthful and timely way with the public without manipulating the information they share. In the sphere of social media priming, this type of open and transparent engagement, the public service builds trust and reassures accountability and credibility that enable the public to assess the quality, adequacy and effectiveness of their service delivery. In fact, with genuine content and connections in social media, the public service

can achieve its desired policy objectives to better communicate with the public in a valuable and meaningful way. Similarly, as Cotterrell [85] once argued, the governmental transparency allows the public to visualise is the current happenings in the government which allows the citizen to hold them accountable and evaluate performances of government agencies.

5.3 *The Types of Content Being Communicated in Public Service Social Media*

The study found that the third research objective is achieved through the identification of considerable amount of social sharing and information provision. These two attributions were applied frequently in the KBS' communication content. Social sharing reflects on the informative content other than the KBS' policy, which provides information that is related to the aspiration and mission of the ministry to empower youth agenda. However, it does not highlight its operations and policies. This type of communication provides factual and valuable information as it may be of interests to those who receive this kind of information that will gain the knowledge and trust of its social media users, particularly the youths.

Information provision, on the other hand, refers to the provision of data and documents the public needs to assess government's information and content that fulfils the transparency mandate of the government [25]. The study distinguished information provision as descriptive information about government programs, events and policies. As one of the most used types of content being communicated in social media, information provision contains public education on the core functions of public service and serves as public service announcements that provide recommendations for issues on public wellbeing, services, and many others.

Therefore, to incorporate the types of content being communicated in the approach of social media priming, Mandel and Johnson [51] suggested that priming as one of the most powerful factors of positioning and connecting in the web era, particularly social media. The popularity of social networking sites such as Facebook, provide a supplemental means of establishing and maintaining social connections by reaching

large audiences as well as increasing the frequency of communication. Through the content of topics being communicated via social media, the priming of social media affects message reception and shapes perception and attitudes towards an issue, people, organisations and many others. As for the public service, the social media priming determines the perception and opinions of the public and social media users at which they could be positively or negatively impacted.

However, despite the popularity and avid use of social media by government and public service, the study identified that input seeking is the least type of content being communicated in the KBSMalaysia Facebook page, and it was seen as underutilised due to the lacking and passive engagement by KBS which indicated it might be lagging in their usage. Most text postings are presumed to be a one-way approach where it did not open for comments and feedback from the followers and users. The study discovered that the public service does not focus greatly on two-way communication engagement and it is imperative to understand the factors that cause this engagement not to happen. Based on this understanding, it may help the public service to identify the factors that could affect the lack of engagement and improve the public service social media communication in the future. It is their prerogative to be able to provide values in its social media communication and ultimately getting its audience to give their insights and ideas for the betterment of its service delivery.

Therefore, the public service should be open to dialogue exchange and not only uses social media to provide announcements. In fact, more substantial content and active use of information exchange and public engagement should be conducted. Moreover, it should be daily monitored in order to allow the public to share their ideas, suggestions and critics through commentary as well as having an active response to these feedbacks.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The study provides invaluable insights to government and public service strategic communicators in providing a more substantial social media content in line with youths' communication wavelengths and could be used as a reference to understand better the strategic and positive use of social media in fostering a more open and transparent public service communication. The findings of the study could also be valuable information to government agencies in order to provide more strategic and relevant social media communication strategies as a powerful communication tool in engaging the public as well as sustaining the relationship built as a way to improve trust towards the government and civil servants, per se.

The most important matter is the right priming of social media content using symbolic representations, and different types of communication content may be more fitting to the key audience and able to establish a level of understanding that will result to an improvement in public perception towards the public service. This is important because the dissemination of information can influence the audiences' way of thinking and attitudes towards certain issues concerning the ruling government and the public service.

Hence, by engaging and building a relationship with the key audience through social media communication, government agencies could focus on a long-term approach in a more open and transparent communication to which it will lift the public's trust not only in the government agencies' ability to be accountable and credible in carrying out their duties but also in the quality of service delivery rendered by them.

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