UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND EFFECT STUDIES IN MALAYSIAN JOURNALS AND PhD DISSERTATIONS FROM 2004-2015

NUR ATIKAH BINTI A RAHMAN

FBMK 2018 50

**SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND EFFECT STUDIES IN MALAYSIAN
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By

NUR ATIKAH BINTI A RAHMAN

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in
Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

March 2018

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Chair   **: Professor Md. Salleh Hj. Hassan, PhD**
Faculty   **: Modern Languages and Communication**

The development of social media plays a phenomenal role in Malaysia, garnering more research on the usage and impact of social media on the users. This illustrates the interest on this phenomenon is immensely growing. Despite the rising amount, previous efforts in exploring the state of social media studies in Malaysia is scarce compared to the West. In keeping pace with the progression of social media, literature on social media in Malaysia were examined for a more comprehensive outlook on the research patterns of the field from the years 2004 until 2015. Specifically, this research utilised quantitative content analysis and in-depth interviews. Two content analyses were conducted on 79 articles in selected Malaysian academic journals and 12 doctoral theses from universities in Malaysia that had conducted social media studies. Descriptive statistics were used to identify the research patterns by adopting a framework of analysis from past literature including: theoretical application, research topic, methodological approach, social media type and development phases of social media research. In-depth interviews of six mass communication and social media scholars in Malaysia were also conducted. The interviews were conducted through an open-ended set of interview protocols to explore their perceptions on the trends of communication theories in social media studies. The interviews were analysed using thematic analysis. The results indicated that social media research in Malaysia was still in formative stage as this communication technology is considered new and Malaysian scholars still lack of skills and experiences in understanding the field. However, a pattern of increase was apparent on the numbers of social media studies. Moreover, the theoretical presence in social media research in Malaysia is relatively higher than the theoretical footings in the West. The most prevalent communication theories were uses and gratifications, agenda-setting and diffusion of innovations. Scholars emphasised cited theories were chosen based on the research background, personal connection and relevancy to the social media issue. Most theories were applied as theoretical framework, followed by merely referencing and comparison of theories. Although

theoretical application in social media studies showed an upward trend, the practice of construction and expansion of theories among Malaysian scholars is still limited, implicating a need for a more solidified and elaborated theoretical foundation. The findings showed that theoretical footing were underdeveloped because existing theories were considered more relevant for their research, lack of credible scholars, no affiliation amongst scholars and incompetency in English. Several factors were suggested in generating theories such as acquiring solid theoretical foundation, a call for more teamwork among scholars, improvement of facilities in institutions, upgrading of communication programmes in universities and enhancement of quality in journals. This study recognised the need for more research topics on the improvement and creation of new concepts and theories for social media; better methodological rigours and wider dispersion on the type of social media. The study concludes with main issues of theoretical development and recommends further fundamental research for the creation of theories to understand the usage and effect of social media on local culture and values of Malaysian users.

Keywords: *Social media, research trends, mass communication theories, Malaysia*

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Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

KAJIAN PENGGUNAAN DAN KESAN MEDIA SOSIAL DALAM JURNAL DAN TESIS PhD DI MALAYSIA DARI 2004-2015

Oleh

NUR ATIKAH BINTI A RAHMAN

Mac 2018

Pengerusi   **: Profesor Md. Salleh Hj. Hassan, PhD**
Fakulti   **: Bahasa Moden dan Komunikasi**

Perkembangan media sosial memainkan peranan yang fenomenal di Malaysia, yang menjana lebih banyak penyelidikan mengenai penggunaan serta kesan media sosial kepada pengguna. Ini menunjukkan minat terhadap fenomena ini semakin meningkat. Walaupun jumlah penyelidikan semakin meningkat, analisis tren penyelidikan media sosial di Malaysia, khususnya tentang status aplikasi teori masih terhad jika dibandingkan dengan negara Barat. Sejajar dengan perkembangan media sosial, kajian media sosial dari tahun 2004 hingga 2015 dijalankan untuk mengupas secara komprehensif mengenai pola penyelidikan dalam bidang ini. Secara khusus, penyelidikan ini menggunakan analisis kandungan kuantitatif dan wawancara. Dua analisis kandungan telah dijalankan terhadap 79 buah artikel dalam jurnal akademik yang terpilih terbitan Malaysia serta 12 tesis kedoktoran dari universiti di Malaysia mengenai media sosial. Statistik deskriptif digunakan untuk mengenalpasti pola penyelidikan menggunakan kerangka analisis dari literatur terdahulu termasuk: aplikasi teori, topik penyelidikan, pendekatan metodologi, jenis media sosial dan fasa pembangunan penyelidikan media sosial. Wawancara mendalam terhadap enam orang sarjana komunikasi massa dan media sosial di Malaysia juga telah dijalankan. Mereka ditemuramah melalui protokol wawancara yang terbuka untuk mendapat persepsi mereka mengenai tren teori komunikasi dalam kajian media sosial. Wawancara dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik. Hasil kajian menunjukkan penyelidikan media sosial di Malaysia masih di tahap formatif kerana teknologi komunikasi ini dianggap baru serta sarjana di Malaysia masih kurang mahir dan pengalaman dalam memahami bidang ini. Walau bagaimanapun, corak kenaikan bilangan kajian media sosial adalah ketara. Ia juga mendapati kehadiran teori dalam kajian media sosial tentang pengguna Malaysia adalah lebih tinggi dari penyelidikan di negara Barat. Teori komunikasi yang lazim digunakan adalah kegunaan dan kepuasan, penentuan agenda serta difusi inovasi. Para sarjana menyatakan bahawa teori-teori yang dipilih adalah berdasarkan latar belakang penyelidikan, hubungan peribadi dan perkaitan dengan isu

media sosial. Menurut keputusan, teori-teori digunakan sebagai kerangka teori, diikuti sebagai rujukan dan perbandingan teori. Walaupun kajian media sosial menunjukkan tren yang meningkat dalam aplikasi teori, amalan pembinaan dan perkembangan teori di kalangan sarjana Malaysia masih berkurangan, oleh itu memerlukan asas dan penggunaan teori yang lebih kukuh. Kajian ini juga mendapati kekurangan penggunaan dan perkembangan teori adalah kerana teori-teori yang sedia ada adalah lebih relevan untuk kajian mereka, kekurangan sarjana yang berwibawa, tiada gabungan antara sarjana serta ketidakcekapan sarjana dalam Bahasa Inggeris. Beberapa faktor telah dicadangkan dalam menghasilkan teori: memperoleh penggunaan teori yang lebih kukuh, keperluan lebih banyak kerja berpasukan dikalangan sarjana, penambahbaikan kemudahan di institusi, menaikkan taraf program komunikasi di universiti dan meningkatkan kualiti dalam jurnal. Kajian ini juga mendapati keperluan untuk lebih banyak topik penyelidikan tentang peningkatan dan penciptaan konsep dan teori baru untuk media sosial; penggunaan pendekatan metodologi yang lebih baik dan penyebaran lebih luas mengenai jenis media sosial. Kajian ini membuat kesimpulan dengan isu-isu utama berkaitan pembangunan teori dan mencadangkan lebih banyak penyelidikan asas berkenaan penciptaan teori untuk memahami penyebaran dan kesan media sosial ke atas budaya tempatan dan nilai-nilai pengguna Malaysia.

Kata Kunci: *Media sosial, tren kajian, teori-teori komunikasi massa, Malaysia*

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Most importantly, thank you Allah s.w.t. for giving me the courage, health and opportunity to partake in this endeavour. I would like to express heartfelt gratitude to my supervisory committee, Professor Dr. Md. Salleh Hj Hassan, Dr. Mohd Nizam Osman and Dr. Moniza Waheed. They have mentored me with exceptional guidance by giving constructive recommendations and detailed analysis of my work in accomplishing the fruition of this dissertation.

My gratefulness is also for the informants, universities and coders of this study who have assisted along the way throughout the data collection process. I would also like to thank Universiti Sains Malaysia and the Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia for awarding me with the SLAB scholarship. The financial assistance has indeed been useful in the process of gathering the data and the completion of the dissertation.

I also dedicate this success to my loving husband, Azmi and our sons, Aqil and Ariq, for their unwavering compassion, understanding, patience and care in achieving this dream. Finally, I also would like to thank my family members, especially my Bapak and Ibu for their endless encouragement, faith and presence during this last 3 years. Thank you for believing in me and looking after the kids when I needed to go for data collection and focus on writing.

This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

Md. Salleh Hj. Hassan, PhD
Professor
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Chairman)

Mohd Nizam Osman, PhD
Senior Lecturer
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

Moniza Waheed, PhD
Senior Lecturer
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

_____
ROBIAH BINTI YUNUS, PhD
Professor and Dean
School of Graduate Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date:

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Name and Matric No.: Nur Atikah binti A Rahman, GS 40518

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This is to confirm that:
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Signature:
Name of Chairman of
Supervisory
Committee:

Signature:
Name of Member of
Supervisory
Committee:

Signature:
Name of Member of
Supervisory
Committee:

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

COP	Communication of Practice Theory
CPM	Communication Privacy Management
MCMC	Malaysia Communication and Multimedia Commission
SNS	Social Networking Sites
TAM	Technology Acceptance Model
UTAUT	Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the subject and background of this study. It explains the reasons to understand the research trends on mass communication studies related to social media. This section also illustrates the issues raised in the problem statement, the research objectives, the significance of the study, the scope and limitation of the study and the definition of key terms.

1.1   Background of the Study

Over the past years, the development of social media on the Internet has attracted global attention in the field of mass communication. Social media has captured millions of users across the countries in using this interactive media as part of their daily communication channel. According to Mustafa and Hamzah (2011), people are now using social media to create, share and recommend messages or information as well as to stay connected with other users. The shared content may be in different types of medium such as text, audio, video, pictures and more. Some people use it for socialising online and others may use it for promoting their business, products or service. In other words, social media users are able to do almost anything online. People are now considered to live in a richer media environment. Moreover, people have easy access to social media as they can use it on personal computers or even in their smart phones.

Based on the statistics released by Araujo and Neijens (2012), Internet users are using social media, particularly social networking sites (SNS), at 44% online population with over 800 million users worldwide. Statistics showed that about 2.2 billion users are actively embracing Facebook, 1.5 billion are on YouTube, 800 million uses Instagram, 794 million are on Tumblr and 330 million tweets on Twitter as of January 2018 (Statista, 2018). The statistics portray that social media is one of the most engaging online communication platforms on the Internet, allowing users to interact among families or friends, as well as exchange information (i.e. pictures, videos and more).

Recently, Malaysians also showed keen interest on social media in communicating with the masses by becoming more engrossed with this new online platform in their everyday lives. Ahmad, Chang, Mustaffa, Ibrahim, Mahmud and Dafrizal (2012) state that in Malaysia, 90% of the Internet users use Facebook as their prime social media network. Moreover, Malaysia was also reported to have the most number of Facebook friends in the world, having a total of 5 million Facebook users, making up to 18% of the total Facebook users in Asia (Wok, Idid, & Misman, 2012; Balakrishnan & Shamim, 2013). In addition, Malaysia is at eighth place (62%) in September 2016 for

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having active accounts on the top social network in the world (We Are Social, 2016). Facebook is the leading social media in the country with 97.3% of respondents, followed by Instagram (56.1%), YouTube (45.3%), Google+ (28.3%), Twitter (26.6%), LinkedIn (9.1%), and other lesser known social networking sites (0.9%) (MCMC, 2017). All of the statistics clearly show that social media's usage in the nation has been increasing at a remarkable pace. The recent developments of social media, particularly SNSs have heightened the needs for its usage among the Malaysian users whether at home, in the office, cafes, libraries and other places.

The widespread usage of social media is perceived to have significant influence on the communication between individuals or society. Scholars assert, "with the new media, there are greater number of information diffusion and retrieval, giving more control for the users in producing the content and choosing the right information" (Chaffee & Metzger, 2001, p 369). The social media technology has revolutionised the communication field from mass communication to interactive digital communication (Khang, Ki & Ye, 2012), changing how people communicate and consume the media content. According to Baran and Davis (2012), the new perspectives of social media challenge existing mass communication theories. This implies that the development of social media changes how people communicate with each other and the impact of this new media may be slightly different than the conventional media such as newspapers, magazines, radio and television. In the social media environment, users are no longer passive audiences that depend on the media to get information. Social media users are active media users and receivers, where they are able to contribute to the content of the new media and make their own decisions when interpreting messages. The users are perceived to have the power to receive and alter their messages.

Thus, the changes of communication patterns and habits have also contributed to the progress of mass communication theories to better suit the new media technologies in understanding the usage and consequences of social media on the users. Mass communication theories are often used to describe the impact of mass communication on the audiences; reveal on how people utilise the mass media and the reasons of them using it; show how people gather information or news from the mass media as well as to determine the role of the mass media in shaping the values of those exposed to it (Rosenberry & Vicker, 2009). Moreover, Scolari (2009) claims when the digital media first arrived, past scholars applied existing mass communication theories to understand the new media (Landow, 2003; Bolter, 2003). However, Weaver (2000) and Scolari (2009) suggest existing concepts and theories are still useful for the computerised communication, but need to be refined and matched with the approaches of the new media. Hence, researchers should not simply combine the existing mass communication theories with the new media technology (i.e. social media).

With the tremendous increase in social media usage among Malaysian users, there has been ample focus on this subject matter in the academic field. In recent years, Malaysian scholars have come out with increasing numbers of published articles on social media, highlighting on several issues such as privacy (Ishak, Sidi, Jabar, Sani, Mustapha & Supian, 2012), identity and reputation (Mun, Li, & Fernandez, 2011), media effects (Sani & Zengeni, 2010; Balakrishnan & Shamim, 2013; Abdulahi, Samadi, & Gharleghi, 2014), usage and gratifications (Hamid, Ismail, Ishak, & Yazam,

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2013; Mustafa, Zumrah & Azdi, 2013), social media as information (Wok, Idid, & Misman, 2012) and more. The increasing numbers of published papers on social media portrays an increasing interest in the mass communication discipline. The next sections further discuss the research problems, research questions, objectives and significance of the study.

1.2   Statement of Research Problem

Since the emergence and development of social media in Malaysia, it can be seen that social media research has burgeoned in response to understand the increasing adoption of social media and its consequences on the users. However, although social media research have steadily increased in the recent years, studies on the current status of social media related studies in Malaysia are still limited when compared with the research trends analyses of social media studies in the Western countries. Considering that social media research has varied over the years in accommodating to the changes of the communication behaviour, habits and patterns of the users, it is important to assess and understand the research trends and patterns of social media studies to see the evolution of those changes. Research trends are referred to as the frequency, proportion and occurrence (Kim & Weaver, 2002; Khang, Ki & Ye, 2012) patterns of social media research to see the progression and improvement of a certain discipline or field of area.

Past studies portrayed that there are numerous studies on the trend of mass communication research on mass media use, media effects and theoretical trends in the Western countries (Schramm, 1957; DeFleur, 1998; Kamhawi & Weaver, 2003; Bryant & Miron, 2004; Potter & Riddle, 2007). Kamhawi and Weaver (2003) stated that by reassessing literature or research scholarship, researchers are able to distinguish larger patterns and trends in mass communication research. Consistent with the research interest of the Western scholars, Malaysian scholars have also studied the development of mass communication research in Malaysia. However, there are only a few studies conducted to explore the current trends of the mass communication field, particularly on the theoretical application (Hassan & Salleh, 1990; Idid, 2014; Merican, 2005).

In growing along with the advancement of the new communication technologies, prior literature shows that there have been extensive research done on the content analysis or trends of communication research on the Internet (Kim & Weaver, 2002), new media (Tomasello, Lee, & Baer, 2010), social media (Khang, Ki & Ye, 2012) and social networking sites (SNS) (Zhang & Leung, 2014) in the Western countries. These studies explored on the research trends of new media in mass communication (Tomasello, Lee & Baer, 2010); theoretical and methodological trends of communication research on the Internet (Kim & Weaver, 2002); social media research patterns (Khang, Ki & Ye, 2012) as well as on the current development status of SNS research in mass communication (Zhang & Leung, 2014). Previous research on social media and SNS were mainly developed and enhanced based on the American or European cultural context, hence, perceived as insufficient in understanding the communication

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behaviour, social media usage and its effects on the users of non-western countries such as Malaysia.

In Malaysia, there are few studies done that have looked through the research patterns and issues on social media in selected journals such as on microblogging (i.e. Twitter), collaborative projects (i.e. wikis) and content communities (i.e. YouTube) (Alias, DeWitt, Siraj, Kamaruddin & Daud, 2013; Alias, Sabdan, Abdul Aziz, Mohammed, Hamidon & Jomhari, 2013; Alias, Razak, elHadad, Noh, Kunjambu & Muniandy, 2013). These studies concerning social media research trends has thus far focused on research topics, issues category, sampling, research method and data analysis. Nonetheless, little research have been done to analyse the research trends of social media research in Malaysia, particularly on the theoretical application as well as the research development stages of social media studies in the country.

Since there are increasing number of the mass communication research related to social media development, it is now important to review the literature of social media research in the country to look for the development and impact of this new media in Malaysia. The notion was also supported by Idid (2014, p. 14), who asserts that the social media development has changed the "concepts of audience, effects of the media, space communication and time". Consequently, social media has changed the communication patterns and usage of the media among users, leading to slightly different effects of the media content to the users. Henceforth, the rationale for conducting this study is to fulfil the void of addressing the research patterns of social media usage and effect studies in Malaysia.

In fulfilling the void of addressing the research trends of social media research in Malaysia, the study aims to identify the research patterns of social media studies in Malaysian journals and PhD dissertations from Malaysian universities. Particularly, this research aims to review studies that are related to social media usage and effect in Malaysian journals of communication, media, social sciences and humanities as well as PhD in Communication and Media dissertations to understand the research patterns in these studies as well as its theoretical footings. In this context, the reason for only focusing on this database is to see the Malaysian publication status and patterns of social media usage and effects research in journals and PhD dissertations in the country.

The importance of studying theoretical underpinning on social media research in Malaysia is to see the progression of this new media in the country's mass communication field as well as the significance of this new media on the society. The study also explores how the cited theories in the social media research are applied in the studies. The reason for understanding what the communication theories are used for is to see the theoretical development of scholars in Malaysia.

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In the context of Malaysian scholars, the study also viewed whether there are different communication theoretical elements than the Western theories were applied in social media research in Malaysia. According to Hassan and Salleh (1990) as well as Idid (2014), the Malaysian scholars are seen to have utilised Western theoretical framework in understanding the development of mass communication in Malaysia such as agenda-setting, diffusion of innovation, spiral of silence, the third-person effect and uses and gratifications theories. However, the Malaysian society has different background, cultural upbringing and believes compared to the Western population. According to Merican (2005), communication studies in Malaysia have been uprooted from different culture (Western theories and ideologies) into the nation's historical and cultural setting. The question here is whether Malaysian scholars should conceptualise slightly different or modified theoretical framework in understanding the communication process, usage and effect of the social media on Malaysian users.

The timeframe of the study is from the years 2004 until 2015. Although social media such as social networking sites was first introduced in 1997 with Six Degrees.com, social media was only considered in the mainstream of the communication field in the year 2004 (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). According to Boyd and Ellison (2007), social media phenomena, its popularity and usage grew in 2004 with the emergence of online applications such as MySpace, LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr and many more. Thus, the year 2004 was selected for the timeframe of this study to understand the early adoption of social media phenomenon in Malaysia. The year 2015 is chosen as the end of the timeframe to distinguish the current state of the social media development in Malaysia.

1.3   Research Questions

Considering the issues stated in the problem statement, the following research questions are formulated:

1. Which mass communication theories have been used and developed in the research of social media on Malaysian users?

2. How are the theories being used in the social media related studies on Malaysian users?

3. What are the research patterns found in the social media studies on Malaysian users that were conducted from 2004 to 2015?

4. What are the scholars' points of views on the application of theories in the social media related studies?

1.4   Research Objectives

The general objective is to identify the research patterns in social media related studies in Malaysia from 2004 until 2015, particularly studies on the usage and effect of social media on Malaysian users.

The specific objectives are:
1. To identify the most frequently used mass communication or communication theories, theoretical frameworks or models in social media related studies on Malaysian users.
2. To determine how are the cited theories used in the social media research on Malaysian users.
3. To identify the research trends of social media related studies on Malaysian users (i.e. preferences of methodological approaches, social media type, research topic and developmental stages of social media research).
4. To understand the reasons behind the use and development of mass communication theories of the social media related studies on Malaysian users from the Malaysian scholars' point of view.

1.5   Significance of Study

The results of this study are expected to contribute to the mass communication theory knowledge and literature for the scholars that are focusing on the social media area of research. In the field of mass communication, this study depicts the evolution or progression of the mass communication theories used by the Malaysian scholars throughout the eleven-year period of study. There are several significance of this research, among them are: theoretical, methodological, policy formulation as well as practical implications.

Firstly, for theoretical implication, the findings of this study can be an important reference for the extension of theories in the mass communication field. As there has been limited research done on the theoretical application patterns of social media research in Malaysia, the assessment of the theoretical application and how the theories are used in the social media research can pave the path for other researchers that are also interested in the topic of study. Researchers on social media may use this study in generating ideas and propositions for theory development or construction for future social media research.

Aside from the above, another significant of this study is yielding further insights on the research trends of social media research in Malaysia. The comparison of findings between literatures of social media research can be a reference for future studies in the same field of interest. This study offers methodological reviews that are employed in

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previous studies of social media related research. The understanding on the methodological approach preferences and data-gathering procedures used in the past studies may be beneficial as guidelines for other researchers or scholars who would like to pursue their studies related to social media.

Thirdly, this study is expected to be beneficial for the media industry and governing bodies of the mass communication field. The study may contribute to the policy formulation on using social media for national agenda, social movement and more. Lastly, the study may also have a practical implication for the media industry in Malaysia. The results of the study can be a reference for communication practitioners in designing effective mass communication strategies in social media. With the theoretical analysis and research trends found, the study may contribute to the implementation of effective mass communication strategies in social media for the media industry to garner greater brand awareness, persuade customers or generate greater Return on Investments (ROI).

1.6   Scope of Study

In this research, the main purpose is to identify the research patterns of social media research in Malaysia. Specifically, this current study highlights on the theoretical application of mass communication theories that are applied in social media research in Malaysia. The study centres on mass communication theories to understand better on social media development in the country, particularly on the usage and effect of social media on Malaysian users. To accomplish this goal, the study is based on the review of precedent research trends through the content analysis of two approaches: (1) published papers in Malaysia's major academic journals on communication, media, social sciences and humanities that may publish on social media as well as (2) doctoral dissertations that are on social media research from universities in the country that offers doctoral programmes in media and communication. Adopting variables from past literature on research trends analyses of mass communication, new media and social media research, a framework of analysis will be utilised to determine the research patterns as well as the theoretical trends of social media studies in Malaysia.

First, a total of 21 academic journals on communication, media, social sciences and humanities are selected as the scope of this study based on the Malaysian Citation Index website (Malaysian Citation Index, 2015). The journals include Journal of Malaysian Studies, International Journal of Asia Pacific Studies, The Asian Journal of Humanities, Malaysian Journal of Communication, e-Bangi: Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, AKADEMIKA: *Jurnal Sains Kemasyarakatan dan Kemanusiaan*, Malaysian Journal of Media Studies, SARJANA, JATI: Journal of Southeast Asian Studies, The Journal of the South East Asia Research Centre for Communication and Humanities, Journal of Media and Information Warfare, Global Media Journal: Malaysian Edition, Journal of Language and Communication, PERTANIKA: Journal

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of Social Sciences and Humanities, *Jurnal Kemanusiaan*, Journal of Human Development and Communication, PERSPEKTIF: *Jurnal Sains Sosial dan Kemanusiaan*, Universiti Tun Abdul Razak e-Journal, Voice of Academia, International Academic Research Journal of Social Science, and Journal of International Studies.

Secondly, 21 universities in Malaysia are selected as the scope of this study such as Universiti Sains Malaysia, Universiti Malaya, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Universiti Utara Malaysia, International Islamic University Malaysia, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, Universiti Teknologi Petronas, Universiti Malaysia Perlis, Monash University, University of Nottingham, Infrastructure University Kuala Lumpur, Open University Malaysia, International University of Malaya-Wales and Asia eUniversity, Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, Curtin University Sarawak Malaysia, University Malaysia Sabah and Universiti Malaysia Terengganu. The 21 universities were selected based on the doctoral programmes that they provide as one of the present study's criteria is that theses should be for PhD in Communication and Media. The PhD dissertations were collected through the Malaysian Theses Online Database (MyTo) and each of the universities' online libraries and repositories.

Aside from the quantitative content analysis, this study also employs the qualitative approach by utilising supporting in-depth interviews to understand the reasons behind the application and development of mass communication theories related to social media research. In order to have an accurate scope for this study, Malaysian scholars in the mass communication field are selected to participate as informants.

1.7   Limitation of Study

As within any study, there are several limitations to be mentioned. Firstly, the choice of selecting only Malaysian journals on communication, media, social sciences and humanities for the sampling of this study may limit the data analysis and may not be exhaustive to determine the research trends of social media studies in Malaysia. Future studies can broaden the scope by selecting international or high-indexed journals for articles on social media research in Malaysia.

Secondly, the published articles of the selected journals may not be inclusive, as some of the studies may not include the methodological approaches, data gathering procedures, data analysis methods, samplings methods or theoretical applications that were employed. Thus, future studies should include further variation of international or high-indexed journals and disciplines to garner extensive research patterns in social media studies.

Next, this current research attempts to be comprehensive and exhaustive when choosing the keywords to select published papers from the selected journals or doctoral dissertations on social media research. However, other researchers may consider other key terms that may garner additional journal papers or doctoral dissertations on social media. Regardless, the study still believes that the list of keywords used as selection criteria for the content analysis is effective in cumulating published papers or dissertations related to social media research.

1.8   Definition of Terms

Mass communication

Mass communication is when a source (organisation) employs a technology as a medium to communicate with large audiences as the receivers (Baran & Davis, 2012). Traditionally, mass communication are distributed and presented in printed and digital media such as magazines, newspapers, direct mailers, radio and television (Rosenberry & Vicker, 2009; Wimmer & Dominick, 2011) to inform, entertain and persuade them (Vivian, 1997). However, in the new technological world today, the Internet has taken over the mass communication industry, where everyone turns for interaction, information, competitive comparison and even online purchasing. According to Chun and Keenan (2006), new media is an interactive, effective, efficient and useful medium that helps people communicate with each other such as the Internet. Today, the most popular new media and one of the fastest growing fields on the Internet is the social media.

Social media

Social media consists of a set web-based application that lets users to produce, change and remove User Generated Content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010) such as text messages, pictures, videos, audios and more. In this study, social media is referred to as collaborative projects (i.e. Wikipedia), blogs and microblogging (i.e. Blogspot or Twitter), content communities (i.e. YouTube or Flickr), social networking sites (i.e. Facebook or MySpace), virtual game worlds (i.e. Worldcraft) and virtual social worlds (i.e. SecondLife) (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Mass communication theory

Mass communication theory can be illustrated as a set of guidelines that helps in explaining, assessing, presuming and controlling certain communication phenomenon (Cragan & Shields, 1999). Mass communication theory can also be used to describe the impact of mass media on the audiences; show how people use the mass media and the

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reasons for their use; reveal how people receive news or information from the mass media as well as determining the role of the mass media to form the values of the audiences exposed to it (Rosenberry & Vicker, 2009).

Research trends

Research trend is referred to patterns, frequency, proportion or occurrences of research scholarship (Kim & Weaver, 2002; Khang, Ki & Ye, 2012). The need to assess research patterns of scholarship is to see and understand the issues, strengths and weaknesses of a certain field of area. Moreover, research trends analyses also helps in examining the direction and development of a certain discipline (Kim, Hayes, Avant & Reid, 2014) to help researchers make better research on future scholarly endeavours.

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