

**SOCIAL MEDIA, RELIGION, GENDER AND POLITICS
IN MALAYSIA:
A Case of the Social Media Usage by Sarawak Muslim
Female Candidates in Batang Sadong and Batang Lupar in
the 2018 Malaysian General Election**

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ABSTRACT

The 14th Malaysian General Election (GE2018) had changed the political landscape in Malaysia. For the very first time, the ruling party of Barisan Nasional failed to dominate the government in all states except that of Pahang, Perlis and Sarawak. This study is intended to discuss the scenario of GE2018 by focusing on the election results among female candidates in Sarawak. Ten female candidates participated in GE2018 as compared to a total of 78 candidates to grab 31 Parliamentary seats in Sarawak. Meaning, merely 12.82 percentages of female candidates competed in GE2018. Nevertheless, out of ten female election candidates competing, only five (4 PBB + 1 DAP) won which was 16.12 percentages of winning whilst a big portion of the percentages of 83.87 went to the winning male election candidates. Interestingly, the usage of social media is frequently used by the candidates in GE2018. Hence, this work focuses on the usage of social media among two female Muslim election candidates from a political party of Parti Bumiputera Bersatu Sarawak (PBB). The findings reveal that the frequent usage of Facebook has positive and negative impacts on both female candidates. Eventhough both female candidates win the election but one has an increased in votes and majority votes whilst the other has a drastic decrease of votes and majority votes obtained.

Keywords: Sarawak, female, election, candidate, social media, posting.

INTRODUCTION

Over a decade ago, the sudden increase of frequent usage of social media by individuals or people proved that using the social media for business provides a user friendly website for users. The platform sees to the needs

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of the users to socialize and communicate through their opinions, openly discussed in the social media. It also provides an avenue for the business with an opportunity to advertise and marketing their products (Malaysian Multimedia Communication Commission/SKMM, 2017). SKMM (2017) also noted that the social media account number has amounted to a high percentage of internet users increased since 2015. The SKMM's information is based on the *Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, WeChat Moments, Google+, Twitter, LinkedIn, Snapchat, LINE Timeline, Tumblr* among other things. From the ten social media as reported by SKMM (2017), Facebook has the highest account since 2015, in which the users had increased from 96.5 percentages to 97.3 percentages in 2017. Therefore, an interesting fact by Statista (2018) also indicates that the usage of social media would increase from 2015 to 2022. In fact it is expected according to Statista (2018) that the increase is estimated from 20.42 millions of social media users, from 18.62 millions users from 2017.

The current statistics by SKMM (2017) and Statista (2017) offer an interesting evaluation of the usage of social media by focusing on the Facebook. Subsequently, the trend of frequent usage of the social media is evident among the election candidates in GE2018. In this case, the female candidates are not an exemption. Though the social media is said to influence the voters but it does not entirely depend on the social media alone. Other factors such as the candidates' personalities, the choosing of political party, religious affiliation and the issues highlighted during the campaign could contribute to the winning of an election candidate. Furthermore, the social media could lead to a small winning of a candidate or the probability of losing an election. This could be due to determinant factors of an individual as voters and not based on the frequent political media campaign.

Together, these studies provide important insights into my study in answering two research questions. Firstly, what are the types of information in the social media to influence the voters in deciding which political party and which election candidate that they would choose and secondly, what are the issues in the social media. In relating to the questions, this study is focused on the frequent usage of social media based on the postings of the two female Muslim election candidates; which comprise the pictures and videos posted or uploaded in the Facebook. In addition, the data is also based on the number of votes, the percentages of votes and the majority votes garnered by the female election candidates for two constituencies, which are P200 Batang Sadong and P201 Batang Lupar to answer the first research question. For the second research question, the issues highlighted in the social media indicate

the acceptance of the voters towards these two female candidates.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed for this study is qualitative research. The qualitative method is used to probe into details and to provide the actual information for this study. In addition, the content analysis is used to collect data. According to Mariette Bengtsson (2016), content analysis can be used on all types of written texts no matter where the material comes from. Moreover, there are no specific rules that must be followed (Berg, 2001, Burnard, 1991, Catanzaro, 1988, Downe-Wambolt, 1992), for example, deep interviews (Wann-Hansson, Hallberg, Klevsgård & Andersson, 2005), focus group interviews (Golsäter, Sidenvall, Lingfors & Enskär, 2011), one single written question (Bengtsson, Ohlsson & Ulander, 2007), open-ended questions as in a questionnaire (Donath, Winkler, Graessel, & Luttenberger, 2011), or observations of situations (Eastwood, O Connell & Considine, 2011) as well as from pictures and films (Krippendorff, 2004, Neuendorf, 2002). However, the choice of data collection method affects the depth of the analysis. For example, open-ended, written questions cannot provide the same depth that an interview can provide, as the researcher has the opportunity to deepen the discussion with the informants.²

The data analysis refers to the purpose and the meaning of the collected data to a realistic conclusion. Content analysis is employed in this study as a unique analytical unit applicable in both quantitative and qualitative.³ In quantitative content analysis, facts from the text are presented in the form of frequency expressed as a percentage or actual numbers of key categories that is the researcher seeks to answer questions about *how many* (Bengtsson, 2016 quoting works of Berelson 1952, Krippendorff, 2004, Neuendorf, 2002). This method differs from that of the qualitative content analysis; in this method, data are presented in words and themes to draw interpretation of the results. That is, the qualitative content analysis gave the researchers answers to questions such as “how” and “how many”. Nevertheless, the choice of analysis method depends on the depth of the data presented by the researcher which reflects on the informant about a subject. This in turn, would have an effect on the data collection and on the total number of informants needed. Therefore, the researcher either chose the manifest analysis or the latent

² Bengtsson (2016) referred to all the references in this paragraph to write his journal article, entitled *How to plan and perform a qualitative study using content analysis*.

³ Bengtsson (2016) refers to previous studies by Krippendorff, 2004 and Neuendorf, 2002 (quantitative) and the works of Berg, 2001, Burnard, 1991, Catanzaro, 1988, and Downe-Wambolt, 1992 (qualitative), and the deductive and inductive method is used.

analysis. In the manifest analysis, the researcher specifies the “what” matters as informed by the informant or what the informants actually say. Further, the researcher stays very close to the text, uses the words themselves and describes the visible and obvious text in the text. In contrast, latent analysis is extended to an interpretive level in which the researcher seeks to find the underlying meaning of the text: what the text is talking about (Berg 2001, Catanzaro 1988, Downe-Wambolt 1992, as quoted by Bengtsson, 2016).

Secondary data is also employed to study on the voting pattern and the voting information is based on two general elections of GE2013 and GE2018. Social media such as Facebook is used to gather information on the current issues at P200 Batang Sadong and P201 Batang Lupar, the chosen constituency areas for this purpose. Consequently, the qualitative content analysis would reveal the contents of the information or postings in the Facebook in a reasonable way. Duration of the study is for 16 days. It started on the 24th of April 2018, the day of appointment of candidates until the polling day of 9th May 2018. This study eluded the interview method but merely referring to the postings made in both the female candidates’ Facebook. The choice of these two constituency areas of P200 Batang Sadong and P201 Batang Lupar is because both are caretakers of these areas since 2004 (for P201) and since 2008 (for P200). Thus, it is impeccably significant to investigate the loyalty of the voters as the female candidates are representatives for more than three or four terms which are approximately 10-14 years.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a growing body of research literature on social media use and political participation since 2004—the birth year of Facebook. Most of them attempted to discover whether the general use of social media could enhance young people’s online and offline political participation and civic engagement (e.g., Baumgartner & Morris, 2010; Bode, Vraga, Borah, & Shah, 2014; Gil de Zúñiga, Jung, & Valenzuela, 2012; Hargittai & Shaw, 2013; Valenzuela, Kim, & Gil de Zúñiga, 2012; Valenzuela, Park, & Kee, 2009). Most of these studies were conducted in Western democracies such as the United States (e.g., Bode et al., 2014; Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2012), the United Kingdom (Xenos, Vromen, & Loader, 2014), Australia (Xenos et al., 2014), Sweden (Sveningsson, 2014; Svensson, 2014), Italy (Vaccari et al., 2015), Spain and the Netherlands (Calenda & Meijer, 2009) as quoted by Yang and Dehart (2016)).⁴

⁴ Yang and Dehart (2016) referred to all the above references in these two paragraphs to write their research article entitled Social Media Use and Online Political Participation Among College Students During the US Election 2012.

The research article by Hongwei Chris Yang and Jean L. Dehart (2016) also proposed that the United States (US) citizens' online political participation is on the rise, fueled by the phenomenal growth of social media. Further, Yang and Dehart (2016) revealed that the Pew Internet & American Life Project found that there was an increase of US adult internet users from 2008 election (55 per cent), 2010 midterm elections (54 per cent of US adult) and a more recent survey found that the social networking site 66 per cent of social media users (of which 22 per cent of online adults) stayed connected with the internet. The internet allowed the users to get involved in the political process or to receive political news or information, or got involved online, visited these sites for political information or getting involved in the campaign. More interestingly is the fact that political scientists and communication scholars urged politicians to tap the huge potential of engaging voters and campaigning via social media (Yang and Dehart (2016) cited Utz, 2009) because those who use social media for political purposes are more likely to vote or to donate to a campaign (Yang and Dehart 2016).

This is further stipulated by Sebastian Stier, Arnim Bleier, Haiko Lietz & Markus Strohmaier, (2017). The researchers specified that usage of Facebook and Twitter enable election candidates to directly reach out to voters, mobilize supporters, and influence the public agenda. In addition, these fundamental changes in political communication therefore present election candidates with a widened range of strategic choices. This was evident with the researchers work based on their empirical analysis focuses on political communication on Facebook and Twitter by candidates during the German federal election (Bundestagswahl) campaign 2013. The baseline is a representative survey of the German population conducted during the election campaign and the researchers noted that social media have become universal communication channels for election candidates during election campaigns. Taken together, their findings suggest that campaign strategies and political communication in general are mediated by varying sociotechnical affordances of social media platforms.

Having in mind the importance of social media to the users either in the United States, Germany, and other parts of the world or even in Malaysia, how is social media related to the choice of voting among voters? I am interested in the question of how the rational choice theories could influence the political views and perhaps in the long term the political culture at large among the voters. Therefore, Jiirg Steiner (2017) pointed out that this is a special question within a much broader problem, namely how political science influences the political life of a country. According to Steiner (2017), politicians, equally

selfishly, are motivated to be elected and reelected and rational choice theories may be based on other motives including motives of morality and altruism. Hence, by referring to the works of rational choice theorists William H. Riker, Steiner noted that Riker has formulated the basic axiom in a very concise way: "Politically rational man is the man who would rather win than lose, regardless of the particular stakes." Thus, winning is always better than losing; staying in office better than being thrown out of office; a higher office better than a lower one.

The discussion on the voters' choice of voting is referred to as Rational Choice theory. According to S.M. Amadae (2017), rational choice theory, also called rational choice theory or rational choice school of thought is based on the assumption that individuals choose a course of action that is most in line with their personal preferences. Rational choice theory is used to model human decision making, especially in the context of microeconomics, where it helps economists better understand the behaviour of a society in terms of individual actions as explained through rationality, in which choices are consistent because they are made according to personal preference. Eventually, rational choice theory is applied to other areas as well, including evolutionary theory, political science, and warfare.

It started with a basic assumption about being rational in an action and to simplify the behavior of actors based on a mathematical methodology (Anthony McGann, 2016). Nonetheless, McGann (2016) noted that for the purpose of analysis, the writers did not use the mathematical methodology as stated by them. Instead, McGann stipulated that the writers focused on the postings and the comments in the social media particularly the Facebook. Further, McGann (2016), described that the assumptions illustrated by the Rational Choice Model experts are – people chose consistently and they do things with a reason, thinking about its consequences - it is not something that could be rejected, but it is acceptable to the researchers; that is at least their expectations towards certain matters. Consequently, the question is which particular voting model is consistent to these assumptions? Hence, the most apparent matter is the ideological voting, meaning, the people voting for political party that they agreed to. This is based on the people's liking over matters such as government policies, and therefore they chose that government. Alternatively, the probability the voters use ideology as an experiment if their knowledge on a policy is limited. That is, a voter would not know the tax policy in depth but he or she knows which political party made an effort to restructure the tax policy.

On the other hand, Sara (Berita Harian online, 2017) is opinionated that

Facebook is 'an information Centre' for the Malaysians specifically during the GE2018 campaigns. The upsurge data happened hastily with plentiful of information from various sources. In analyzing Facebook, Sara (2017) found that the Facebook in Malaysia during GE2018 is evident what she terms it as 'Facebook Election'. Sara (2017) concludes that Facebook would continue to become the main stream media attention, either in the broadcast media or printed media to share current information directly through this online platform. Sara (Sinar Harian online, 2017) stressed that the manifestation of social media such as blog, Facebook or WhatsApp became a force or strength for a political party and in the political scene, this is unavoidable. Through the social media, it has become a medium of communication for the election candidates; for at least to update status regarding issues raised by the people. Thus, Sara viewed this from a political arena that is way different back in five to ten years ago.

A similar view was expressed by James Chau, a reporter from *China Central Television* (CCTV). He is opinionated that today's political campaign normally takes into the social media and the media landscape is interesting to analyze as there are many attractions from various angles (Zainuddin, 2018). However, James Chau (2018, as quoted by Dania) did not deny the fact that simultaneously, the usage of traditional media also plays an important role. James Chau gave an example of choosing and voting of United States of America's President in 2016 and the EU Referendum, the social media became a war zone for campaigns and for the younger generations to use Twitter and Facebook to access information.

In Malaysia, the GE2018 resulted in the hashtag like #GE14 (which stands for GE2018), #*PulangMengundi* (which means come home for voting) #*MalaysiaMemilih* (means Malaysia chooses/voting) in the social media to encourage the young ones to vote and to discuss political matters. Further, James Chau stressed that the new technology in the social media platform such as live streaming has open an opportunity for politicians and personalities to convey their messages or information which is accessible to the public. Similarly, a study of "Internet usage and political perception of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia" by Junaidi et al. (2013) stated that the internet influence and social media played an important role in influencing the political behavior among the students of UKM. In fact, a study in the United States of America (2000) and the United Kingdom (2001) revealed that media played an important role as an important source for political information and news related to election (Junaidi Awang Besar & Mohd Fuad Mat Jali. 2015). Political communication through the internet has transformed the

political discourse, political participation and methods of election campaign of a country which later created a conducive democratic environment and freedom of speech (Junaidi Awang Besar & Mohd Fuad Mat Jali, 2015 quoting the study of Jankowski and Van Selm, 2008).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study refers to two social media on Facebook of P200 Batang Sadong (P200) and P201 Batang Lupar (P201), making comparisons based on the frequency of postings including campaigning methods used through their video and pictures shared in their Facebook. This in turn would allow the researcher to analyze and answer the first question of what types of information posted in the social media could influence voter' decision in choosing the political party and which election candidate would they choose. This would lead to the findings on the number of votes, percentages of votes and majority votes garnered by the candidates from P200 and P201. Secondly is the issue arising in the social media of P200 and P201. In order to understand what was mentioned in the earlier paragraph, there are four main factors discussed in the following paragraphs.

Firstly is the number of postings or frequency of postings in the Facebook. Within the dates of 25 April 2018 until 9 May 2018 (the polling day), P201 had frequent postings of pictures and/or election campaigning postings. A total of 137 pictures and two videos were uploaded in her Facebook. This differs from P200 who uploaded 27 pictures or/and election campaigning postings, and seven videos. This further confirms the idea of Hongwei and Dehart, 2016 (cited the work of Utz, 2009) that an interesting fact that urged politicians to tap the huge potential of engaging voters and campaigning via social media because those who use social media for political purposes are more likely to vote or to donate to a campaign (Hongwei and Dehart, 2016; Kim & Geidner, 2008).

Secondly, based on the numerous postings it is seen that P201 election candidate fully utilized the platform for campaigning by uploading it in her Facebook almost every day. On the other hand, this is not so for election candidate of P200. It could be deduced that P201 acquired eleven days to upload her postings, between the dates of 25 April 2018 up to 9 May 2018, whilst P200 needed five days to do so. An act of numerous postings by P201 election candidate via Facebook is an evident of how a politician directly reaches out to voters, mobilize supporters, and influence the public agenda as suggested by Sebastian Stier, Arnim Bleier, Haiko Lietz & Markus Strohmaier (2017).

Thirdly, the last or final dates for both P200 and P201 uploaded their postings also differ. P200 did her political campaigning until the polling date of 9 May 2018 but P201 did not upload postings on the 9th of May 2018. Therefore, P201 had a gap between the differences of nine days, 8 May 2018 (final posting) until the new posting on 17 May 2018 (wishing her Muslim followers celebrating Ramadhan). Nothing was uploaded after 17 May 2018 (for P201) but P201 visited her constituency on 30 May 2018. Based on her Facebook, she uploaded activities such as break of fast and teraweh prayers, giving of contributions for religious activities, GawaiRaya 2018 celebration and GE2018's Thanksgiving function. A similar approach was evident in P200's Facebook. Her postings were not limited to wishing her Muslim prayers for Ramadhan but also attending break of fast with the Muslims and non-Muslims of her constituency.

The fourth point is significant. P200 continued to serve her constituency. Her facebook indicates that she serves her constituency during the month of Ramadhan and especially helping out of the water problem due to limited amount of water in her area. The water problem involved 27 villagers between the dates of 20 May 2018 to 13 June 2018. Although the problem arose, the break of fast activities was continued elsewhere. Although Ramadhan was a fasting month, this did not stop P200's election candidate from visiting and receiving visitors to celebrate Gawai Raya with the villagers in her constituency.

These four findings raise intriguing questions regarding the number of votes garnered by both election candidates. Surprisingly, it was found that the numerous times of postings political campaigns in the Facebook gave both positive and negative effects to P200 and P201. Simultaneously, it gave a negative effect to P201. Positive effect refers to both female election candidates won in GE2018. As a contrast, the negative effect refers to P201, although she won the election, but, a sudden decrease in the number of votes garnered was less as compared to GE2013. This finding is unexpected and suggests that multiply postings do not guarantee an increase in votes. What is more, P201 was an incumbent in her constituency area and had served for 14 years since 2004.

To add to the mentioned arguments on the positive and negative effects towards the votings of the election candidates in Sarawak, a study conducted by Patrícia Rossini, Jeff Hemsley, Sikana Tanupabrungsun, Feifei Zhang, Jennifer Stromer-Galley, 2018 is worthy to note. Specifically, the researchers' study has demonstrated that candidate standing in public opinion polls is positively related to social media use in several ways. Candidates who are performing better, as indicated by higher polling numbers, tend to rely more heavily on

social media to communicate with voters.

This finding by the researchers is contrary to a prior study looking at gubernatorial elections by Rossini et al., 2018 (cited by Patrícia Rossini, Jeff Hemsley, Sikana Tanupabrungsun, Feifei Zhang, Jennifer Stromer-Galley, 2018) that suggested that those who were behind in the polls were more likely to frequently post on social media platforms. In actual fact, according to my study, the female Muslim election candidate of P201 won the election but with a reduction of 27.8 per cent of votes garnered (by comparing the 75.4 per cent votes garnered in 2013 and 47.6 per cent votes garnered in 2018 and by comparing the votes gained in 2013 was 15,625 was reduced to 14,204 in 2018 – please refer to Table 1).

Consistent with the literature, this study found that as stipulated by McGann (2016), the female election candidates focus on the postings and the comments in the social media particularly the Facebook. This study also supports evidence from Sara (2017) who dubbed the Facebook during the GE2018 as 'Facebook Election', which was clearly the case of both the female Muslim election candidates in this study. This study also supported Sara's (Sinar Harian online, 2017) manifestation of social media such Facebook is unavoidable in the political scene. This also accords that through the social media, it has become a medium of communication for the election candidates.

The eminent of social media is evident in the case of the opposition party of Pakatan Harapan (PH). What is more interesting is that, PH has championed the usage of social media way before the GE2014. According to Najwa Abdullah and Amalina Anuar (2018), PH's social media lead was relatively diminished in this electoral cycle; it had already established a strong online presence in previous elections. Thus, this likely influenced younger and first-time voters in GE14, as they would be familiar with PH based on its previous popular campaigns like #IniKalilah (This is the Time) and #Ubah (Change) that have taken root in Malaysian society over the years. As in the case of the female Muslim election candidates of Batang Sadong and Batang Lupar, both had been postings frequently on Facebook of their activities. However, the most frequent postings were during the campaigning period of GE2018.

Votes and majority votes obtained by both female election candidates could be seen in Table 1. Table 1 also shows the differences between the votes and majority votes for both candidates based on two parliamentary elections of 2013 and 2018. It is apparent that P200 illustrates an increase of majority votes and a decrease of majority votes for P201. Majority votes received by P200 increased from 11,206 in GE2013 to 12,328 in GE2018. Nevertheless,

percentage votes for P200 decreased from 85.5 percentages to 61.2 percentages. The percentage difference of 24.3 is apparent of a drastic decrease in votes. Votes and majority votes garnered by P201 has decreased. One unanticipated finding was that P201 is an old-timer, had served her constituency for 14 years. Her 14,204 votes obtained in GE2018 compared to 15,625 votes in GE2013 was astonishment. In terms of percentages, from 75.4 percentages to 47.6 percentages suggests a 27.8 percentage of votes plunged. Table 1 continues to reveal the full figures for the contested election candidate of P200 and P201, showed their performance in terms of votes and majority votes attained based on comparison between GE2013 and GE2018.

Table 1 : Muslim female election candidates, votes and majority votes 2013 dan 2018

Muslim female election candidates / political party / Parliamentary constituency	Votes garnered (percentage of votes in bracket) 2018	Majority votes 2018	Votes garnered (percentage of votes in bracket) 2013	Majority votes 2013
P200 Batang Sadong	14,208 (61.2%)	12,328	13,277 (85.5%)	11,260
P201 Batang Lupar	14,204 (47.6%)	10,277	15,625 (75.4%)	10,964

Source: Data is acquired from *The Star* (10 May 2018) and the researcher had modified the data based on the constraint of this study.

With respect to the first research question, it was found that P201's numerous postings in the Facebook did not give her a positive impact. Even before Facebook was popular in 2013, P201's votes were higher. The usage of Facebook would increase votes of any other election candidates, and in this particular case, most of Pakatan Harapan's candidates successfully won GE2018. Pakatan Harapan took over Malaysia except for the three states of Sarawak, Perlis and Pahang. And example is Langkawi's election candidate; Tun Mahathir's video entitled Tun M: Not Much Time Left (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lYFr9raKeiI>) was uploaded in YouTube and had 26,092 viewers. Whilst Tamara (2018) noted that the video was uploaded in TWEETER and Tun Mahathir's Facebook on 27 April 2018. The video had 762,000 viewers and received mixed feelings among viewers that signify support and forgiveness to Tun Mahathir; although there are some who questioned his sincerity.

Campaign content appeared more sincere on PH's end. For instance, the

campaign video showing Dr Mahathir Mohamad talking to a little girl about saving the country resonated with many (Najwa Abdullah and Amalina Anuar, 2018). However, the opposites befell to Barisan Nasional's election candidates that received negative comments from the facebookers. As such, despite a smaller election machinery on PH, mass mobilisation via the Internet enabled PH to draw large crowds to their ad hoc campaign rallies across the country (or alternatively, to their Facebook live streaming videos), potentially swaying fence-sitters and consolidating votes amongst its supporters.

This study is set out with the second aim of assessing the issues arising in the social media of P201. On the other hand, P200 who has no comments in her Facebook, indicated that P200 is well accepted by her voters. Evidently, it is unlikely for P201. It is interesting to note here that Facebook was utilized by her followers who uploaded pictures and comments for P201. The most obvious finding to emerge from the analysis is there is no limit for voters or individuals to be opinionated over their dissatisfaction of the female election candidate (P201).

The resentment against P201 was based on protest by the villagers of her constituency. Data on the ground suggested that the grassroots were promised assistance and services by one of the family members of P201 female election candidate. But the promises were not materialized. An example is the dissatisfaction of I.A. (pseudo name) posted in his Facebook who shared another counterpart's comments (S.A.M – pseudo name) dated 15 April 2018. S.A.M initially had uploaded in a group's Facebook of Saribas Global, a picture of two handwritten banners which said, "*We love the Chief Minister/ Government. But we rejected the BN's P201 election candidate D.R.*" and "*We will vote Barisan Nasional if the P201 election candidate is changed to another person*".

S.A.M's dissatisfaction continued with his second comment to Saribas Global timed at 8.49 am (15 April 2018). He stated that,

"The villagers of Batang Lupar wanted a new face so he or she could bring development to our area. This constituency area need a leader who goes to the ground, not merely coming once the general election is near. We want change, our Chief Minister, Abang Johari Abang Openg, we demanded your promise, you promise if the representative is not good, we can change to a new representative...if the people of Batang Lupar had forgotten, please share this information, and let others know the real situation of Batang Lupar".

The statement made by S.A.M. clearly stated that there was a demand for a new representative for P201 who could develop their area and to listen to the grievances of the people. Having a representative who could be hardly seen at the area made them demanded a new face to represent them. The phrase “touch and go” attitude of the representative is uncalled for. This phrase is common among the people of Sarawak by having the constituency representatives who seldom visited their constituency areas or even to organize activities in those areas.

Thus, Facebook could not be denied of its significance. It should be utilized as a means of communication between the election candidates and their voters. As mentioned by Damian Tambini (2018), in terms of deliberation and information gathering related to elections, Facebook is becoming the crucial platform in some countries, which is reflected in the shift of UK political advertising onto the platform over the past five years. Moreover, the complex process of deliberation and debate during an election cycle, the flow of ideas, memes, reversals of public opinion, and fluctuations of fortune of individual politicians is now more knowable than ever before.

On top of the two handwritten banners as discussed in the previous pages, an observation was also conducted by the researcher to few small districts at P201 on 31 March 2018; the journey to Kampung Sebangon witnessed a huge billboard at the road side that has the picture of the female election candidate (P201) and small children with her. On the billboard, there was a scribble of calling the female election candidate, a liar, on the (face) picture. A blue colored spray was used to scrawl on it. It is somewhat surprising to note in this condition that the probability of any individual(s) or group(s) dared to show their resentment by scribbling on the billboard. To add to the argument on the negative effects of social media via the Facebook, Patrícia Rossini, Jeff Hemsley, Sikana Tanupabrungsun, Feifei Zhang, Jennifer Stromer-Galley (2018) argued that the results indicate that a candidate's performance in the polls drives certain communicative strategies, such as the use of messages of attacks and advocacy, as well as the focus on personal image.

Henceforth, these findings suggest important implications. Firstly, this study has identified that recurrent postings in the Facebook gave positive and negative effects. The study has also shown that it affected the number of votes obtained by both P200 and P201 female Muslim election candidates. Likewise, the research has shown that the various postings by P201 are more compared to postings by P200, gave negative effect to P201 female election candidate. That is, her votes have decreased as compared to the votes she garnered in the

previous GE2013. The second major finding was that the number of posting of P200 is less from the frequent postings of P201 that has a positive effect to P200 in a way that her votes increased even though in terms of percentages had dropped.

Furthermore, this study has also found that the contents of videos uploaded by P200 and P201 are dissimilar. P200 adopted a casual live streaming video, meeting the villagers at her constituency area by visiting from house to house whilst P201 hired a professional video maker of her and children. The video give the impression of superficial as compared to that of a casual live streaming by P200. The most obvious finding to emerge is the common problem of under developed villages in P201, continuously raised by the villagers in their Facebook. This is related with calling the female election candidate of P201 as a liar because of her promise to bring development to her constituency.

CONCLUSION

Although most prior research analyzes the social media research in elections, this study focuses on the election results among two female Muslim women in the Malaysian General Election (GE2018). The GE2018 presents an ideal opportunity test on how numerous postings or uploading of information can determine the votes garnered by both female election candidates. This study's findings suggest that communication strategies on Facebook are significantly related to how well candidates are performing in the polls. Overall, the findings show that the usage of social media such as Facebook has a positive and negative impact to the owners of facebook. It shows that social media has been positively associated with higher increase of voters obtained by one of the female election candidates. On the other hand, it also shows a negative impact towards other female election candidates even though she has numerous postings in her facebook using some different contents including those related to ideas, ethnicity, religion and culture.

It could also be understood that political efficacy among voters in P200 and P201 is driven mostly by their interest in the election and their attention to election news or matters discussed in the social media. Their interest in the election and political discussions in the social media were primarily associated with their preference over the female election candidate. This study also suggests that social media platform matters for campaign strategies. Hence, the 'Facebook Election' as labelled by Sara (2017) seems safe to conclude that the social media is growing rapidly for people who want to have an alternative medium that not only provide viewers with diversified political information about GE2018 in Malaysia, but also gave voters to choose whom they wanted to vote for or vote against.

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