

Social Media Regulations: Opinion of Media Authors in Malaysia on Facebook Restrictions

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Abstract

Social media is a term that refers to websites that combine applications to allow users to create and exchange and share content with other users online. Social media users often imagine that social media is a secure and closed platform for them to share provocative and controversial content without realizing the potential impact of such sharing. However, Facebook does censor posts by users as a control strategy. It has some restrictions on access or posting and transfer of information as well as outlines the rights and responsibilities of users over each posting made. This study was conducted on the phrases blocked by Facebook especially in the matter of news distribution in addition to checking whether the editor-in-chief and authors in media organizations know the rules. Qualitative methods involving interviews of media organization experts were fully used in the study. The results of the study found that many Facebook rules are outlined for the well-being of local and international communities. It is true that certain phrases are blocked by Facebook on news released by media organizations despite the flexibility based on the use of the local language. In addition, the author group understands their responsibilities in the use of social media especially Facebook.

Keywords: *Social Media, Facebook, Phrases, Editor, News.*

Introduction

The use of social media is so significant in contemporary society as a platform that offers an easy way to access and connect networks of friends, family and communities around the world. Social media is part of service systems (Kadirov, 2010; Kadirov et al, 2020; Krisjanous et al, 2021). In addition to being a communication tool, social media is also capable of being a tool for disseminating and sharing information (Donath & Boyd, 2004; Boyd & Ellison, 2008). Social media websites can be categorized into social networking platforms (MySpace, LinkedIn, Facebook), media publishing platforms (Wordpress, Blogger, Wikipedia), content sharing platforms (YouTube, Flickr), discussion platforms (Yahoo Messenger, Skype), microblogging platforms (Twitter, Tumblr), live broadcast platforms (Lifestream), and virtual world platforms (Second Life) (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The number of individuals in the society who are involved with the use of social media has increased exponentially in recent years. According to the Pew Research Center (2019) in Smith's (2019) study in 2005, only five percent of Americans use social media and it increased to 50 percent in 2011 and continued to increase to 72 percent in 2018.

Recognizing the increase in users in cyberspace through social networks, news gathering and sharing shifted from the print newspaper industry to social media, providing a cheap and easy route to the journalism sector (Broersma & Graham, 2012). For example, Facebook has become the most visited website in terms of pages and time allocated. Through social media channels, newspapers update information on meteorological forecasts and promote specific events. Newspapers also share hosted news links to newspaper websites via social media (Ju, Jeong, & Chyi, 2014).

Although social media is now one of the discourses of news and information sharing, but almost all social media sites in the form of social networking sites - from MySpace to Friendster and then to Facebook - have some restrictions on access or posting and transfer of information. Myspace has provided a third of its staff to monitor profiles that potentially violate the terms of use of its platform. It includes sharing related postings of pornographic images, hate symbols and sensitive and offensive content (Rosenblum, 2007). Social media users often imagine that social media is a secure and closed platform for them to share provocative and controversial content without realizing the potential impact of such sharing (Jagatic, Johnson, Jakobsson, Menczer, 2007; Hey Tow, Dell, Venable, 2010). Thus, social media such as Facebook censor posts by users as a control strategy. Moreover, this control strategy is also able to be utilized by users in managing their social media followers (Wisniewski, Lipford, & Wilson, 2012). This posting filter was created to address the privacy aspect that is often an issue for social media users and preserve the overall security aspect. The posts they make are potentially accessed by inappropriate users gaining access as well as shared content (Bernstein, Bakshy, Burke, & Karrer, 2013).

Facebook has outlined the rights and responsibilities of users over every post made. Facebook has stated the seventh security regulation, users may not post content that contains hate speech, threats, pornography, incitement towards violence, pornographic images as well as violent-shaped images (Facebook, 2015). In addition, the openness of social networking platforms such as Facebook also encourages communication to take place freely in the virtual world and without censorship as well as scrutiny of facts, fake news and dissemination of inaccurate information by users (Wu, Morstatter, Hu, & Liu, 2016). In this regard, Facebook has recently partnered with the Singaporean government to introduce strict criteria for the purpose of political advertisements and social issues such as crime and immigration on social networking

platforms aimed at preventing the spread of false information (South China Morning Post, 2019). To increase security for consumers, especially children, the European Commission's Safer Internet Program has assisted social networks in regulating. Leading social network operators including Facebook have signed the Safer Social Networking Principles monitored by the European Union (EU). It outlines social networks should be appropriate for all ages, user privacy should always be taken care of, encourage users to manage personal information and create easy-to-use mechanisms for children to report inappropriate posts (Livingstone, Olafsson, & Staksrud, 2011).

Restrictions on access to the use of Facebook on citizens have occurred in several countries including China and North Korea to prevent the dissemination of any information to encourage rallies among the people. In the democracy bloc, in 2011 India called on social network operators to censor and take down shared content if it is in the form of degrading, harassing or offending the culture of the Indian community. Among the key words that the partnership has revealed are about the Telangana movement, money laundering and online gambling (Timmons, 2011). Degrading messages might relate to vulnerable groups (Mandlik et al., 2021), migrants (Krisjanous and Kadirov, 2018; Kadirov and Triveni, 2010), groups with specific needs (Krisjanous et al., 2021), and marginalised ethnic communities (Kadirov et al, 2018; Wisker et al, 2020).

Aside from the external pressures that cause Facebook or other social networking platforms to impose restrictions, there are also internal factors that are taken into account. According to Green, Wyllie and Jackson (2014), social networks may impose restrictions to protect individuals such as victims or witnesses of criminal incidents. Restrictions or censorship are also intended to maintain an environment that is acceptable to all ages such as no pornographic and violent posts. Content filtering can also protect users from any form of data breach and is also required to protect copyright and comply with the law. Therefore, media organizations should be aware of the restrictions and censorship imposed by social network operators such as Facebook so that the content shared reaches the target group. As the party that provides information and news to users, these restrictions and censorship have their own impact on the aspect of information delivery. With a social network usage rate in Malaysia of 67 percent, the number of readers posting on social media networks in Malaysia is high (Mustafa & Hamzah, 2011). These censors also tend to organize specific issues and audiences that social network operators desire and bring adverse effects to specific messages to be conveyed particularly from media practitioners (Jackson, 2014). Media practitioners in particular who act as news presenters bear additional responsibilities in the new media era with the presence of social media networks as a channel of information delivery. Journalists in New Zealand for example explain they are expected by management and editors to engage with online audiences and expand the number of news readers (Fletcher and Nielsen, 2018). Thus, journalists are responsible in ensuring that the target audience gets the news information to be delivered. Most of the research done on restrictions and censorship on the Internet is more focused on the aspects of IP and DNS in a country (Bamman, O'Connor, & Smith, 2012).

Therefore, this study aims to look at more micro restrictions and censorship by looking at keywords and posting specific issues by media practitioners in Malaysia that are often censored by Facebook. Using Social Responsibility Theory, this study will highlight how media practitioners exercise public interest and carry specific social responsibilities. This theory explains that the media should shoulder the task of maintaining the quality of news delivery and the impact on the publication of their work to the general public (McQuail, 2010). According to this theory, the media can be held directly and indirectly accountable by society

in delivering quality news and this theory will be a gauge to the knowledge, practices, ethics and skills of journalists facing the challenges of censorship and censorship on social networking platforms. This study will give a glimpse of the phrases identified in the news content blocked by Facebook and whether the media authors are aware of the rules of blocking and censorship by Facebook and the form of action taken in the delivery of news to the Facebook page.

The public is now exposed to hundreds of daily news reports written in newsrooms. Yet, in a world where information has no limits, credibility is an important determinant in the choice of content presented by any media (Schweiger, 2000; Nygren, & Guath, 2019). Trusted media will deliver quality news content and have credibility that will influence the success of the media and its commercial value. The presence of Facebook makes it difficult for the journalism industry in delivering news as it does with traditional news delivery (Mitchell & Holcomb, 2016). The popularity of traditional media is declining and causing media practitioners to switch to digital media as the amount of traffic in social media is more and it is a new future for industry players. This has led to a new connection between journalists and social media. At the same time, there is a growing concern about Facebook's strength over journalism (Bell, 2016). Hermida (2016) describes the news environment has shifted. Nowadays, users find many messages but only some of them are news. Social media is changing the news ecosystem by expanding the channels through which news can be created and disseminated. Social media makes news sharing one of the elements in its use. At the micro level, Facebook is changing how news is understood by rearranging the context of news in the social media space (Winter, Brückner, & Krämer, 2015). The growing influence of Facebook as a news dissemination site prompts a rethinking of how certain news styles are appropriately exhibited for reading purposes (Vermeer, Trilling, Kruikemeier, & de Vreese, 2020). Mass media authors can edit and define news presentations according to their respective organizational house styles before being uploaded on digital and social media platforms such as Facebook, however there are rules set by the social media platforms themselves to adhere to.

Research Questions:

- i) What are the phrases identified in the news content that Facebook is blocking?
- ii) Are media authors aware of the rules of restrictions and censorship by Facebook and the form of action taken in the delivery of news to the Facebook page?

Research Objective:

- i) Identify phrases in news content that are blocked by Facebook.
- ii) Identify the level of knowledge of media authors on the rules of restrictions and censorship by Facebook and the form of action taken in the delivery of news to the Facebook page.

Literature Review

Malaysia has prioritized the development of information and communication technology but still adopts a policy of tolerance and liberalism based on the guidelines stated in dealing with the media boom (Parliamentary Statement, 2001). Malaysia also gets the most attention in terms of the development of information technology around the world and the audience is given a variety of media options. From traditional media such as newspapers, magazines, telegraphs, films, radio and television, the rise of new media is drastically driven by the development and advancement of information technology. Many new elements will emerge in line with

technological advances and in 1987, Malaysia began to use a new media known as the Internet. New media needs to be handled well and media control is a method of curbing the deliberate dissemination of information by certain parties in any way, usually by governments or owners of media organizations. Media handling is defined as a method of blocking, filtering, canceling and prohibiting any information that a media organization wishes to convey to the public (Mahmud & Pitchan, 2017). In terms of media and regulation, the concept of media control or media information control is described by Kent (1975) as any process that influences the flow rate or type of information contained in a media system. Kent (1975) outlines several forms of media control namely censorship which involves efforts to hide or limit the amount of information published and distorted to protect the interests of parties. However, media control can change due to technological advances, an increasingly heterogeneous society, which makes media control more difficult to curb and less economically productive as well as a more sophisticated audience or audience following improved living standards and education. Control is the process of filtering information and ideas disseminated in a community (Mahmud et al., 2017). Censorship is not a new concept in the modern world as it has evolved in the 20th century through book reviews, radio or television shows, films, dramas and news reports (Mahmud et al., 2017). Today, freedom especially in the media is still a matter of debate among academics, scholars, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and politicians.

According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 (Assembly, 1948), Clause 19 states that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes the freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and communicate information and ideas through any media and regardless of boundaries. That is, everyone has the freedom to speak, speak and express their thoughts without interruption and to receive and disseminate information through any media regardless of borders. In the realities of life, people generally need guidance on what to do and vice versa in their lives. Law is one of the most important elements in this context, through which one can live in peace and harmony. However, the government continues to face various challenges in its efforts to enforce the law (Pitchan, Mahmud, Sannusi, & Salman, 2015). In this country, the Printing Presses and Publications Act 1984 was enacted to regulate the use of printing and printing, import, production, reproduction, publication and distribution of publications and on matters connected therewith. The Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission Act 1998 and the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 enable the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) to perform its role in regulating cyber security. Among the several acts related to the profession of journalism and should be known is the Sedition Act 1948 which aims to punish anyone who raises sensitive questions with the intention of inciting and endangering national security. The Official Secrets (Amendment) Act 1986 aims to keep the country's official secrets so that they are not leaked to those who want to make immediate profits or could threaten national security. Meanwhile, the Defamation Act 1957 aims to protect the public from being a tool of defamation. Defamation is a lie that is publicly published or broadcast to a third party. The Defamation Act is a civil law while the Internal Security Act 1960 was created to curb subversive activities that could endanger national security, whether communist, political, or persons involved in communist activities (after the end of the Emergency on July 31, 1960). The Penal Code contains criminal provisions in the Penal Code that touch on freedom of speech. Restrictions are made on words that insult women, threats, insulting or insulting, treacherous statements, rumors, advertisements of pornographic books and statements that may offend religion. The Copyright Act 1987 aims to protect original works from being misused by others who want to make a profit easily and immediately. In the meantime, the Printing Presses and Publications Act 1984 was created to regulate all types of publications whether printed domestically or imported.

Media and Technology

The Internet and social media are changing the way people interact. The Internet represents a new, unique, and evolving media environment. Before the internet, human interaction depended on the physical location of communication, but the existence of the internet facilitated communication. The Internet also allows the replication of face-to-face interactions, where two individuals who communicate using this technology can communicate directly (Melissa & Hamidati, 2011). The advent of digital networks and the internet especially computer information technology is driving the digital era. New media in the digital age can be manipulated, networked or the internet. The mass media is turning to new media or the internet due to cultural changes in the dissemination of information. The capabilities of this digital age facilitate and accelerate the dissemination of information to the public and the internet media is driving a large part of the mass media to shift towards digital. The development of social media is changing the way of life of society when its users are constantly updating and sharing information in high frequency. Social media is used as an alternative media for discussion and as a medium of user interaction to respond to current issues (Setiawan, 2017). Changes in various media networks present various challenges to the role, norms and daily practices of journalism. Professional culture is articulated in the skills, ideas and practices used as a model of audience-oriented journalism. The Internet and tools that empower journalists to do their (traditional) jobs better move to the next level, resulting in a greater commitment to the use of sociotechnology (Spyridou, Matsiola, Veglis, Kalliris, & Dimoulas, 2013).

The development of information, communication and technology has brought great changes in the media industry including society as a publisher or consumer in terms of such information, communication and technology. The media industry is evolving through the expansion of ownership in various mass media or outside the mass media. Concerns about travel distance or long-term needs are no longer a barrier in the dissemination of information (Pratiwi, 2015). Society now has a wide range of information, and even more importantly in reviewing and evaluating all the information available in the mass media, especially online. The development of information, communication and technology is causing social and cultural change. Communities become freer to voice their opinions online until they form an online community that is a movement or social change in society. There is no denying that today's society cannot avoid the impact of information, communication and technology.

Media and Facebook

Social media is changing the circulation of news, shifting from a mass communication model defined as one-way news selection and delivery (Nerone and Barnhurst, 2001) to a network of users who personalize their content, share stories with others, add comments and showcase stories through popularity. In the face of developments, discussions about Facebook's involvement with news and news organizations should not be seen as exaggerated but as part of an important interpretive process, in which journalistic practices are recognized or represented as an appropriate way for the public to find out. News formation is not a natural entity, but a practical material form and its meaning arises through metajournalistic discourse (Carlson, 2016). According to Ma'Alip (2015) in his study found that Facebook is the most

popular social site made the main choice of respondents representing 53.9% while the second most popular social site is Instagram by 30.0%, followed by Twitter by 15.6%. According to The Star, 2010 Malaysians are known to have a large number of friends on Facebook (Balakrishnan and Shamim, 2013). This media is known to be the most popular online social network, especially among college students. As has been reported by previous studies 85-90% of college students use Facebook on a daily basis (Hargittai & Walejko, 2008; Jones & Fox, 2009). Facebook created a Community Standard that outlines what is allowed and what is not allowed for users. These standards are universal for all types of content and are designed to be comprehensive - content that is not considered hate speech can still be removed for violating the social site's bullying policy. Facebook wants to create a safe environment and develop its policies based on input from its community and experts in areas such as technology and public safety. Conversations on Facebook reflect the diversity of a community of more than two billion individuals communicating around the world. Facebook Community Standards will continue to develop over time and serve as a guide for how to communicate. Facebook users need to follow the guidelines that are set.

Malaysia inherited the press system left by the British after achieving independence in 1957, including the success of the press laws established during the British occupation. Media practitioners in this country use the Moral Pillars outlined by the National Union of Journalists of Peninsular Malaysia (NUJM) as a guide in producing news that is in line with the practice of the concept of Social Responsibility Theory. The following is the moral code set by the NUJM.

- i. Respect the rights and entitlements of the public to get proper reporting. Preserves two basic principles: the freedom to seek and print reports honestly and correctly to comment and reprimand fairly without pressure from any party.
- ii. Reports are based only on clear and authentic facts from clear and valid sources. The methods used to obtain news, photos and documents must be true and not illegal.
- iii. Republish the correct statement if there are errors in the report and do not publish the source if requested.
- iv. Avoid serious offenses of intentionally committing fraud, defamation, baseless allegations, and bribery to publish or conceal something in a report.
- v. Do not be subjected to pressure, coercion or threats to influence the decision on reports that are considered important and should be made public.

In the meantime, McQuail (2002) stressed that the power of the media is not only to promote certain ideas and images but has the ability to be a gatekeeper to society. According to McQuail (2010), the basic principles of Social Responsibility Theory as i) the media must accept and fulfill certain responsibilities to society; ii) this obligation is based on professionalism such as quality of information, truthfulness, accuracy and appropriateness and balance; iii) regulate and act within the law and institutions; iv) Avoid messages that could be detrimental to society and the country; v) Provide opportunities for the community to express their views; and vi) Individuals involved in communication media responsibilities must be accountable to employers and the state. Snider, Hill and Martin (2003) emphasize that social responsibility is traditionally understood as equating being a good citizen translates into a company and that it focuses to specific issues such as environmental, social or caring society policies. In this regard,

the same concept is used by Adams-Bloom and Cleary (2009) on Social Responsibility Theory in media by emphasizing that social responsibility principles are used to address true, objective and fair issues in media content. In relation to the social and economic responsibility of a media Adams-Bloom et al (2009) also showed that social responsibility also needs to change, especially with the expansion of new media channels that also change the way viewers use their content, forcing media organizations to make appropriate changes in their content. In the context of news reporting, social media responsibilities involving so-called development journalism include supporting development efforts in line with government policies and policies; developing a society with information that contains good cultural values; individuals involved in communication media should be free to obtain information within the law and be held accountable for such information.

Methodology

This study uses a qualitative method to analyze the role of mass media authors in complying with Facebook rules. The interview approach was done by explaining Facebook's restrictions on the media in Malaysia and its impact on media reporting in Malaysia. The interview method was used because the researcher was able to ask questions openly to the informant. In this study, the analysis used is content analysis, grammar and phenomenology. The seven informants who were asked and selected to be interviewed were those who were proficient in the field of this study and they were given 14 questions to answer. Face-to-face interviews with informants and telephone given that time is the country hit by the Covid-19 pandemic. Researchers recorded conversations using mobile phones and recorded various information obtained using notebooks. This information is then compiled, interpreted and analyzed by the researcher. The following is a list of informants in Table 1.

Table 1.1: Expert Interview Background Information

| No | Name | Position | Organization | Experience | Expert ID |
|----|-----------|---|---|------------|-------------|
| 1 | Informant | Senior News Editor | Berita Harian (Malay Mainstream Newspaper) | 26 years | Informant 1 |
| 2 | Informant | News Collection and Current Affairs Manager | TV3 - Media Prima Berhad (TV Station) | 32 years | Informant 2 |
| 3 | Informant | Head of Youth Initiative and Social Media | Astro Awani (TV Station) | 8 years | Informant 3 |
| 4 | Informant | Malay Edition Editor | Malaysiakini (News portal) | 12 years | Informant 4 |
| 5 | Informant | Bernamea.com Editor | Pertubuhan Berita Nasional Malaysia (News Agency) | 21 years | Informant 5 |

| | | | | | |
|---|-----------|-------------------------------|---|----------|-------------|
| 6 | Informant | Sinar Harian Online Webmaster | Sinar Harian (Malay Mainstream Newspaper) | 12 years | Informant 6 |
| 7 | Informant | Premium Desk Editor | Sinar Harian (Malay Mainstream Newspaper) | 16 years | Informant 7 |

Findings

1. What are the phrases identified in news content that are blocked by Facebook?

According to interviews conducted with informants, no specific phrases were listed by social media such as Facebook to be blocked. Facebook will remove content that has elements of hate, threatening, and obscene, inciting violence, content that contains nude photos or extreme violence. Although there is no complete list of what can be written on the Facebook space, media practitioners in Malaysia have their own guidelines on what they can share through their Facebook space. Although some phrases such as the words rape, bastard, sex, anal are not allowed to be used in the Facebook space, but as media practitioners in Malaysia, they have their own standards in choosing phrases found in the Malaysian dictionary. This has been explained by Informant 2:

“The Gatekeeper at TV3 does not use the Facebook Community Standard as a guide in news editing in the organization. TV3 outlines its own guidelines in news editing and will continue to use the word rape and the phrase as it is a dictionary word that is free to use in news reports. The expression ‘haruan makan anak’ used in the news report will not be edited by the gatekeeper and will still be used because it is a parable and a description of the individual who raped his own child. The words that are the daily conversation will be used in every news report.” - Informant 2 (Media Prima Television Network News Collection and Current Affairs Manager)

Most media practitioners in Malaysia can list the forms of phrases that are blocked by Facebook. However, it is their choice to use the phrase or not because the choice of the phrase by Facebook and media practitioners in Malaysia are different. The following is a list of phrases identified as blocked by Facebook through the experience of media practitioners:

“Gatekeeper at Berita Harian makes the Facebook Community Standard as a guide to edit the news that will be uploaded on the social media. Among the words that will be filtered are ‘keling’ and ‘pariah’ because they touch on racial sensitivities in this country.” - Informant 1 (Berita Harian Senior News Editor)

“Berita Harian has received many restrictions from Facebook for violating Facebook's Community Standards. Every day there is news that needs to be removed from Facebook on certain factors and most of it is emotionally related. News of the crash between articles that were once blocked and received reprimands from Facebook for containing pictures of blood. Another example is the news about a boy being abused and his picture was also published in Berita Harian which had received a ban from Facebook for using the words ‘keling’ and ‘pariah’. News related to allegations against certain parties or individuals will not be uploaded on Facebook if there is no response from the parties or individuals involved, for example the news

of Azmin Ali who is accused of sodomy.” - Informant 1 (Berita Harian Senior News Editor)

“Gatekeeper at Malaysiakini knows about the Facebook Community Standard but not in detail. The rules and restrictions imposed by Facebook on media in Malaysia are the same as other social media platforms. Facebook rejects violence, pornography and defamation.” - Informant 4 (Malaysiakini Editor)

“News that is too violent or obscene uploaded by Sinar Harian on Facebook will be blocked. Facebook also once blocked news that used the word rape automatically. Sinar Harian accepts restrictions from Facebook for news or content that contains violent, obscene elements and does not comply with rules or ethics. Among the examples of blocked material is a photo of a child who was reported to be a prostitute.” - Informant 7 (Sinar Harian Premium Desk Editor)

“Gatekeeper also knows that there are certain phrases that will be blocked by Facebook if posted. Reports of suicide and touching on racial sensitivities are not allowed at all.” Informant 5 (Bernama.com Editor)

“Astro Awani has violated the rules imposed by Facebook, especially in cases related to suicide. Facebook had blocked Astro Awani's account for three months for violating the rules and not complying with Facebook's Community Standards.” - Informant 3 (Head of Astro Awani Youth and Social Media Initiative)

“News that has pictures of suicides has received restrictions from Facebook for violating the Facebook Community Standards. Sinar Harian received a notification from Facebook because the suicidal individual can still be seen clearly even though the picture has been blurred before being uploaded on Facebook.” - Informant 6 (Sinar Harian Online Webmaster)

“So far, TV3 has only received restrictions from Facebook due to copyright issues.” - Informant 2 (TV3 News Collection and Current Affairs Manager)

“Malaysiakini has received a notification from Facebook due to the issue of copyright of pictures used in its news reports.” - Informant 4 (Malaysiakini Editor)

“So far, Bernama news uploaded on Facebook has never been blocked but the video has faced copyright issues for the songs used.” - Informant 5 (Bernama.com Editor)

From interviews conducted with Malaysian media practitioners, it was found that there are categories of phrases used that will be blocked by Facebook. Facebook blocks phrases that contain elements of racism (keling, pariah), violent (suicide, blood photos), sexual (rape, sodomy, pornography) and posts that infringe copyright. Facebook is strict with the restrictions they impose on phrases and the copyright of a post even though the phrase is found in the Bahasa Malaysia dictionary such as the phrases rape and sodomy. Phrases such as pariah and keling should be blocked because they are racist and they are terms that are not registered in the Bahasa Malaysia dictionary. However, the phrase restriction from Facebook is less agreed by some media practitioners in Malaysia. In their view, Facebook is less knowledgeable about the phrases that Malaysians often use in everyday conversation. Phrases blocked by Facebook also look more at contexts that are perceived negatively by society in the West. For example,

Informant 1 argued that Facebook should not block the word *pariah* because it does not refer to any particular race and it is a phrase commonly used by Malaysians. The message that media practitioners in Malaysia want to share does not reach the target audience because the message to be conveyed needs to be changed several times before it can be shared. It is shared as in the following interview:

"There are rules and restrictions imposed by Facebook that are excessive. For example, blocking accident news that included pictures of severely injured and bleeding victims. Facebook should not block the word pariah because it does not mean negative and does not refer to a particular individual or race. Facebook needs to identify common phrases used by Malaysians and not block them. A committee should be set up by Facebook to re-evaluate phrases that touch on political and racial sensitivities. Facebook is also asked not to be too strict with its rules because it makes it difficult for gatekeepers to perform their duties." - Informant 1 (Berita Harian Senior News Editor)

"In the context of Malaysia, the rules and restrictions by Facebook are felt to be imposed on the media in Malaysia because they do not cause any impact. The rules and restrictions imposed by Facebook are only in accordance with the ethics and assessments of Western countries and only what is considered outside their limits will be blocked." - Informant 2 (TV3 News Collection and Current Affairs Manager)

However, Malaysian media practitioners abide by the rules and restrictions imposed by Facebook because as a large social media entity, Facebook needs to look after the interests of many parties. Facebook also plays a role in ensuring that posts shared on its platform spread positive content.

"The Facebook Standard Community is considered cruel but it is understood that the action taken is to protect the interests of investors and discipline the media in Malaysia. Facebook connects many people, so the platform needs to scrutinize and ensure that every content uploaded by the media does not have negative elements." - Informant 3 (Head of Astro Awani Youth and Social Media Initiative)

"The restrictions imposed by Facebook on the media are very necessary because a lot of news content and reports need to be screened before being published so that it is suitable for all parties to read." - Informant 6 (Sinar Harian Online Webmaster)

2. Are media authors aware of the rules of restrictions and censorship by Facebook and the form of action taken in delivering news to the Facebook page?

In this convergent era, media authors should be aware of the rules, restrictions and censorship imposed by Facebook because social media is one of their mediums to share news with readers. Furthermore, according to a study by Anspach (2017), Facebook users are able to influence what news their friends should read on Facebook. As such, news that is sensational and read by many users will reach a larger audience. Therefore, media authors need to know the form of rules and restrictions imposed by Facebook to ensure that the news reaches the reader and is not blocked. Through interviews with media authors, it was found that only one media practitioner was unaware of Facebook's rules and restrictions on user-uploaded submissions.

“I do not know and am not aware of the Facebook Community Standards and do not make the Facebook Community Standards a guide in news editing.” - Informant 7 (Sinar Harian Premium Desk Editor)

This explains why submissions shared by Sinar Harian are often blocked by Facebook as explained by Informant 7 in objective 2. According to him:

“News that is too violent or obscene uploaded by Sinar Harian on Facebook will be blocked. Facebook also once blocked news outlets that used the word rape automatically. Sinar Harian accepts restrictions from Facebook for news or content that contains violent, obscene elements and does not comply with rules or ethics. Among the examples of blocked material is a photo of a child who was reported to be a prostitute.” - Informant 7 (Sinar Harian Premium Desk Editor)

News shared by Sinar Harian on Facebook is often blocked and among them contains violent and obscene elements including the use of the words rape and prostitution. Furthermore, the news of the prostitution involved children. This is due to the author of Sinar Harian who is not aware of the Facebook Community Standards in editing news to be uploaded to Facebook. However, the majority of other news writers are aware of the rules and restrictions imposed by Facebook. They argue that the restrictions imposed are necessary to maintain the sensitivity of the community.

“The Gatekeeper at Berita Harian knows about the existence of the Facebook Standard Community and is of the view that the rules set by Facebook are intended to safeguard the sensitivity of the community. Under the auspices of Media Prima, Berita Harian went through an era of convergence and made a transformation in terms of work in the organization. The senior author is in charge as a gatekeeper, he knows about the conditions of uploading news to Facebook.” - Informant 1 (Berita Harian Senior News Editor)

“Gatekeeper at Malaysiakini knows about the Facebook Community Standard but not in detail. The rules and restrictions imposed by Facebook on media in Malaysia are the same as other social media platforms.” - Informant 4 (Malaysiakini Editor)

“Gatekeepers at Bernama know about the Facebook Standard Community and the rules and restrictions imposed. Gatekeepers also know that there are certain phrases that Facebook will block if posted. The rules set through the Facebook Community Standards will serve as a guide for news editing.” - Informant 5 (Bernama.com Editor)

The Gatekeeper is aware of the restrictions and will be careful to release news that will be uploaded on Facebook and ensure it is carefully reviewed. There are certain SOPs that are practiced by mainstream media such as Berita Harian when selecting news to be uploaded on Facebook. The mainstream media needs to be sensitive and maintain sensitivity in producing news and when uploading any content on Facebook to avoid tension. It is the policy editorial of every mainstream media organization and also a guide for all media personnel.” - Informant 1 (Berita Harian Senior News Editor)

“Gatekeeper at Sinar Harian knows that the Facebook Community Standard is a guideline to ensure that the material uploaded does not violate certain ethics.

Gatekeeper at Sinar Harian has made the Facebook Community Standard a guide in news editing.” - Informant 6 (Sinar Harian Online Webmaster)

After the news written by the author is edited, it is uploaded to the official Facebook belonging to the newsroom. Sometimes, it is still blocked by Facebook because it does not meet the criteria for sharing to Facebook. Thus, the authors interviewed have shared the steps taken by them in ensuring that the news can be shared with readers.

“The action taken after receiving reprimands and restrictions from Facebook is to immediately release the news to be corrected before being re-uploaded to the social media platform.” - Informant 1 (Berita Harian Senior News Editor)

“The action imposed made the gatekeeper at Astro Awani more careful in editing the news. Among the actions taken against the blocked news is to re-process the content to comply with the accuracy made by Facebook before being re-uploaded on social media.” - Informant 3 (Head of Astro Awani Youth and Social Media Initiative)

“Reports blocked by Facebook will be immediately removed from the social media platform. However, if the ban involves an offense that should not be prosecuted, the editor will make an explanation to Facebook and eventually the report will be given permission for publication.” - Informant 5 (Bernama.com Editor)

As has been reported, there are restrictions imposed by Facebook related to copyright. This means, news authors must explain the original source of the news or photos taken that have been uploaded to their Facebook page. However, if restrictions are imposed, media practitioners will explain to Facebook about their news sources to ensure copyright is not infringed.

“The issue (copyright) is addressed by subscribing to Reuters and collaborating with several other news television stations such as RCTI and TVRI. The restrictions imposed by Facebook on TV3 will be referred to the company's Legal Department and the gatekeeper will not contact Facebook to discuss the issue.” - Informant 2 (TV3 News Collection and Current Affairs Manager)

“Facebook is found to be very strict and sensitive to content uploaded by the media, especially photos and visuals. Astro Awani has also faced the issue of copyright infringement but the action taken is to provide an explanation to Facebook that permission has been obtained from the owner of the blocked visual.” - Informant 3 (Head of Astro Awani Youth and Social Media Initiative)

“Pictures taken from Johor Southern Tiger's account were reported to Facebook. The action was taken for copyright infringement and upon receiving a reprimand from Facebook, the photo was immediately removed. After receiving the notification from Facebook, the photo that allegedly infringed the copyright was immediately removed.” - Informant 4 (Malaysiakini Editor)

Conclusion

The results show that every online media organization in Malaysia must comply with the Facebook Community Standards and internal rules in Facebook if using the social media

platform to post content or news. All media organizations in which seven informants served have been prosecuted for violating the Community Standards. In an effort to identify phrases in news content blocked by Facebook authors, mostly identified words that touched on racial sensitivities such as *keling* and *pariah* were clearly not allowed to be posted on Facebook. In addition, video content will also face action if there is copyright infringement. The question of measuring the level of awareness of media authors about Facebook's rules and restrictions also found six out of seven gatekeepers of media organizations in the country were aware of the rules Facebook imposed on online media. In this study, three aspects have been identified that need improvement to help facilitate the task of news writers or gatekeepers in the news editing process, namely the rules and restrictions imposed by Facebook are excessive. Facebook needs to identify common phrases used by Malaysians and not block them. A committee should be set up by Facebook to re-evaluate phrases that touch on political and racial sensitivities. Facebook was also asked not to be too strict with its rules as it makes it difficult for gatekeepers to perform tasks. The rules and restrictions imposed by Facebook are only in accordance with the ethics and assessments of Western countries and only what is considered beyond their limits will be blocked and the social media platform is said not to understand the media landscape, especially in Malaysia. However, some authors are of the view that the rules imposed by Facebook on the media are very necessary because a lot of news content and reports need to be screened before being published so that it is suitable for all parties to read.

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