IIUM JOURNAL OF HUMAN SCIENCES

IIUM JOURNAL OF HUMAN SCIENCES

IJOHS

IIUM Journal of Human Sciences

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Eco-Activist Social Media Influencers (SMI) on Twitter: Does Credibility Matter?

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ABSTRACT

There has been continuous environmental disruption going on globally up until today, nevertheless, not many are reported in the traditional media. For some, this might mean the country is harmless from disasters. Unfortunately, no country could be declared as free from environmental issue. Malaysia specifically, has been continuously dealing with the 'annual' haze that came from the neighbourhood countries due to the urbanisation and speedy development of industrial sectors. In order to obtain information on such pertinent issue, people have now turn to Twitter for any news or trends that are occurring and substitute the physical newspaper. With the vast number of users on social media, Social Media Influencers (SMI) have also been influencing others by their opinions or expertise including environmental issues. This paper seeks to understand how the eco-activist SMI create awareness on environment on Twitter. Using Social Credibility Theory, a qualitative content analysis of eco activist SMI twitter accounts was conducted. The findings indicate that trustworthiness, expertise and active online presence are salient features of an eco-activist SMI when communicating environmental messages through twitter.

Keywords: *Credibility, eco-activist, social media influencer, twitter*

INTRODUCTION

Malaysia has been continuously dealing with the 'annual' haze that came from the neighbourhood countries due to the urbanisation and speedy development of industrial sectors (Wen, Mohd Nor Fazilan & Sulaiman, 2016). Apart from that, there have been other environmental issues such as the news that Malayan Tiger is categorised in the 'Critically Endangered' species (Mohamad, 2019). All these environmental issues are in dire need of people's attentions and actions on it. Hence why, many have started taking initiatives to preserve the environment. However, to call upon volunteers offline might not be an ideal way for this era.

With the advancement of technology, people can now have access to variety information online. The most referred sources of all time for people now are no longer newspapers and prime news on television, but social media (Forbes, 2020). Social media alone can fulfil all the uses and satisfactions of the users for both entertainment and information. Since then, people have been using social media for multiple reasons. People have been actively connecting with each other, sharing, and disseminating all sorts of news. Users who are able to produce creative and witty ways in sharing information will get the fame shone upon them. These types of people are called Social Media Influencers (SMI). There are

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various types of SMI, this paper discusses how SMIs who are perfervid of the environment manoeuvre social media into a tool of communication to spread environmental information.

Even though there are many occurrences of environmental conditions happening, the media seem to turn a blind eye in spite of the issue is being considered important and rather paved ways for insignificant news to be on the cover page (Boydstun, Hardy & Walgrave, 2014). This critically worsen the condition when Luedecke and Boykoff (2017) reported that, media coverage also loses its credibility as there are authorities biased in reporting news. When there are biases in media, the media reliance could possibly decrease as people are finding credible sources to fill in the gap in trusting news and information reported. With the emergence of variety kinds of technology, things are becoming easier; including finding suitable sources and platforms to rely on. Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) Internet Use Survey 2020 reported, reliance on social media increased with approximately 88.7% users. This illustrates that since people are actively present online, majority of them gained information on haze or other environmental issues online by SMI whom they followed. The question is, does credibility of messages matter when they convey information and news on the environmental issue?

Twitter allows users to have broader audiences when one tweeted something; giving access for the tweets to reach audiences with variety areas and topographies and not only restricted to friends and families (Raamkumar, Erdt, Vijayakumar, Rasmussen, & Theng 2019). This is suitable for the research because SMIs are not only followed by friends and families, but also strangers hence why SMIs have a lot number of followers. Twitter is also chosen as it is deemed to be having more intellectual discourse which fits with this research as it aims to find out how SMI communicate about the environmental messages which linked together with political issues and requires deep thinking (Hughes & Batey 2012). This paper aims to understand how eco activist SMI spread environmental awareness through Twitter. Two research questions which are posed on this study are:

1. What are the topics tweeted by eco-activist SMI?

2. How are the credibility of messages portrayed in eco-activist SMI' tweets?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media influencers

Ever since the emergence of social media has been manifesting a great effect, the purchase intention among social media users have also increased. This is shown by Permatasari and Kuswadi (2018) whereby companies preferred investing more time on promoting on social media as it spread like wildfire effectively than conducting promotion offline. On the other hand, Yin, Wang, Xia and Gu (2019) found that purchase intention online relies on the intimacy and trust between social media users. This illustrates that as time passed by, social media users have constructed a safer way in purchasing things online. This safer way led them to seek assistance from people whom they put their trust on, on reviewing things before purchasing it. Apart from seeking reviews from their friends, social media users also entrust social media influencers (SMI) for reviews. There is a high trust and credibility on influencers, it is found that influencers are more persuasive (Lim, Mohd Radzol, Cheah, & Wong 2017). Hence, online marketing through the means of SMI in reaching audiences is found effective and this is proven by the increase in number of purchase intention.

There are quite a few motives in using social media, and one of it is as mentioned, emotional release. Even with that motive of using social media, it is also found that people are having troubles with self-

esteem. In a study conducted by Jan, Soomro and Ahmad (2017), it is found that the more time people spend on social media, the lower their self-esteems are. This happens because, when social media users spend their time on social media, they will tend to visit others' profiles and start comparing themselves with other online users resulting them to be having jealousy feelings thus lead to having lower self-esteem. Most of the source of having low self-esteem and even depression came from when social media users compare themselves with specially SMI as SMI often show luxurious lifestyle online (El Khouly 2018).

SMI has been associated with having large influence on a lot of people and even celebrities have low chance to defeat the popularity or how influential SMI are. Lokithasan, Simon, Jasmin, and Othman (2019) defined SMI as people who have founded their own reputation projected online. SMI also play prominent role in shaping the audiences' perceptions and an asset for marketing online as these people control how other users perceive things and issues (Glucksman 2017). For instance, the two examples stated above: purchase intention and low self-esteem. Both are because the existence of SMI in voicing their opinions, reviews and portraying scenic lifestyles online.

Similarly, Freberg, Graham, McGaughey and Freberg (2011) defined SMI as the mediator who shape the audience thoughts and behaviours through the means of social media such as blogs and tweets. The evolvement of SMI started as people who were just sharing about things they were passionate about. For almost most of the cases, SMI initiated with topics they shared on beauty products or beauty tips, food recommendations, fashion advices and tips on some things. These topics discussed then would attract the followers. To add, the SMI would also present some relatable information or situation that would build trusts between the followers and SMI. SMI are actively using all types of social media to engage with their followers. However, this paper focuses on Twitter.

Topics discussed in Twitter

According to Lee et. al (2011), there are 18 topic classifications taken from trending topics on Twitter: art & design, books, charity & deals, fashion, food & drink, health, humour, music, politics, religion, holidays & dates, science, sports, technology, business, tv & movies, other news, and other. Since the time frame for the observation was dated before 2011, the topics classified are mostly regarding pop culture. Meanwhile, Pearce, Holmberg, Hellsten and Nerlich (2014) found that people were talking about climate change online in 2013. Also, Iman, Sanner, Bouadjenek and Xie (2017) classification of topics discussed on Twitter differs than Lee et. al, the previous study whereby, from the time frame of 2013 to 2014, the classification expanded further to Natural Disaster, Epidemics, Iran Deals, Social Issues, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT), Human Disaster, Celebrity Death, Space, Tennis, and Soccer.

It can be seen that there are additional topics being discussed in which the Twitter users are getting more critical where people are discussing on natural disaster, epidemics, Iran deals, social issues, LGBT, and so. This can also be said that with the evolved and developed technology especially with the widespread of social media usage, people can have more accessibility in gaining information. Nonetheless, this paper will be focusing on environment issue discussed on Twitter in which climate change, natural disasters and anything that have the same type of nature with environment falls under.

Environment on Twitter

As time goes on, people are slowly utilising social media critically in which the users shifted from focusing on discussing topics related to the entertainment to something more beneficial, concrete, and important to be discussing on. In between the year of 2013 to 2014, Twitter users have been discussing on real world problems; environment issues as stated by Iman et al (2017). This is also supported by Doğu (2017) whereby it stated that Twitter play an important role in covering issues that are not reported by mainstream media. As a result, the environmental protests on Cerattepe, Turkey, has been successful.

However, the success recorded due to the huge number of followers of organisations that tweeted about the protests. This means that SMI also play a role in conveying messages to be delivered to huge number of audiences successfully. This also means that with this strategy; assistance of SMI, at least quarter and/or half of the Twitter users would be aware of things that are happening around; environmental issues. On the other hand, according to a study conducted by Abbar, Zanouda, Berti-Equille, and Borge-Holthoefer (2016) proved that there are SMI and users in Qatar talking about Qatar environmental issues on Twitter, but there are decreasing trends when there are no mainstream media coverage on the environmental issues.

Abbar et. Al (2016) also reported that the SMI only tweeted small number of tweets on environmental issues and switched the tweets to something else; life and romance once the media coverage has lessening though the environmental issues are not properly taken care of yet. This shows that, the SMI is following the trends that media and other users set and the SMI are not keen enough to be discussing only on one issue: environmental issues. Thus, it is fair to say that environmental issues have been discussed and talked about since 2013 and ongoing as there are fluctuations of cases of environmental issues going on from all around the world. And it can be said that users are aware of environmental issues on Twitter. Though a study from Abbar et. Al (2016) professed the environmental issues that were talked about in Qatar are decreasing due to the SMI are not environmentalists, this paper, will be analysing on SMI that are also environmentalists or environmental activists.

Source Credibility Theory

Ever since social media came to surface, issues of credibility and fake news have been in most people's conversations. According to the pioneers of source credibility theory, Hovland, Janis and Kelly (1963) as cited in Umeoga (2012) if the sources of information are deemed to be credible, people are more likely going to trust the information. This is also paralleled to Kerstetter and Cho (2004) as cited in Balaban and Mustatea (2019) in which they articulated that if people think that the information, they receive is credible, they would most likely to accept and acknowledge the message. However, baseless judgement on the information may lead to misunderstanding and misinformation.

Therefore, there is a current research on source credibility theory that emphasised the importance of source credibility theory's elements which consist of trustworthiness, expertise, similarity and attractiveness (Teng et al, 2014; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2016; Munnukka et al 2016; Lou &Yuan, 2018 as cited in Balaban & Mustatea, 2019). These elements assist people in determining the credibility of a person and in this context, the SMIs.

Trustworthiness and expertise are closely related to credibility as it measures how the tweets by or from the SMIs are affected by their expertise and how trustable they are. Unlike attractiveness whereby audiences are only drawn into how the SMIs present themselves; by the way they dressed up and similarity is where the netizens are trying to find what are the common grounds, they have between them and the SMIs.

One of the source credibility theory elements in identifying the SMI to be credible is trustworthiness. For SMI to sustain the identity online, one needs to be trusted by the followers or receivers. According to Giffin (1967) as cited in Lou and Yuan (2019) trustworthiness means the weight of the information that can be accepted through sincerity, honesty, and truthfulness. Trustworthiness does not necessarily need one to be an expert, but it is more from what the user perceived of something that the followers can deem it as trustable (Ohanian 1990; Rebelo 2017). In this case, trustworthiness is important as a pre-determined element as it helps measure the credibility of the SMI by looking at their profiles and their tweets.

Thomson et al (2012) also supported that trustworthiness is substantive in making decision and judgement before the readers would totally believe in the tweets. However, Umoegu (2012) had a different take, trustworthiness in advertising if the endorser is purely self-interest the audience would be less believable because to them it seems like there is nothing to be gained out of it. Meanwhile if it is for political purpose, trustworthiness is about flaunting expertise because audience would want to know if they could rely on the candidate. Nonetheless, for this paper even though it is environment-oriented which is almost similar to political cause in context, it could be said that the audience on Twitter would be appreciating and convinced if the eco-activist SMIs are interest driven by themselves as the tweets will not be seen as forced and trustworthiness could be gained.

According to Xin Jean, Radzol, Jun Hwa and Wai Wong (2017) information shared that are coming from the experts are considered as more convincing. As per referring to the similar source, it can also affect one's views, opinions, and behaviours. This shows that expertise plays crucial role in deciding whether it is credible or not which means that it is suitable to make it as one of the factors that determine the credibility of eco-activists SMI. This is proven by Applbaum & Anatol (1972) and DeSarbo and Harshman (1985); Rebelo (2017) that claimed expertise to be vital in determining the credibility of the influencers. Based on the same source, trustworthiness is defined as the level of knowledge that influencers hold on to, to promote the information on Twitter.

In the meantime, past research also proved that expertise played a significant role in attitude change for celebrity endorsement advertising (Ayeh, 2015). This is because to the audience, they believed that the endorser's expertise is a source of affirmation as to how efficient or effective the products would be. In addition, credibility and expertise were substantially pertinent elements in communicating messages in social media as it provided right information to the audience. Therefore, for this paper, expertise is crucial for the audience on Twitter as it showcase and affects how they perceived the eco-activist SMIs. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework of this study.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework
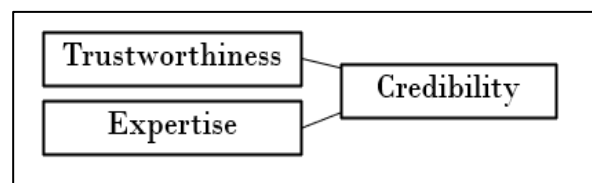
METHOD

Research Design
This paper aims to understand how SMI communicate environmental issues on Twitter. A qualitative content analysis was employed as the research design. Qualitative is deemed appropriate as it can provide a more detailed descriptions (Rahman, 2017), while meanings are also going to be sought. In addition, the qualitative research design may provide more in-depth meanings on a topic. It also

thoroughly describes the data and will go beyond than just the tip of the iceberg. SMIs who own the twitter accounts were not informed on the objectives. The data collection was performed without their acknowledgement. This needs to be done to avoid biasness of the tweets. In order to keep the identity of the respondents remain anonymous, the real names of the SMI of this study are not revealed.

Sampling and Unit of Analysis

A purposive sampling is used in this study because in order to retract the information, the sample must be fulfilled with certain criteria. In this context, the sample is the SMIs — who has built up their reputation or online identity by sharing their expertise or information on a specified topic. According to ("What is an Influencer? – Social Media Influencers Defined" (2020), there is no fixed number of followers that could determine how one is considered as a SMI. However, the same article also highlighted that it could be ranging from 1,000 followers and above. Though there are many types of SMI; mega with one million followers, macro with 40 thousand followers and micro with 1,000 followers, this study selected samples based on the online identity that they have portrayed online with minimum number of followers which is 1,000 followers. Moreover, SMIs chosen are active in disseminating information on the environmental issues, are recognized by governmental or non-governmental bodies that are related with the environment or wildlife such as World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) Malaysia, are active in any conservation excursions or volunteering.

In order to explore how the environmental messages communicated by the eco-activist SMI, Iman Aidid (@sunfloweraidil) and Jasmin (@JasminIrisha) are used as a sample. The reasons behind the selection made are because (@sunfloweraidil) are rising environmental activist that are always called upon by a few institutions whenever there is a talk on environment. The same applies to Jasmin in which she was just recently had herself featured in University of Nottingham news portal and was featured in NST around 2016 on her blazing trails in preaching on environment. She has been actively advocating everywhere, this includes online and offline and still finding ways to reach a bigger audience on environment and sustainability.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was carried out for two weeks from 1st October until 14th October 2020. It is recorded for the mentioned duration to ensure that the data collected suffice to reach to a conclusion that the theory used is paralleled with the data. A coding sheet is used in guiding the researchers in data collection process. The coding sheet was developed based on the two research questions posed in this study. The coding was categorised into two: (1) the type of tweets and (2) the credibility of tweets. All the responses coming from the tweets were also recorded as this will add more value and credibility to the data and also to the research itself. The researchers also included some interpretations to decipher the reasons behind the tweets by the eco-activist SMIs and what was the issues discussed about during the period of data collection process along with supporting evidence.

Data Analysis

Data collected is then analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is done by comparing all the coding sheets from two eco-activist SMIs and then patterns or common ground such as ideas or topics from the data will be included (Caulfield, 2019). These data then go through a few steps which is familiarisation – thoroughly analysing the data, coding – highlighting or labelling a few data that contains similarity or differences from one another, generating themes – in which to omit only irrelevant or the non-recurring data, reviewing themes – compare the themes obtained with past studies, and will be finalised with writing up which will be explained in detail about the data and themes received.

FINDINGS

Profile of eco-activist SMIs in twitter

Using the criteria of SMIs outlined in ("What is an Influencer? – Social Media Influencers Defined (2020), this study analysed two eco-activist SMI twitter account. The activists are Ahmad (not the real name) on Twitter with around 11.7k followers, and Diana (not the real name) with 2,691 followers. All of these eco-activist SMI meet the requirements (Dworkin, 2012) which they have more than 1,000 followers on Twitter, are recognised by professional environmental organisations such as WWF, active in volunteering or rescuing stray animals and active in providing the followers with mostly environmental information. The profile of the eco-activist SMI in twitter is summarised in Table 1:

Table 1: Profile of the eco-activist SMI in twitter

User	Followers	Duration being on Twitter	Age	Gender	Occupation	Acknowledgement from any organisations	Topic of interest	Verification
Ahmad	11.7k	March 2020 (new account)	21	Male	Student	Recognised by WWF and a few other organisations	Environment, Animals, Nature, Plants, Climate change	Non-verified
Diana	2,691	June 2012	26	Female	Research Associate/ Malaysian scientist	Recognised by a few environmental organisations	Environment, Climate change	Non-verified

Topics of eco-activist SMI tweets

Based on the analysis, it can be seen that both Ahmad and Diana spent their time retweeting and liking mostly on relatable issues or on the things they love; fashion or on spreading information regarding mental health. Ahmad is also a bookworm. Hence, many of his tweets are regarding him sharing tweets on his books he just bought or his favourite books. Meanwhile Diana does not tweet a lot but if she does, she will remind their followers upon thinking of prioritising themselves before anything. The researcher interpretation on the frequency of the two SMIs frequency of tweeting are because Ahmad is in his early twenties and he is studying. Since Malaysia is still recovering from the pandemic and is still quarantining, classes are held online. Therefore, Ahmad has a lot of time and hence explained that he tweets mostly all the time daily.

On the other hand, Diana is a working woman and a scientist/researcher, and she is in her late twenties which explains she has not much time to advocate online. Her schedule is mostly packed with work and meetings. Hence why Diana reminds her followers to check up on themselves. Diana also tweeted "covid anxiety is real", to show that she is not stable handling herself and her works due to the pandemic. Shanmugam, Juhari, Nair, Soon Ken, Chong Guan (2020) mentioned though it could be expected that the pandemic could affect mental health of the people but there have been a lot of initiatives done to curb this problem from spreading wildfire. The government and non-government organisations have been providing affordable therapists and psychiatry treatments. Therefore, it is understandable that Diana putting weight on mental health in her tweets.

The type of the tweets by the SMIs on environment are mostly on informing the followers especially Ahmad who prefers to inform and educate other users. Most of the topic that these two SMIs tweeted about are on climate change, educating on how to be more responsible when going to open

places with wild animals such as monkeys and the marines life and where to reach to certain organisations when having a sort of issues with animals. They also tweeted other non-environmental topics such as their hobbies, interests and following the trends or promoting local businesses. While examining the tweets, retweets were also been reviewed. In this case, most of the retweets from both SMI are mostly on climate change, environment, news on animals, mental health, fashion. Retweets can also indicate as topics that they cared about. Therefore, it can be said that there is not much difference between the topic of environment that they tweeted, and they retweeted. This can also strengthen the audiences' perceptions on them which they will be able to trust more seeing how the SMIs are very keen on environment and related topics. Apart from that, it also indirectly makes the SMIs credible to be talking about environment generally.

In addition, the researchers find that the number of followers also influenced the number of tweets the SMIs posted daily. The possibilities on that could mean that SMIs feel the responsibilities to update their account signifying that they have online presence, and they know the latest updates and trends.

Credibility of eco-activist SMI's tweets

Based on the analysis, it is found that Ahmad's tweets are always putting forth on the credibility which he will mostly quote where he got the information from. For instance, from National Geographic website, or local and international online newspaper or government environment related agencies. This strengthens the believe people have in him based on what he tweeted. Hence most of his tweets will be gaining hundreds of retweets from the followers. Even so, his tweets are always getting attention and sometimes up to thousands without having to quote any credible source. This is due to the trust that has been built between the SMI and follower bond. This happens because Ahmad frequently tweets by taking information from official and formal organisations not simply from a sketchy website whose author is not known and not an expert in the field. This could be clearly explained by the trustworthiness elements in his tweets.

In addition, expertise is also vividly reflected in the tweets. To the followers, Ahmad is also one of the experts even though he does not come from having any environment background just because of interest and his passion towards it. However, recently Ahmad tweeted on his intention to pursue environment and political course, this could also tighten the trust that has been established by Ahmad and his followers.

Besides that, Ahmad is also among the youngest environment advocate and activist. His tweets are also often been getting a lot of attention and people mostly asked him on further information from any of his tweets. Taking into account the importance of being credible, Ahmad often responded by channelling his followers to the right authorities that know more than him. And mostly when Ahmad mentioned the right authorities, they often responded to Ahmad's followers that were asking about the questions. This also signifies that Ahmad is mostly known by the organisations due to his online presence.

Diana's Twitter account does not really showcase her online presence. Though she is a SMI, but she could not be bothered to have online presence since she is also an academician. Her works are mostly in the formal settings where she does her works on an official setting along with other professionals. However, she also accepts being guests in any events on environment or climate change. Her schedule is packed hence why she keeps on tweeting on mental health rather than more on environment since she is doing that physically and offline. Therefore, her attention on environment online is a bit diverted but she still managed to keep up. To compensate her absence online, she does it

by retweeting on environment information or issue. The response from her audience was not too many due to the lesser frequency of tweeting and lesser number of followers. Therefore, most of her tweets did not gain many attentions unless from her mutual or people that knows her personally and offline.

Due to her expertise, that is the position that she holds in her career, she has established trustworthiness among her followers, and people who know her will trust her. This cannot be seen through her account on Twitter and during the period of data collection but there had been interaction between Diana and Ahmad. Therefore, the followers who have seen that would most likely follow Diana from Ahmad's account. The tweet that they had interaction going on was when Ahmad tweeted about an environment activist who lead the official team and asking if the person is a lecturer of an institution to send his regards to her. Diana replied to the tweet and that was where the interaction happened.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In general, Ahmad and Diana showcased that trustworthiness and expertise are essential in creating awareness on environmental issues. This supports findings of previous studies conducted by Applbaum & Anatol (1972), DeSarbo and Harshman (1985) and Rebelo (2017). Apart from that, the SMI's personality also played a role here in which Ahmad has a lot of followers because he is keen on environment issues and reading on that. He also volunteered which the fragments of what he is doing has earned trust from the followers. He also tweeted evidence of him volunteering such as pictures or retweeting organisations that invited him to speak and on top of that he reads from various credible sources. In addition, he also channel people to the right authority when he does not know the issues being asked. For some this might seem like a small issue, but this small action of channelling people to the right person to ask about certain matters make him a reliable and credible person. Hence why the followers trust him of tweeting environmental issues and tend to already label him as someone who knows a lot of environment and also an activist. This finding supports previous studies conducted by Ayeh (2015) that expertise of SMI is essential for followers in accepting their messages.

Meanwhile, Diana does not tweet on environmental issues that much but her position has already put her on top of the shelf. However, due to lack of tweeting, her online presence does not show a positive impact in the sense, she does not play a big role as an eco-activist SMI. Therefore, the frequency of tweeting as an eco-activist SMI plays crucial role in order to have the credibility and trust that takes time to build between eco-activist SMI and other Twitter users. And before Ahmad received the environment activist label that people called him, he has been tweeting a lot on environmental issues and volunteered a lot before. Hence, expertise and trustworthiness actually take some time to be built. After the intertwine foundation has been built, people will talk about it and that will gain some attention from other users. Based on the findings, active online presence is another essential attribute of source credibility which determines the acceptance of messages by the eco-activist SMI followers. Hence, these findings provide contribution to the Social Credibility Theory. Apart from trustworthiness and expertise, active online presence of a source or sender in social media is also critical in creating awareness in environment.

This study has several limitations. This study does not analyse all local eco-activist SMI, hence generalisation cannot be made and to come to a conclusion it would be very vague and will only be filled in with grey area. The schedule of every individual also differs hence there will be bias in reporting for future studies in terms of the frequency of tweeting. The understanding of environment or knowledge also contradict with one another, there might be common grounds on some situations but there will still be differences and therefore future studies might not be classified under themes. In

addition, the duration of the study was short, to cramp all possible conclusions in such a short time could lead to a dissonance.

For future studies, the researchers would recommend executing the observation for a longer period. This will lead to even more sufficient information and data to process. Other themes could also be discovered if the process is longer than two weeks. Next, recording other SMIs is also recommend ensuring there will be a variation of local or international eco-activist SMIs in terms of level of knowledge on the environment, the flair of communicating the messages through social media. Other than that, this study could also be conducted in in-depth interviews because the data will be more precise than just making assumptions based on the data from content analysis. Moreover, the literal tweets should also be decoded in the future studies to see the efficiency of the followers in receiving the environmental messages that are coming from the eco-activist SMIs. Another recommendation for future research on this topic is by making comparisons from one SMI to another and scrutinise how another SMI tweet about environment with other SMIs.

In conclusion, this study shows that trustworthiness and expertise are two important criteria for eco activist in creating awareness about environmental issue through twitter. The frequency of tweeting on what a person is doing also play a role and complement the fragment of personality that a SMI has. This also means that a SMI needs to continuously be among the earliest to have been tweeting on an issue and has a concrete online presence.

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