



Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities

**THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA USER IN
MALAYSIA - INDONESIA CULTURAL
DISPUTES**

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**Bachelor of Social Sciences and Humanities with Honours
(International Studies)**

**THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA USER IN
MALAYSIA – INDONESIA CULTURAL
DISPUTES**

This graduation exercise is submitted in partial fulfillment of requirement for the
degree of Bachelor of Social Sciences and Humanities (with Honours)

(International Studies)

Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities

UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK

2022

UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my gratitude to Universiti Malaysia Sarawak for the opportunity to enroll in the International Studies Program in UNIMAS. The 3 years spent in my undergraduate study was indeed immeasurable.

Gratefully, with endless consultation, guidance and support from my supervisor, Madam Noor'ain binti Aini, I am able to complete this research project with a firm direction. The choosing of research topic and design, literature and data collection was indeed time consuming and challenging. I am indebted to her patience while guiding us individually or in-group, especially during this unprecedented time of COVID-19. Her immense knowledge on conducting research and clear explanation has made the writing and completing of this FYP an enjoyable journey.

Besides that, I would like to thank all my FYP teammates, especially Dayangku Nur Sarah, Abdul Mannan, Muhd Danish Fahmi, Norshaza Hanis, Nurizzati Najwa, and Azamudin for the sharing of knowledge and support of each other throughout this process. Last but not least, my gratitude also goes to my family members, especially my parents, Mrs. Che Norwati binti Bulat and Mr. Azman bin Jab, for their understanding, advice and endless support in the completion of this research.

ABSTRACT

This research on The Role of Social Media User in Malaysia-Indonesia Cultural Dispute is to explore the role of social media users in handling cultural disputes between the two countries. If viewed geographically, it can be known that the two countries are neighbours and are in the same group of regions, namely Southeast Asia. However, Malaysia and Indonesia have conflicts which have occurred in the past, and until now conflicts between the two countries still exist, especially in relation to cultural disputes. The citizens of these two countries often have differences of opinion. The issue is when Malaysia and Indonesia tend to demand and dispute the culture of other countries on social media. When there is such a dispute on social media sites, it will cause a lot of misunderstanding to the community that is users to social media, such as *Instagram*. As such, this research is conducted to identify the cultural issues that are often disputed between Malaysia and Indonesia, as well as to explore the role of social media users in dealing cultural disputes between Malaysia and Indonesia. The researcher of this study conducted a questionnaire using a qualitative method of open-ended question, whereby, the researcher focused more on the perspective of the targeted respondents from the Instagram social media. Based on this research, researcher has found cultural issues between Malaysia and Indonesia that often arise on social media based on respondents' perspectives. In fact, researcher have also been able to explore the role that social media users need to play when faced with situations involving intercultural disputes on social media.

Keywords: role, cultural disputes, social media, Malaysia, Indonesia

ABSTRAK

Kajian berkenaan Peranan Pengguna Media Sosial dalam Pertikaian Budaya Malaysia – Indonesia ini adalah untuk meneroka peranan pengguna media social dalam menangani pertikaian budaya antara kedua-dua negara. Jika dilihat dari segi geografi, ia dapat diketahui bahawa kedua-dua negara ini adalah berjiran dan berada dalam kelompok wilayah yang sama, iaitu Asia Tenggara. Walau bagaimanapun, Malaysia dan Indonesia mempunyai konflik yang pernah berlaku pada masa lalu, dan sehingga kini konflik antara kedua-dua negara itu masih wujud, terutama sekali berkaitan dengan pertikaian budaya. Masyarakat bagi kedua-dua negara ini sering berbeza pendapat. Isunya ialah apabila Malaysia dan Indonesia cenderung menuntut dan mempertikaikan budaya negara lain di media sosial. Apabila berlaku pertelingkahan yang sedemikian di laman media sosial, ia akan menimbulkan banyak salah faham kepada masyarakat yang menjadi pengguna media sosial, seperti Instagram. Justeru, kajian ini dijalankan untuk mengenal pasti isu budaya yang sering menjadi pertikaian antara Malaysia dan Indonesia, serta meneroka peranan pengguna media sosial dalam menangani pertikaian budaya antara Malaysia dan Indonesia. Pengkaji bagi kajian ini telah menjalankan soal selidik menggunakan kaedah kualitatif soalan terbuka, dimana, pengkaji lebih memfokuskan kepada perspektif responden yang disasarkan daripada media sosial Instagram. Berdasarkan kajian ini, pengkaji telah mendapati isu budaya antara Malaysia dan Indonesia yang sering timbul di media sosial berdasarkan perspektif responden. Malah, pengkaji turut dapat meneroka peranan yang perlu dimainkan oleh pengguna media sosial apabila berhadapan dengan situasi yang melibatkan pertikaian antara budaya di media sosial.

Kata kunci: peranan, pertikaian budaya, media sosial, Malaysia, Indonesia

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1.0 BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Social media can be defined as one of the latest internet -based communication platforms used to interact between human beings virtually regardless of age, gender and country background restrictions. It allows users to communicate, share photos, find information, do business, shopping, watch videos, read about the latest news, and soon. Social media is a platform that is widely used by communities of people around the world. The use of the platform also provides many facilities and benefits to users to recognize and learn something with just a fingertip (University of South Florida, 2022). Among the social sites that are often used by the global community today are, such as *Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok*, and others. In short, social media is a very effective communication tool in uniting communities around the world in providing opportunities to socialize and exchange information, not only domestically, but also internationally. It is a tool that can have a positive as well as negative impact on its users, depending on how society receives and applies information shared through social media. This is because social media is also a place where, various intercultural communities present themselves virtually. With the existence of this intercultural community, there are various reactions and perspectives of the community online. There will be some social media users who study the cultural backgrounds introduced by their virtual world peers, however, there will also be some users who try to provoke conflict by judging and disputing the culture of other communities (Kerem, 2016).

Although there are various conflicts that occur in social media, such as political issues, scammer, gender-bias, etc., the researcher would like to focus research on the cultural dispute debate between the international communities

that use social media.

In fact, the issue of international cultural disputes that is often raised and attracts the attention of researcher is the conflict between Malaysian and Indonesian cultures. Both countries are very careful and uphold the dignity of the customs and culture of their respective countries. As such, Malaysia and Indonesia often dispute the culture that exists by both countries, through social media. For example, the cultural traditions of traditional clothing, food, martial arts, dance, music, and so on (Suhardjono, 2012).

Therefore, in this research, the researcher would like to explore and make observations on the role played by social media users in the cultural disputes that arise on social sites involving Malaysia and Indonesia.

2.0 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Although social media is a platform that can facilitate users to socialize and share information, online with the community from all over the country, however, the tool can also have a negative impact on users if not used well and uncontrolled. The platform will trigger issues between its users, as is often the case with cultural conflicts. This is because social media users who like to give a negative perspective on the culture of any group or country are likely to provoke controversy virtually, by giving reactions and comments of dissatisfaction on pictures or videos related to the culture of a particular country uploaded by those users (Kerem, 2016b). The behaviour of users that often provoke cultural disputes is often linked to Malaysian and Indonesian issues. This is because disputes between the two countries over culture often occur, especially on social media by some users, although not so widely that it leads to war or death (Furedi, 2017).

In fact, it is undeniable that the issue of cultural dispute between Malaysia and Indonesia has been going on for many years. The dispute between the two countries dates back to 1960, when Malaysia was made the Federal State of Malaysia because it was once under British imperialism. Indonesia could not accept the statement and recognize the matter, so the two countries are prone to border disputes, as happened on the islands of *Sipadan* and *Ligitan* (Irwansyah, 2017). According to Partwardan as cited in Suhardjono (2012b), in his documentary writing, *In the Name of God (Ram Ke Naam)* explains that the thing that easily triggers the conflict of Asians is when it touches on their identity and religion. This is because Asian societies are known to be very sensitive communities when it comes to their identities, such as customs, culture, religious diversity, etc., being questioned by societies from other communities. Moreover,

in this case, Malaysia and Indonesia are two countries that are in the same region, namely South East Asia, and both act to provoke conflict between them due to their respective cultural disputes which are almost identical. The two countries have sparked conflict with squabbles over attempts to claim a culture originating from their respective countries which in fact is not accepted by some Malaysians and Indonesians (Suhardjono, 2012)

The latest occurred regarding the issue of disputes and *Songket* claims between the community of social media users from Malaysia and Indonesia. This happened when a picture was uploaded by a Miss World Malaysia, namely Lavanya Sivaji, while wearing a traditional *batik* dress and had stated that it was the traditional Malaysian culture in wearing *batik*, on her Instagram social media account. This matter has indirectly given rise to the existence of dissatisfied comments by social media users from Indonesia who claim that *batik* is the original property of their country. In fact, Malaysians also tried to defend Lavanya Sivaji on the comments found in the picture of Miss World Malaysia. As a result, the Miss World Malaysia, known as Lavanya Sivaji, uploaded a new picture wearing *batik* and apologized to Indonesians for her inadvertence in stating that *batik* is the original Malaysian tradition (Tim, 2021). The conflict has been brought to the 16th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The UNESCO headquarters in Paris, France has determined that batik has been under the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (MOTAC, 2021)

3.0 RESEARCH QUESTION

3.1. What is the role of social media user in dealing with Malaysia and Indonesia cultural dispute?

4.0 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

4.1. To identify the cultural issues that are often disputed between Malaysia and Indonesia.

4.2. To explore the role of social media users in dealing cultural disputes between Malaysia and Indonesia.

5.0 SCOPE OF STUDY

This research covers the cultural issues that are often disputed between the two countries as well as the role of social media user in dealing with cultural disputes between Malaysia and Indonesia. For this research, the researcher has chosen *Instagram* users from Malaysia and Indonesia as the focused social media platform because the researcher found that *Instagram* social media accounts are easier to interact and reach respondents, and also have many contacts who are users on the social media site, especially from Malaysia. In fact, according to Statista Research Department (2021) in its statistics on countries that are users of Instagram social media accounts in October 2021, Indonesia is the fourth country that has the most users of Instagram accounts, which is 94.2 million users. Due to that, researcher have limited users of Instagram social media accounts as a platform to get respondents. The time period for this research topic has recurred

in December 2020 to date, which is about a year.

6.0 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

This study aims to explore in more depth regarding the cultural issues that are often disputed in cyberspace, between Malaysia and Indonesia, as well as explore the role of social media users. This study also encourages researcher to find more reading material on related topics so that this study can be understood by researchers in more detail and can produce a complete study.

7.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

7.1. Social Media

Social media can be defined as an application or website to be used to communicate, interact in pairs or with more people through online, business, sharing photos, news and so on (Lutkevich, 2021). In short, social media is an application that is often used by all communities around the world. Applications included in social media groups are such as *Twitter*, *Facebook*, *Instagram*, *LinkedIn*, *TikTok* and so on.

The word 'social' meant the interaction between human beings of different backgrounds and either randomly, in pairs, in groups or in community. Socialization is also meant when the interaction between communities from all over the world, i.e. from various different countries and share pictures, views, criticism, praise, news info etc., regardless of religion, race, and ethnicity. Meanwhile, the word media can be defined as a tool used to communicate or interact online. For example, the latest media devices are such as the internet, mobile smartphones, laptops, tablet computers and many more. For television, newspapers and letters are counted as traditional media tools. Therefore, if both the words "social" and "media" are combined, then creating the term social media, it will give meaning as a media tool used by humans to communicate with each other and share information through online, using the internet from any media device such as a laptop or mobile smartphone (Nations, 2021).

According to Zaw (2018), social media is a very popular tool among the world community as it facilitates humans to communicate and socialize with each other virtually, by connecting those who are far away can be met using today's electronic technology, such as smartphones, tablet computers, laptops, and so on. It is also used to share info as well as photos or videos to be shown to virtual friends as memories. He also said that the existence of social media also gives a tendency to its users to learn or get to know the culture of other communities uploaded on social media sites. Social media has its own role and challenges. Its role is to provide space for social media users to communicate with each other, even from a distance and from a variety of human backgrounds, find family members, friends and partners, share news information about an individual, community or country, and distribute products from any type of

business, whether food, clothing, furniture decoration items and so on. However, in terms of its challenges, social media can also be a tool for the dissemination of false information from those who are irresponsible or tend to divide the community of society found on social media, thus ever engaging between countries. Additionally, social media is capable of causing an individual to become addicted and use the application non-stop in his life and there are also those that involve polarization, which is, a person is marginalized in the community found in social media (Lutkevich, 2021b).

Arguably 9 out of 10 global communities use social media that exist today, with an estimated 4.55 billion users out of 57.6 percent of the world's total communities in October 2021 (Kepios). Meanwhile, the region in Southeast Asia has the second largest number of social media users, at 482.73 million people (Oberlo). Social media is used by a variety of user behavioural backgrounds. It can be seen when there are some users who use social media in beneficial ways like adding friends, giving compliments and others. However, social media will also create users who are fond of giving negative words or disputing other users found on social media. It is also said so because there are a handful of users who act dissatisfied towards other individuals or communities due to certain factors such as cultural issues disputes, whether in terms of language, clothing, ethnicity, food and so on. Things like this often become conflicts on social media that make the platform tainted with the behaviour of the community acting in such a way (Chai, 2020).

7.2. Cultural Disputes

Cultural disputes often occur involving Malaysia and Indonesia are so intense that it involves fights between the two countries. Communities from

both tend to quarrel and debate over their respective cultural heritages which supposedly assume both have stolen the culture of their country. This cultural dispute seems very trivial, but if viewed from the social aspect, the people of Malaysia and Indonesia have increasingly hated each other (Chong, 2012).

Malaysia and Indonesia were once shocked by the issue of cultural disputes that took place involving the same traditional dress culture. It has happened, where, in 2017, one of the Miss Grand Malaysia has performed by wearing a traditional dress based on the Javanese *Kuda Kepang*. This has raised issues and disputes from the Indonesian community who dispute that the traditional clothing is from the original Indonesian culture. There are also a few years ago, Indonesia tended to dispute the Malaysian society had stolen Indonesian culture by using songs like *Rasa Sayang Hey* and had assumed as if the song was produced from Malaysian origin. Similar to the issue of *Pendet* dance culture dispute, *Rendang* food dispute, *Angklung* musical instrument dispute and so on. Due to that, from there, the mixing or similarity of cultures occurs, which has now been misunderstood by the people of Malaysia and Indonesia (Mohd Hazmi, 2017).

8.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

8.1 Type of Study

Research methodology can be defined as one of the procedures used in each study to identify, analyse information, obtain data and collect it to be the conclusion of the study. With the methodology in the study will also show the validity of a study based on the methods used to analyse and formulate data (University of the Witwatersrand, 2021). In this study, researcher will use

qualitative data, like a survey to collect the information from the participants. Qualitative data can be defined as a method conducted with open -ended questions to obtain information data based on the opinions and suggestions of respondents from the study conducted by the researcher. The methods used in qualitative data are through interviews, observations, survey questions, and secondary research (Bhandari, 2020). By using qualitative data, researcher will make a survey by making a questionnaire from Google Form and disseminate them to the targeted community from Malaysia and Indonesia, through social media, which is *Instagram* to identify the cultural issues that are often disputed between Malaysia and Indonesia and to explore the role of social media users in dealing cultural disputes between Malaysia and Indonesia. By using this research method, it is easier for researcher to get a response from the respondents, namely the Malaysian and Indonesian communities regarding perceptions and perspectives based on the role of social media user on cultural disputes between the two countries.

9.0 RESEARCH PARADIGM

Research paradigm is a common set of beliefs and views by scientists and researchers regarding methodology, ontology and epistemology. There are three types of research paradigms that will shape the science of research, namely interpretivism, constructivism, and positivism (Sahifa, 2017). In this study, the researcher chose to use the paradigm of social constructivism. Researcher of this study choose social constructivism because it is a belief of scientists regarding a group or social population of human beings who share information that is almost the same with each other, then,

form a small socio –cultural group with the same meaning (Moodle, 2015). Moreover, the study conducted is in the form of qualitative data collection, as well as the methods used are open -ended survey questions, which will be distributed in the form of GoogleForms, via *Instagram* social media account. Mainly to the targeted communities of Malaysia and Indonesia. The questions to be surveyed are in the form of perspectives and perceptions of the Malaysian and Indonesian communities themselves regarding the role of social media user in cultural disputes that occur. Constructivism is concerned with how a person's thinking is constructed based on observations that take place around him and his own experience. As seen from the Malaysian and Indonesian communities constructing the culture in their respective countries, as well as what makes them so strongly defend the culture of their country (Adom et al., 2016).

10.0 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is a form of strategy chosen by researchers to study more logically and accurately based on solving problem statements in their research. It is a form of planning in collecting, measuring, and analysing data (Donalek, 2004). For research on The Role of Social Media User in Malaysia - Indonesia Cultural Dispute, researcher will use exploratory design. This is due to exploratory research is more about exploring research questions. Such a design will explore problems that are still unclear in the topic (Saunders et al., 2012). This design can be attributed to the objectives of this study, which are to identify the cultural issues that are often disputed between Malaysia and Indonesia and to explore the role of social media users in dealing cultural disputes between Malaysia and Indonesia.

11.0 POPULATION SAMPLING

11.1 Sampling Method

Population sampling can be defined as the process of obtaining a sample for a research to ensure statistical analysis for the research has complete evidence in collecting research data (Explorable.com, 2009). In this research, researcher use targeted sampling to obtain respondents who have been targeted among users of *Instagram* social media accounts from Malaysia and Indonesia. Targeted sampling is a method of obtaining a population in a systematic and controlled manner (Crystal, 2002). The number of respondents targeted by the researcher was 40 people. The researcher focused on active *Instagram* social media users to be the targeted respondents in this research. Therefore, the researcher will select 20 respondents from active Indonesian *Instagram* users and 20 respondents from active Malaysian *Instagram* users.

12.0 DATA COLLECTION

12.1. Primary Data

Data collection is the most common way of getting-together and estimating data on factors of interest, in a set up methodical style that empowers one to respond to expressed survey questions, test theories, and assess results (Knatterud et al., 1998). In this part, the questionnaires consist of three sections. The sections contained demographic, the cultural issues that are often in dispute between Malaysia and Indonesia, and the role of social media users in dealing cultural disputes between Malaysia and Indonesia. The data collection method that is used in the study was an exploratory survey. The researcher will conduct an online survey using Google Form to

generate questions. The survey will be an open-ended questionnaire and will be distributed to 40 respondents, which is 20 social media users from Malaysia and 20 users from Indonesia.

13.0 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is the method involved with collecting, displaying, and examining information to extricate experiences that help decision-making. There are a few strategies and procedures to perform analysis relying upon the industry and the point of the analysis (Calzon, 2021). Data analysis methods will also be carried out by the researcher to get the final result based on the collection of study data from survey and secondary data sources. It is important to ensure that the study gets the results targeted by the researcher from the questions that arise based on the problem statement of the research. For this study, the researcher will use thematic analysis. This is because the researcher focuses on the exploration of the study, which questions will be an open-ended question that are questions related to the perspectives of social media users in the Malaysian and Indonesian communities.

14.0 RESEARCH ETHICS

Research ethics are the ethical rules that administer how researchers should complete their work. These standards are utilized to shape research guidelines concurred by gatherings, for example, college overseeing bodies, networks, or state run administrations. All researchers ought to follow any