

EXPLORATORY STUDY ON SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS BETWEEN PHILIPPINES AND AMERICA

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Abstract

Once accessed social media becomes the great equalizer, one can easily post thoughts with wanton abandon disregarding social classification. Such feature can be a boon or a bane in the proper hands. What more if these tools were placed on the hands of people with the power to lead and shape governmental relations? This study seeks to explore the mind of policy makers and how they go about reaching out to their audience using social media tools like Facebook and Twitter, also we consider the impact of such tools to the traditional new media outlet. This study makes use of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis employing double hermeneutic by combining the definition as used by the participants of the study and that of the researcher. This methodology also employs coding and analysis of the ideas, ramblings, and thoughts as posted by policy makers on social media and possibly explore how it affects their international relationship with other nations. Themes are generated to show these post and with selected interview tracts supporting these themes. From the collected theme, a general rule in handling and creating social media post are suggest to improve interaction.

Keywords: International Relations, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, Social media, Usage of Media Platforms

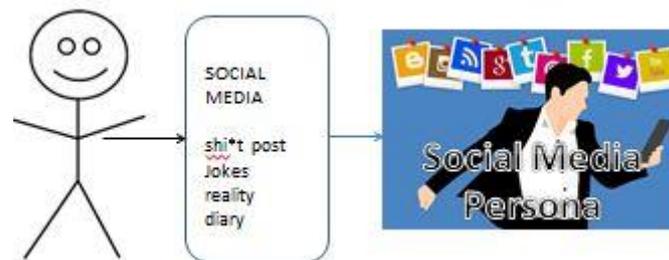
1. INTRODUCTION

Social media has been considered as the most important tool of the 20th century, it allows us to communicate and share user generated content on the fly, immediate sharing of information and updates and it can even be used as a tool for information and misinformation dissemination. Obar & Windham (2015) defined “social media as one that relies on user generated content and uses the web 2.0 protocol”. Boyd & Ellison (2007) offered three elements to be considered as social media, the presence of a public or semi-public profile in a system, second a link of connection between users to access the profile and the ability to use and access data related to the user generated profile. According to Abs-cbn (2019) Filipinos are the world’s top users of social media, the most popular social media used with strong preference to Facebook, with Twitter as a strong second in terms of usage. In America, the opposite is true according to Forsey (n.d.) the youth and adults alike prefer to use Twitter than Facebook. This choice matters when one tried to market services or products but if what is being marketed is information and public service? Should governments take charge in using both platforms? This

study strives to answer this specific research question in relation to between Philippines and America: What more if these tools were placed on the hands of people with the power to lead and shape governmental relations?

2. PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH

Figure 1 :Jung’s Persona in social media



This study is anchored on the Model espoused by Jung (1971) ground breaking work on the consciousness but how is this model applied in modern day with social media. This study is of the belief that our persona is made and shaped distinct to our “real” self. In social media, we can be who we say we are. Jung, An, Ahmad, Nielsen & Jansen (2017) agreed that a virtual persona, can be devised, is as believable as a human being despite such to be made by artificial intelligence. From a collected data, a computer can easily create a “persona” from collected behaviors, actions, mannerism, catch phrases; In short, one can easily create an identity that may not be real. Leary & Allen (2011) are in agreement that in cases of dissociative identity disorder, patients can exhibit unique persona’s distinct from each other; by extension of this argument, we can easily surmise that normal individuals can easily create personae for social media, one that is unique from the real person. It is the main point if one can easily create a persona for acting, teaching, what more for social media activities?

3. METHODOLOGY

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) with double hermeneutic is employed as a methodology. On a previous published paper, this researcher wrote regarding IPA

“Interpretive Phenomenological Approach (IPA) developed by Heidegger ... believed that in cases of miscarriage, an unquantified experience, IPA is best suited as responses made by informants are representative of their mental state of mind, view point and understanding of the phenomena. Consensual relationships by its nature are unquantifiable experiences, there is no better way to understand an experience but from hear it from source itself.” (Dublin, 2015)

Interpretative Phenomenological Approach requires data triangulation, where the collected data is verified correct from three other possible sources, this is made to ascertain the actual meaning of the source and how it was used. Double Hermeneutic is an approach where the two meanings of an uttered or printed word is employed by combining two possible meanings: from the

origin and the receiver, the writer of the phrase being the origin and the researcher acting the receiver. These two meanings are then showed to make the reader understand how the selected themes are generated in this study. The purposive sampling and the inclusion criteria are following: (a) The writer of post for analysis must be from a public official who is either America or Filipino (b) The post for inclusion has some importance to International Relationship between the Philippine and America. (c) The post was made public on social network platforms Twitter and Facebook; the reason for the limitation on these platforms of is due to their popularity and strong usage numbers in the Philippines and America. A sample size of five is resorted in this paper, such size is not suitable for generalization however this sample size is suitable if we are understand the circumstances and nuances that led to writing social network post that is of great importance – ramblings of public officials tend to be received by the media and made public with or without malice – that can have a positive or negative impact on the international relations between two countries. Generated themes were devised with presentation of the erring post with no attribution to the authorship and origin. Privacy issues on social media. In a workshop, Gross & Aquisiti (2005) laid out that all post made by a persona in social media, despite privacy settings, can be pulled for public consumption. There is no such thing as privacy in the age of information superhighway for it runs in the principles of sharing, collective usage and propagation of experiences. This was echoed by Madden, Lenhart, Cortesi, Duggan, Smith & Beaton (2013) where their study pointed out that social media has become so ubiquitous to the needs of the teens such that the social media has assumed the place of a telephone as the basic means of communication. In fact, the social media with video calling features has replaced expensive long-distance calls, it put to deal the pages and telegram; the telephone is on its way to extinction in America due to dwindling landline subscribers opting to go fiber optic connection.

4. THEMATIC PRESENTATION

A. Ignorance

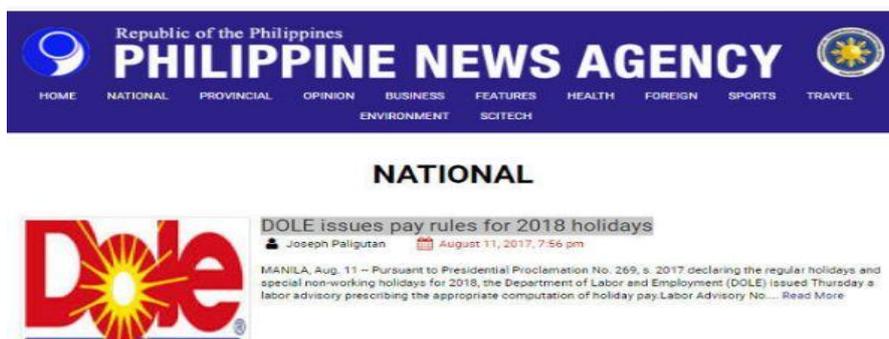
Image 1.0: Ignorance is Bliss



Image shows that the post was not privy to the knowledge that the Philippine flag when the colors are reversed refers to the declaration of war. The Intention was good to greet the Filipinos on their Independence Day but raises question on propriety of learning the culture. Foreigners not knowledge on Philippine History and culture may scratch their heads not

knowing the significance of the reversed colors. This post did not instigate war nor insulted the Filipinos rather it made them chuckle at the thought of a simple faux pas coming from a popular company.

Image 2.0 : The DOLE



When a government agency creates such mistake one can only laugh? Like in the previous example, no harm was done aside from shooting themselves on the foot.

B. Fake news peddling

Image 3.0: Not real



Image 3.0 resulted to the immediate firing of a government appointed communications officer. At first glance it was harmless but it reek of slander as it calls the attention of opposition law makers to be present only at times of distress but fortunately someone recalled the image to have appeared on a national newspaper a year ago. The erring former government employee merely used the photo from a search engine unknown to her that such image was already part of the intellectual property of a newspaper.

Image 4.0 : Manners maketh man



Follow

Fuck the international community. It can be bought. This is our fight and in the end ours alone.

When an international representative drops curses out of disappointment with dealings in the international community, had such post been taken seriously it would have resulted in economic problems for the Philippines.

Image 5.0 : what did he say?



Follow

Just landed in the Philippines after a great day of meetings and events in Hanoi, Vietnam!



2:21 AM - 12 Nov 2017

Social media communication is very informal but if tweet came from a high ranking official then it is reflective of the office of that post. It is problematic tweets like these that shows the importance of holding ourselves to a few moments of silence to review and ponder on the results of our actions but man being a creature of habit and action, often acts on his baser instincts that is to act swiftly, and regret later.

5. DISCUSSIONS ON COURSES OF ACTION FROM SOCIAL MEDIA SAVVY POLITICIANS

“The social media allows me to be closer to my constituents, to be at their hour of need, a more intimate relationship with the voting public.

I cannot attend to all post and messages which is why I had a social network manager.” –Politician A Interview track 0212019

The social media manager is not just one who handles all social media communication for the politician, it is a position of confidentiality for this reason most politicians prefers their blood relation to tackle this position; a wife, daughter, son or nephew can fit the job description but familiarity is such a requirement that the social media manager can make a post and sound as if it was the politician himself doing the post. This can only be done with intimate familiarity as leverage to developing a social media presence.

“Social media helps but it is also expensive, as in the price of advertising alone can drive you up the wall en (sic) climb it” –Politician D Interview track 07122019

Advertising is the bread and butter of social media, your preferences are stores and sold to marketers, multimedia company selling their products. An old adage goes “be wary if something is free, you might be the product”

“I am very old, I can even use the cell phone much more paysbewk [sic] –Politician S Interview track 03222918

Technological fear and the inability to keep up with the changing world is a common characteristics of older politician

6. CONCLUSION

Social media is a power tool to communicate with people but it comes the cost of privacy, most of the time we post when we are angry, we post to vent out and mostly we create a unique social media persona to hide our true selves. We create an image of us that will appease people; but small mistakes gets blow out of proportion and make create a tear in international relationships. It is for this reasons that we recommend the employment of a social media manager, it bears to say that a social media manager should not be left to his own devise withouth a viewing eye and overseeing the works.

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