

## **MEDIA EXPERIENCE AND SOCIAL INFLUENCE ON FLAMING ON YOUTUBE: A PERSPECTIVE OF FLAMERS ON YOUTUBE**

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**Abstract:** *Media experience and social influence are two concepts in flaming on YouTube. Media experience and social influence in flaming on YouTube are factors in both flaming as behavior and interpretive sense-making act. Today, the YouTube website has been labeled as a page that contains a lot of flaming. This shows the need for flaming on YouTube to be studied for a particular purpose. The design of this research is to study the views on media experience and social influence on flaming on YouTube. This study uses a qualitative methodology. In-depth interview was conducted with five informants who were the flamers on YouTube. Thematic analysis method was implemented in order to analyze the data. The results showed that flamers use of harsh language, sharing on other social media, sarcasm, and usage of capital letters and exclamation marks to express their anger toward certain issues of the video. In terms of thought of flaming activity, informants stated this thought means for entertainment and norm. This means flaming activity as a platform to express emotions and a form of cyber-bullying. The 'thoughts' in this concept are seen as an element of belief, expectation, concern, feeling, and understanding of a certain issue. The results also show that 'flamers' on flaming experience YouTube divided into three sub-themes. Among them is religion or race issues, celebrity, and politics. The ways flamers handled flaming on YouTube replies back comments, does not get offended and defensive. Based on this study, it contributes to flamers using the right and prudent approach before indulging themselves in flaming activity. Flamers need to endure politeness in accordance with Malaysian culture before commenting on YouTube. Hopefully, this study will also be an advantage for the government such as Malaysia Communications and Multimedia Commission, Cyber Security Malaysia, and other related parties as it will provide input findings from YouTube on the flamers' point of view. The*

*government will then be able to implement certain campaign and activities to create awareness of the disadvantages of flaming activity to the community and YouTube users. Law enforcement could be done to maintain the well-being of the nation and racial harmony.*

**Keywords:** *Media Experience, Social Influence, Flaming, and YouTube*

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## **Introduction**

The emergence of the Internet brought a lot of changes in the context of media in Malaysia. According to Himelboim et al. (2012) Internet allows users to interact via online communication which demonstrates a positive relationship with behavior that is in line with the movement of information from various directions. Meanwhile, Bahiyah and Hasrina (2017), stating the latest trend shows that the Internet has become the first choice among young people to get any information.

The number of active Internet users in the country exceeds 20.1 million with 16.8 million active users in social media (Moghavvemi, Sulaiman, Jaafar, & Kasem, 2017). Deputy of Minister Communication and Multimedia Datuk Jailani Johari said the development, based on broadband penetration rate of 72.2 per cent, showed that the people in the country were heading towards the digital lifestyle. It can be concluded that Malaysians use the internet to browse social media, watch videos, and play online games, location-based applications, search engines and internet banking (Berita Harian Online, 2015). The communication phenomenon through Internet increasingly popular and is widely used in social media. As a result, the use of the Internet has changed the paradigm of one another, especially in social media.

Social media is the type of media used by online users to interact, share ideas, and create content that includes blogs, social networks, Wikipedia, forums, YouTube and so on. Generally, this social media is understood as an internet-based medium that includes media notions created by the user and followed by the experience that is happening shared online. Through this social media, the content produced by social media users is seen as "mixing of facts and opinions, feelings and sentimental, something that founded or unfounded experiences and rumors" (Blackshaw & Nazzaro, 2006).

Today, YouTube is one of the most popular social media. This YouTube social site was implemented by Chad Hurley, Steven Chen and Jawed Karim. People can watch and download the videos available on YouTube for free and it is seen as a unique feature of YouTube (Koya et al, 2012). Users are allowed to upload their own videos and comment on others' videos. In Malaysia, the YouTube, Facebook, Google, MalaysiaKini and The Star website are among the top Internet websites in the country throughout the year 2014 (Alexa Portal, 2014). Statistics also show that Internet users in Malaysia are generally 90.1% and YouTube users are 42.1% in 2016 (Malaysian Communication & Multimedia Commission, 2016a).

"Flaming" is a new scenario in Malaysia. Moor, Heuvelman and Verleur (2010), define "flaming" as displaying animosity with insults, oaths or using offensive language. In short, "flaming" is an interaction that illustrates the lack of politeness, insult, and disrespect amongst Internet users. The Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) has received and investigated 62 complaints related to abuse on social media within January to May 2016 (Malaysian Communication & Multimedia Commission, 2016a).

According to MCMC Network and Enforcement Security Sector Chief Information Officer, Zulkarnain Mohd Yasin, the number was an increase of 63% compared to 2005 for the same period which only recorded 38 cases (Malaysia Multimedia & Communications Commission, 2016b). Based on this report, flaming could possibly related to the issue, topic of discussion, or the image that becomes viral on YouTube.

In short, flaming is an interaction that illustrates the lack of politeness, insult, and disrespect amongst Internet users. This statement is consistent with Kayany (1998) view, "flaming" can be defined "Hostile emotional expression is directed at others, contrary to the criticisms directed at ideas and opinions". In other words, users who write comments that violate freedom of speech. This scenario is in line with Moor et al. (2010) that defines flaming as "displaying enmity with insults, swearing or using abusive language".

O'Sullivan et al. (2003), explains that the process of "flaming" includes the creation, transmission, and interpretation of messages viewed from various perspectives as breaking the norms. "Discussion on first world issues such as politics, religion, and philosophy, or issues polarizing sub-populations. Based on the findings of flaming research on YouTube and other social media, it can be concluded that "flaming" activity can be categorized as cyberbully which is indeed a negative behavior and is seen as capable of harming the cyber security of Malaysia if left unattended.

Thus, this research will focus on the real situation on the YouTube platform. The media experience and social influence on flaming on YouTube will be taken into consideration and analyzed. The design of this research is to study the views and the opinions of media experience and social influence on flaming on YouTube from the perspective of flammers on YouTube.

### **Research Questions**

How does the flammers of YouTube perceive the issues of media experiences and social influences on flaming on YouTube?

### **Literature Review**

#### ***Media Experience***

According to Goode and Johnson (1991) those involved in computer-mediated communication (CMC) are aware of the legitimate 'e-mail etiquette' and are exposed to the concept of 'fire wars' in the CMC routine. User experience is also easier to experience the scope of illuminated practice than the weight of the statement in CMC. It provides an unfriendly message opposition and its incredible and glowing translation. Additionally, user experience creates a capability in 'fire management'. For example, the content is lit with expressions, FLAME ON and FLAME OFF (Sproull & Kiesler, 1991), or pictograph use (symbols for punctuation) to show playful tones (Blackman & Clevenger, 1990; Miller, 1992; Thompsen & Foulger, 1993). Additionally, users authorize ALL CAPS (such as shouting out a message), abandoning different message headers, and publicly circulating individual messages to the list of electronic mail discussions. The user also considers it an attempt to change the dispute (the word IMHO before a statement which means 'in my humble opinion') that allows the interpretation and dissemination of the message to be a bit resolute.

### ***Social Influence***

There are four types of social effects of flaming. Among these are 1) aligning information by other individuals, 2) vicarious learning, 3) amass conduct standards, and 4) social meaning of objectivity (Fulk et al., 1990). Flaming can act direct by aligning other external declarations from CMC settings (Thompson, 1992). An antagonist email message indicates someone is 'hot-headed' outside the CMC settings. It also translates the message of disappointment in the relationship (Turkle, 1984). CMC users can learn a lot about 'fire' directly by listening to stories about past flames from co-workers, or reading about 'fire' in popular CMC accounts. The assembly in the CMC by the user allowed them to argue on a warm issue. Lea and Spears (1991) find that it is partial confirmation of objective behavior in CMC participation. Lea et al. (1992) recommends that 'fires' may be wisely as a "computer hacking subculture" that involves a situation of thought that is contrary to industrial or educational organization standards that may be considered to be stored by the norm.

### **Methodology**

The qualitative method that was implemented in this study is in-depth interview. It emphasizes the focus on people's subjective experiences and interpretations in terms of media experiences and social influences flaming YouTube. Purposive sampling was used to answer the in-depth interview which is a total of five 'flamers' as the informants of this study. According to Creswell (2012) in relation to the size of a qualitative research sample for a specific purpose is "to study a few individuals or a few cases" (pg. 209). Creswell (1998) also added that small number of sample can be used which is about 4-10 when cases is to be reported. The number relates to the question or the type of qualitative approach used. In this study, five YouTube flamers as individuals involved in flaming on YouTube was used for purposive interview. The sampling of this study is a purposive sampling. This sampling involves people who expresses negative comments on the column / commentary on the YouTube Malaysian-themed videos. They are known as flamers. The procedure of this research is through the sending of private messages to the flamers of YouTube through their inbox to conduct a face-to-face interview.

Unstructured interview patterns were used for this study. The interview question did not follow any of the main guidelines (Best & Khan, 2003; Creswe11, 2007). A simple set of interview provided that includes informant interview question. There were face-to-face interviews conducted for those who are available to be met for an interview session after a mutual agreement on the venue and date.

Informant also is required to complete the consent form as the consent and permission to participate in this study. And their interview results was used solely for the purpose of this study. The name of the informants is kept confidential for the purpose of protecting the personal data of informants. To answer these questions, the in-depth interviews were done which includes intensive individual interviews or meeting the number of participants' limits to explore specific views, thoughts and circumstances. According to Best and Khan (2003), interviews are the essential way to obtain clear and sustained data from the informants through oral information. There are also two independent coders specializing in social media especially on flaming assess the themes for the in-depth interview for flamers on YouTube.

This study uses thematic analysis. This analysis is carried out via line-by-line coding on the results of the study data. Researchers obtained data collection through a simple idea based on data information (Creswell, 2007).

## **Finding and Discussion**

### ***Findings from Perspective YouTube Video Flamers about Media Experiences and Social Influences***

The results of this study discuss four themes, namely ways of expressing anger, thoughts on flaming on YouTube, experience on flaming on YouTube and ways of handling flames.

#### ***Media Experiences and Social Influences***

Media experiences in this context are the experiences and encounters that one has made and gone through as a user of YouTube. Social influences on the other hand, happens when an individual's feelings, sentiments, or practices that are affected by others. Social effects involve structure and are found in similarity, socialization, peer pressure, leadership, persuasion, and compliance (Kelman, 1958).

In 1958, psychologist from Harvard, Herbert Kelman distinguished three expansive assortments of social influences. First is consistence is when individuals seem to concur with others regardless keeping their contradicting feelings private. Second, recognizable proof is upon somebody who loved and acknowledged. For example, a famous individual online affects individuals and third, disguise is when individuals acknowledge a conviction or conduct and concur both freely and publicly.

This can be related to this study as the media experiences of YouTube and social influences predicts most of the reason behind why and how a person indulge themselves in the act of flaming. To understand further on this situation, theme two looks into ways on how a person expresses anger, the feeling towards the issue of flaming, the experiences that one encountered and how flames are handled when projected to the flamers.

#### ***Ways of Expressing Anger***

Peoples of this modern age utilize online networking sites as a methods or place for aggressing against a person or an issue. Online animosity can take numerous frames; anything from verbally abusing, debilitating, rumor spreading and so on. Like most aggression, the hostility displayed online regularly propelled mostly by outrage of anger (Martin & Vieaux, 2016). Anger shown in many ways on social media and in YouTube, its comments section has always been a platform of emotions and hatred reveal since its existence.

The informants of this research questioned on how they would release anger on YouTube. The most popular answer is through the expression of harsh language as comments- in other word, curses, swearing, cuss and usage of vulgarity. The following are the answers of the informants:

*'It is actually depends on the situation. If i am really angry and things which provoke my anger. I just say it out. Sometimes obviously it would be very harsh.. but sometimes i do use wild words. Like normal vulgar words. Four letter words. Basically like when i, if really really angry, and i want to express my feeling, i use caps lock and also, so that people know that i am really angry. When i just put it, everything in.. capital letter, it shows that someone is really stressing on something. And... another thing also, i use a lot of many exclamation marks.. So that people really know that i am shouting out of anger.'*

(Informant 1)

Other than the usage of harsh words, informant 1 has stressed on using exclamation marks (!) and capitalizing words during commenting on YouTube in order to stress on the portrayal of the level of anger. This has been explained in a research done by Albritton (2017) where he investigates on the act of enthusiastic expression in text messages, and gives proposals concerning how best to connote feeling when speaking with text messages. He explained that composing words in every single capital letter and the use of extensive exclamation marks could offer accentuation to words, and such composition comprehended to imply shouting or yelling. In view of the last recognition, this orthographic strategy might be an approach to pass on negative influence (Arendholz, 2013). The following is the answers of the informants who use harsh language in order to show anger.

*'When the heat starting up then I will use some – you know, yeah the F word, the N words. Or any other words that not so decent.'*

(Informant 2)

The answer of the informant 2 confirms that the most desirable way of expressing hatred online is through portrayal of harsh words. This proofed by a research done by Kwon and Hazel (2017), where it reveals that swearing is in fact contagious in YouTube among its users. The research also concludes that aggression through CMC is spreadable and emotional speech through text is always present online.

Besides that, one of the informants claimed that one of her way of expressing anger is through sarcasm. A person performs sarcasm for communicating his or her inverse feeling that implies skeptical significance of what he or she says (Rosanti, Wijayanto & Hikmat, 2017). In a research done by Rosanti et. al (2017) on the impolite strategies in Vlogs, sarcasm as seen as one of the main ways of expressing impoliteness on YouTube as comments. This shows that sarcasm has been a style of certain users on YouTube in order to flame on this site. Below is the answer of the informant;

*"I will be commenting in harsh words and – Okay, let me think. I will use sarcastic words to condemn them. For example like "Ooo, I'm so scared".*

(Informant 4)

Other than that, some informants has said to be sharing the content they find in other social media as way to reveal their anger. For instance:

*'I dislike the video, and I comment negatively like condemning the person. And then sometimes I comment about the video in Facebook.'*

(Informant 3)

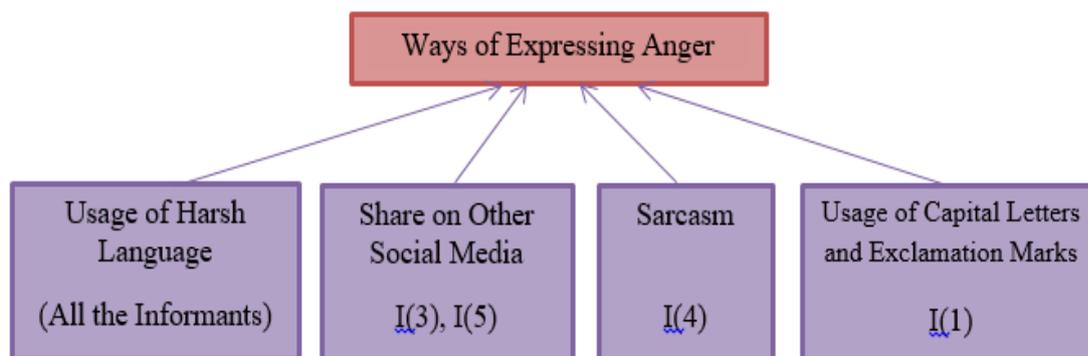
*'I'll be just commenting negatively on that. Commenting and sharing the videos to my private groups and based on that video, I will be discussing with my other group members in WhatsApp, in Facebook, in WeChat.'*

(Informant 5)

According to Informant 3 and 5, sharing their dissatisfaction on other social media calms their anger. According to a recent study, the individuals who express their outrage online by means of other social media will probably encounter maladaptive outrage in other aspects of their life. Peoples will likewise utilize online networking as a method for aggressing against a person or

an issue (Martin & Vieaux, 2016). This finding is similar to the answers of the informants above, where they seem to share their outburst on YouTube in other medias such as Facebook, Wechat and so on as a way to express anger.

The answers provided by the informants on the issue on the video triggering factors concluded as a recap in the figure 4.1 below:



**Figure 4.1: Ways of Expressing Anger Recap**

#### ***Thoughts on Flaming on YouTube***

The informants of this research asked on their thoughts on the flaming activity on YouTube for a better understanding of this issue. The thoughts and the perception on a certain issue results in the portrayal of one’s behavior. The ‘thoughts’ in this concept are seen as an element of belief, expectation, concern, feeling, and understanding of a certain issue; which in this case the hostility display on YouTube. The answers presented below:

*‘It is actually fun. It is fun and it is a platform for you to express.. each and everything you feel. Like saying, sometimes you agree, sometimes you don’t agree, sometimes you get angry, sometimes you feel people are stupid..The main thing is you don’t reveal yourself. That is the main thing for me..Since like for me, it is not necessarily for me to reveal myself, so i can just say it out, whatever i feel..’*

(Informant 1)

Informant 1 has seen flaming as fun and an element of ‘feel good’, in other words entertainment and satisfaction. This is closely related to the theory uses and gratification that has been adapted for this study where satisfaction has been motive of the media usage. These informants had said to be feeling satisfied and entertained through their flaming activity. In addition, Jonson (2013) studied on the flaming motivation on YouTube and results shows that entertainment has always been a great reason for the act of flaming on YouTube.

Other than that, informant 1 reveals that he has the luxury of saying anything he wants as long as he is anonymous- where anonymity is one of the most said reasons for the act of flaming as it had already discussed multiple times in the previous discussions and will detailed again in the following parts.

Similar to the answers of the informants above, most of the other informants think that flaming on YouTube is in fact not a bad thing overall but a platform to express themselves. Following are the answers of Informant 4, 5, and 3.

*'Flaming is not a bad thing overall but it should be in a manner. At the same time, you should get angry about some things. When it is not true, you should defend, you should explain the truth to them. Moreover, when you want to say the truth is always bitter so it is very hard to convey the truth. Yes, we will be angry because we do not know how to express the truth but that does not mean that we should keep quiet- we have to use bad words if necessary. Just to express what we really think.'*

(Informant 4)

*'Actually the YouTube – flaming on YouTube is up to them. It is up to every single person who commenting on that. Everybody has a right to review the YouTube. Everybody has the rights to view the YouTube and so they can just comment according to their opinions and that is nothing wrong on that. Yes, freedom of speech is supposed to be. So, actually it's a good thing when people out of expressing their feelings as a commenter.'*

(Informant 5)

According to the answers of the informants above, YouTube has been used as a platform to express themselves online through the comments section. Similarly, a study was done by Lange (2014) on the ranting videos on YouTube in order to find out the contextual analyses of online behavior of the YouTube users through comments. The study has revealed many interesting findings and one of them is that the fact that many YouTube users use YouTube as a platform to deliberate their emotions and feelings. This study also contends that under the correct conditions, expressing emotions on YouTube develops a passionate open circle that produces exchange among likewise concerned YouTube members about their online informative rights and benefits. Hence, believing expressing self is important; opinions expressed freely without filter on YouTube creating flames and flammers.

Similar statement was also given by Informant 3 where he says flaming is not a bad thing overall when it is directed to any public figure or famous personnel, however flaming on a normal individual is considered unacceptable. Informant 3 also feels that it is a form of cyber-bullying. Transcript of informant 3 presented below:

*'To me, I don't think flaming is not a bad thing if you directed it to a public figure because if they want to be a public figure, then they should be open to criticism. However, if the flaming is directed to someone who is not a celebrity and it might be – it can be considered as a cyber-attack – cyber-bullying inside.'*

(Informant 3)

Throughout the existence of internet, flaming in other words, the displaying of hostility online has been seen as an element of cyber bullying. According to Moreno (2014), cyber bullying defined as "an aggressive, intentional act or behavior that is carried out by a group or an individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself." Cyber bullying has been a serious issue in today's world and flaming is one of the forms of online bullying. Many scholars have done research on this issue in the recent years to find out its causes and the amount of damage cyber bullying brings to our society (Hood & Duffy, 2007; Espelage & Hong, 2017). Despite all these endless studies done

on issues like cyber bullying and confession by the flammers knowing it is a bad thing to do, bullying online still takes place because of the lack of awareness among YouTube users who flames on this site.

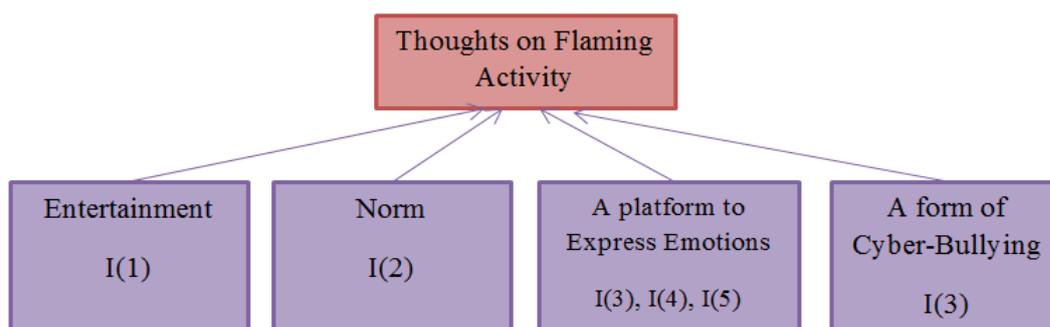
Informant 2 on the other hand, feels that flaming on YouTube is a norm. Below is the answer of the informant.

*‘Well, now everyone has exposure to the social media and all this kind of internet so it’s – I could say that now it’s become a norm. So, it’s nothing new. Like, not abnormal. Everyone feel like they have a freedom of speech. So, they feel like they can say anything. Well, it became like a culture now, when people dislike other people’s videos, they start to show their dislikes by commenting in a negative way. As simple as that.’*

(Informant 2)

According to the answers of the informants above, some informants thinks, that flaming is a complete norm in today’s life and it is nothing bizarre. This is the motivation behind their act of flaming. Many scholars also had found similar results through their research for instance; Wi and Lee (2014) studied on the norms of the Korean perspective on the trolling community online and their mechanism in adopting norms in their trolling activity.

The answers provided by the informants on the thoughts on the flaming activity concluded as a recap in the figure 4.2 below:



**Figure 4.2: Thoughts on Flaming Activity Recap**

### ***Experience on Flaming on YouTube***

According to Philip (1993), contrasting levels of media experience and ability affects flaming as a conduct and flaming as interpretive behavior in CMC. Different people face different flaming experiences on YouTube varying on the topic of discussion. The researcher questioned the informants on the experiences they have gone through as a flamer and the story that lead them to flaming. The findings resulted many interesting stories where majority of the answers was on experience based on the issue of race or religion. Following are the answers of informant 1, 4 and 5.

*‘Yes, there is incident where I got offended from the comment that people make, which is about racial issue. Being a Christian definitely, I don’t want any other racist to put my religion down*

*and also to talk bad about my religion. I have to stand firm with my religion rights and it is our rights to not to give up on all this unnecessary comments.'*

(Informant 1)

*'Basically, there is a lot of resistance under Hinduism archeologist building and the religious itself. For an example, the Adam bridge. And there is a different people view those things and we can see some are atheists, some are opposite religious fanatic so they always use a very harsh way to accuse those things. So, it get me hurt since I'm a Hindu and I know the true – I know the background of the – any of the building or the culture or the history so I always want to defend with the fact I own.'*

(Informant 4)

*'Okay, about this girl. Two years ago, she uploaded on YouTube video which commenting and criticizing on the Indian guys and she said that Indian guys judging an Indian girl by seeing their attires. Let's say an Indian girl is wearing a sexy means they should be a slut. If not means they are good girls so I totally disagree with this. I mean I'm not a – if let's say I disagree with her character itself in a Facebook, she has a very negative – I mean, her life is very social. She drinks beers so she's an Indian girl but in YouTube, she's acting like a good girl. It's like she's seeking for attention from all the YouTube viewers. So I just comment like 'bullshit'. Watch out your attitude first before you uploading racist videos and act like a good person.'*

(Informant 5)

Informant 1, 4 and 5 had experienced flaming based on religion and racial talk, which is mostly a sensitive topic to most online users. According to Cerase, D'Angelo and Santoro (2016), users of the Internet has gained the sensation that they have now crossed the time where people has to self-censor their output as comments on Internet and are free to talk race or religion publically. Therefore, people are more open to convey racial based thought on the social media cites, creating chaos with people of other races by either degrading, mocking or insulting others beliefs and customs.

Informant 2 had flaming experience on YouTube due to celebrity talk. Through the answers of the informant, it is certain that flaming happens when they either defend their favorite artist or has a point to express. Below are the answers of informant 2.

*'Not so many people love Kardashians because they're saying that she's fake and, like, she's having all these fake boobs and stuff and like that. But for me, I don't mind at all. Like, it's her life and then she's making money out of it. So, as long as she's not doing something bad to your family or anything like so leave her alone. So, that what makes – like I'm saying – contradict with my idea. Like, some people can be so bossy, judging and like, shut up, it's not even your thing, it's her thing. So, I stand up for her but I'm not saying that I'm, a really protect – literally protecting her because she doesn't even know me but at least I want to – people know that we only live once so, live it – live the life to the fullest. So that is part of the contradicting.'*

(Informant 2)

A recent study by Schneider (2016) on comments below YouTube music videos revealed that feud often happen among YouTube users due to the love towards their favorite celebrities and the defensive emotions that they lay for these artists. Therefore, flaming activity takes place on YouTube when users has a varying level of interest towards a certain celebrity and decides

to express it on YouTube, challenging fans of other celebrities which finally leads to disagreement, hence hostility through comments.

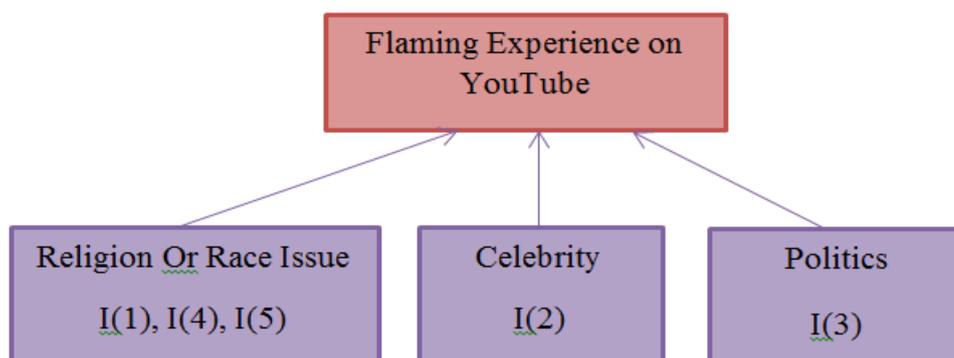
Other than that, there is informant who said that they have experienced flaming through politic talk. Whether they are government or opposition supporter, flaming somehow happens in YouTube commenting section. The following are the answer of informant 3 regarding politics.

*‘Usually I don’t care about what they are saying to me because I say controversial things on politics and of course I can expect people to retaliate with more controversial comment. There are many experiences similar to this on politics when it comes to YouTube comments.’*

(Informant 3)

Many studies in the past have proven that politics has always been a controversial issue of feud in YouTube comments section (Kwon & Gruzd, 2017, Cho & Kwon, 2017). Politics has always been an issue of discussion among the users on YouTube as a way to express thoughts, display of emotions and disagreement towards a certain political party. This is similar to the quote of Papacharissi (2011: 78) where he says, “it is possible that our quest for civic behaviors has not produced the desired results because we have not been looking at places that civic behaviors now inhabit: spaces that are friendlier to the development of contemporary civic behaviors”. This defines that if we look for something in the right place and manage to ask the right questions, we can find something great within the social media. This is often how the users of YouTube think. Therefore, being the motivation behind flaming activity.

The answers provided by the informants on the experiences on flaming on YouTube concluded as a recap in the figure 4.3 below:



**Figure 4.3: Experience on YouTube Recap**

***Ways of Handling Flames***

In this hostile internet era, almost all Internet users are entitled to receive flames and hate. The key point is that how they would handle the flames that projected to them. The individuals who feel the medium is insufficient or wrong for the outflow of feelings would appear to be more averse to art blazing messages than the individuals who might be more agreeable in communicating feelings in this way (Philip, 1993). The following are the answers of the informants when asked on the way they would handle flames.

*'Actually i will be very excited when people talks about me and people pointing at me without knowing who the real me, actually. So it is always fun to read about yourself, when.. fun to read about yourself from others. What they think and.. yeah.. So when flaming projected at me, i will see whether it is necessary for me to...whether to get angry, or to feel happy, to feel..to laugh..or whatever it is. So definitely i will reply back.'*

(Informant 1)

*'I know this will somehow just gone be by gone so I'm not taking it seriously. I'm not taking it personal. I don't even know this guy flaming me who commenting or responding to my comments so for me, I'm just – I'm not taking it seriously. I don't know you, you don't know me so let's get it on.'*

(Informant 2)

*'Usually I don't care about what they are saying to me. I don't care really but sometimes I have to defend myself because if I believe that I'm right then I have to defend myself.'*

(Informant 3)

*'I believe when I write things with the fact, I already convey a message to almost everyone who looking at that. When that happen, I can see people are supporting me. You can see when one opposing me there is another two supporting me because they are seeing with the fact. So, it's definitely, yes, when speak truth it's definitely will not going to lose.'*

(Informant 4)

*'Definitely I will fight back. I always want to win the match.'*

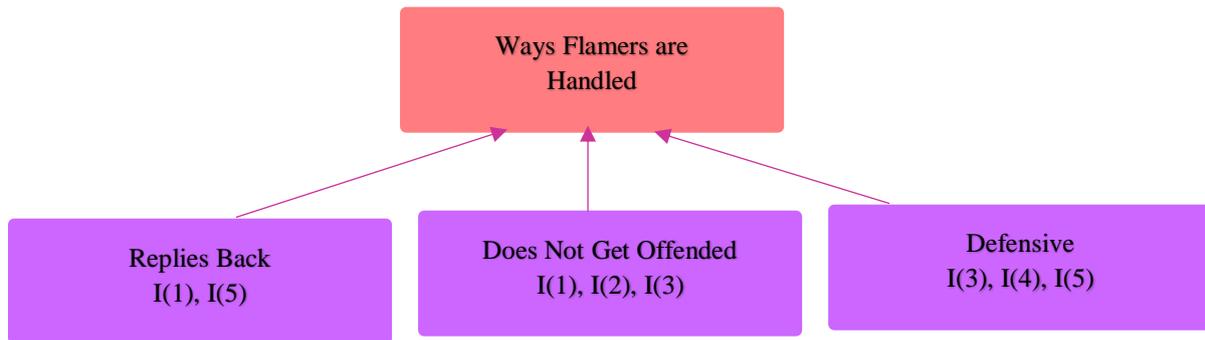
(Informant 5)

According to the answers of all the informants above, they either take it as something that is not offensive, and as a defensive element. These informants admit to reply to the comments as a way defend themselves and unable to let the comments that projected to them left unattended. This is closely related to the term 'flame bait' and 'flame war' where trolling is a posting of a provocative or hostile message known as "flame bait" while a flame war happens when various users give provocative reactions to a unique post while the first post is normally flame bait. This means 'fishing' for negativity in any online forum (Zainudin, Hasbullah, Wahab & Ramli, 2016).

Therefore, the intensity of the users of YouTube creates the motivation to flame both conscious and unconsciously through the intention to reply and be defensive towards any comments projected to them as replies on the site.

The answers of the informants also show that they does not get offended by the flames that are projected to them. This shows that these flames holds the perception that other YouTube users might also feel the same way towards their flaming activities hence flames on the site. Ruby and Decety (2004) did a study on perspective taking with social emotions and found out that there is a close relation between the interaction of emotional and perspective factor. People would rather think what they believe as also what others believe. Hence, the flammers of YouTube accepting flames as a non-offensive issue.

The answers provided by the informants on the way flames handled on YouTube concluded as a recap in the figure 4.4 below;



**Figure 4.4: Ways of Flames are Handled Recap**

### **Conclusion**

This preliminary study to look how flamers perceived on media experiences and social influences on flaming YouTube. The results showed that flamers use of harsh language, sharing on other social media, sarcasm and usage of capital letters and exclamation marks to express their anger to certain issues of video. In terms of thought of flaming activity, informants stated this thought means for entertainment and norm. This means flaming activity as a platform to express emotions and a form of cyber-bullying. The ‘thoughts’ in this concept are seen as an element of belief, expectation, concern, feeling, and understanding of a certain issue.

The results also show that flamers on flaming experience YouTube divided in three sub themes. Among them is religion or race issues, celebrity and politics. The ways flamers handled flaming on YouTube replies back comments, does not get offended and defensive.

YouTube flamers have different media experiences and social influences perception about YouTube flaming. Media experiences in this context are the experiences and encounters that one has made and gone through as a user of YouTube. Social influences on the other hand, happens when an individual's feelings, sentiments, or practices that are influenced by others. Social impact takes many structures and found in similarity, socialization, peer pressure, leadership, persuasion, and conformity (Kelman, 1958).

This study was limited to five flamers. It is a preliminary study to assess the understanding of flamers on the questions raised. Based on this preliminary study, it contributes to flamers using the right and prudent approach before doing flaming activity. Flamers need to be applied with eastern values and language politeness in accordance with Malaysian culture before commenting on YouTube. Hopefully this study will also be an advantage for governments such as the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, Cyber Security Malaysia, and other related parties to continue controlling this flaming. The government has implemented a number of specific campaigns and activities to create awareness of the disadvantages of flaming activities to community YouTube users and law enforcement to maintain national well-being and racial harmony. Additionally, technology systems such as artificial intelligence and blocking the use of abusive words are applied on YouTube page to handle the symptoms of flaming any negative comment.

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