Reaching Users through Facebook in Pandemic Situation: The Malay Studies Library, University of Malaya Experience

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ABSTRACT
The Malay Studies Library (PPM) is one of the special libraries in the University of Malaya Library network that serves Academy of Malay Studies (APM) users. This paper aims to discuss the responses taken by PPM to continue serving its subject- based community through social media platform i.e., Facebook despite the pandemic situation. Primary information derived from the built-in Facebook statistical application and librarian experience in managing the dissemination of subject -specific information contributed to the understanding the users' information needs. The findings shown that each format of content evoked different users' interest. Users are also using the platform as medium of communication with the librarian.

Keywords: Malay studies, Malay Studies Library, Social media, COVID-19, Facebook, Liaison librarian

INTRODUCTION

The Malay Studies Library Facebook (PPMFB) https://www.facebook.com/malaystudieslibrary/ has been in service since 2014. It is managed individually by Mr Haslan Bin Tamjehi, The Librarian of Malay Studies, University of Malaya. The main purpose of the library Facebook is to be a medium in promoting the collection, services and activities of The library. The Facebook Platform was chosen due to its popularity among students. Almost all student bodies in The University of Malaya have their own Facebook sites. By subscribing to Facebook it is seen a strategic move to approach students online. When COVID-19 virus outbreak raging in the country. The function of the PPM Facebook is extending from promotional platform to subject specific information provider.

Library operation during MCO

The enforcement of MCO on 18th March 2020 the library is minimizing its operation by fulfilling online book request from in -campus users. Only library staff is allowed to enter the library to work. User entry to the library is technically not allowed. The counter service is limited to book returning. All returned books have to undergo 3 days quarantine

process in a special box for disinfection. If meeting with user is necessary standard procedure is observed such as wearing mask, scanning Mysejahtera app, filling up visitor record book, hand sanitization and social distancing. The meeting point is only up to designated area of the service counter. In April 2021 users were allowed to make seat reservation to enter the Library.

However, due to the recent surge of second wave of COVID-19 in the country, third MCO is enforced, and the library is totally closed to users and library staff. This pandemic contributes to disruption and inconsistency of the library service delivery which in return causing users dissatisfaction.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

COVID-19 pandemic has affecting University operations including library service. the closing of Malay Studies library interrupted student learning and research. Social media platform such as Facebook can be an alternative to help those students to get access to the information related to Malay Studies.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this paper are:
1. To discuss the responses taken by Malay Studies Library via social media app e.g. Facebook to serve its users during current pandemic situation.
2. To describe challenges in providing services via Facebook for subject specific online community.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Review of literature information about related subject of research from its findings, methodology and contribution to the topic of highlight. Philips (2011) described about the feasibility of Facebook in academic library as a mean of service delivery. The analysis of Facebook pages of selected academic libraries in Illinois revealed Facebook dynamic could cultivate relationship between academic ibraries and student. Usage of Facebook among librarians presents themselves as approachable (Garcia, Elbeltagi, Dungay & Hardaker, 2015). The study discussed whether Facebook social network support informal learning and peer support. Social network analysis (SNA) demonstrated student in central in the central of the network tend to remain in course and achieve their qualification.

Kai, Pierri, Pik, Axelrod, Torres-Lugo, Bryden & Menczer, (2021) made comparison between Facebook and Twitter in the dissemination of COVID-19 misinformation. Data based on identified keywords from Facebook and Twiitter Post were analysed. The finding shown infodemic content is coordinated sharing. Facebook is more effective than Twitter in combating the infodemic due to stronger role of verified accounts of the platform. Boholano & Cajes (2021) studied the reasons and feedback of Cebu University students of using Facebook. Mixed method was used to gather information. The result revealed frequent use of Faceback may cause adversed effect. However, Facebook is beneficial in information exchange and collaboration in the group chat. It is a learning tool in instruction during COVID-19 pandemic to students and lecturer.

METHODOLOGY

Library Facebook Performance data in three months (1st April to 30th June 2021) was analysed to see how user responded to the posted content. The data from the specified period were taken as a sample to see users' preferences and reaction over the posted contents on the PPM Facebook page. The underlining objectives of designated time span can be described as: First month, identifying to be observed contents; Second month, to see the pattern of preference; Third month, to confirm the pattern of user most preferred content. The contents were ranked from 1st to 4th based on the highest to lowest score in Page Reach for each month. The overall rank is also provided to give general overview of user content preference. Page reach was chosen as main ranking criteria since it indicates the number of users who saw a PPM page content. Engagement is paired with Page Reach to enhance the analysis process. Additionally, the accumulation of experience of the librarian in charged in preparing content and managing the Facebook itself contributed as a primary source for this research.

RESPONSES VIA FACEBOOK

The pandemic has deprived users' privilege to access library collection. Immediate action must be taken by PPM to support their information needs. Mobilizing the existing Facebook page to serve library users in online environment is considered as the fastest and best alternative to reach them during the pandemic. The Facebook page is optimized by PPM to:

1.To supply information
Regardless of the current situation, it is the responsibility of a PPM to provide subject - related content on Malay Studies. Most of the resources about Malay Studies is largely available in printed format. Since the Librarian in charge has some understanding about the field, relevant information from available source with him is shared with the users in the page.

2. informing available online resources.
The page is used to inform users with available online resources on the subject. It gives information that direct user to the online resources provided by UM Library or other entities.

3. Give motivational words / to console
The enforced Movement Control Order (MCO) may cause mental Fatigue, stress and loneliness. Instead of providing information, the Library Facebook is becoming platform of interaction with users, it tried to console users with motivational and inspirational words to promote positivity. By consistent interaction, user will feel the librarian presence as virtual companion. Greetings, and whishing users with good health may give positive effect to their lives.

4.Safety reminder on COVID-19

Consistent reminder posted on COVID-19 prevention and precaution to instil awareness.

5. Library updates
To update users with current development of PPM and University Malaya Library in general.

6. Answering library queries.
Queries that channelled comment and Facebook Messenger are entertained by PPM librarian. Questions on library operation, book renewal, fines as well as information request received as personal message in messenger.

CONTENT OF PPM FACEBOOK

The type of content in PPM Facebook are text, image, video, web links. The medium language of the PPM Facebook content is Malay language. It is the main medium of instruction in the Academy of Malay Studies, University Malaya.

The most posted content is in the text form. The text is a selected quotes from books and journals related to the field of Malay Studies. The text itself is available in several forms. First, mere plain text. Secondly, a text with a graphic background which created with graphic apps and converted as JPEG file. Thirdly, a text directly captured with smartphone camera and edited with a built-in app from dailies such as Sinar, Utusan Malaysia, Berita Harian and, New Strait Times. The latter two text formats are considered as image by Facebook.

Preparation of the content involves several procedures. It begins with determining subject searching for resources selection and evaluation (this involved scanning and reading exercise). When the quote is selected, it is copied by typing the quote and with complete citation to avoid plagiarism. After that proofreading process is taken place to avoid misspelling. In average It takes 16 minutes to complete 16 lines text. It is times consuming undertaking but worth it.

The content mainly based on the five main subjects division of Academy of Malay Studies mentioned earlier. This includes their related subdivisions. For example, ekonomi Melayu (for Malay's economic condition and activities) Sejarah Melayu (for Malay historical criticism, and origin). However, there are also complimentary subjects content such as, research methodology guide. Hikmah which consist of wisdom quotes derived from Malay scholars. Others are Library collection highlight updates, activities announcements, links of webinar, conference paper call, ads for faculties activities.

Content organization
PPM Facebook posting is released daily. In average there are three posts posted per day. Minimum of one post whenever the librarian is engaged with urgent task. To organize the posting of the page content. A daily schedule is devised to keep track and guided. Each day is assigned with a specific content subject: Monday: Malay Language; Tuesday: Malay Literature; Wednesday: Malay Linguistics; Thursday: Malay Socio- Culture, History; Friday: Malay Arts; Saturday: Research Guide and Malay Wisdoms; Sunday: Rest and Preparation of content.

However, there are times when the subject scheduled is not followed. This happened when the librarian unable to find a suitable content or more editing time needed to prepare the content. Whatever the situation is, the librarian is trying to have one post live on that day if possible.

Hashtags

Each posting is accompanied with hashtags for the purpose of internet discovery with search engines. However, the other objective of the hashtag is to give user basic information about the posting's theme. This is helpful when a quote derived from a middle of paragraphs. Although temporary title is given by putting square bracket symbol [temporary title], the admin is trying to minimize the practice in order to retain the originality of the extracted text). The hashtags that frequently used by the PPM FB are: #bahasamelayu, #sasteramelayu, #linguistikmelayu, #sosiobudayamelayu, #kesenianmelayu, #hikmah#panduan, #penyelidikan, #manuskripmelayu.

Content reaction

The reaction of user for a post depends on type of the content. For two lines Pantun of Tenas Effendy from his book tunjuk Ajar Melayu with nice graphic and fonts PPMFB could get a Like or share within or less than 15 minutes. However, a plain text of about 12 text lines on Pantun need more than 30 minutes to get a reaction. Even though no reaction acquired by the content could get more page reach and engagement. This means the post is being viewed and read passively by users. An image needs to have description to get more reactions. A mere photo may only get page reach. Whereas a photo image with Malay Studies Student s or known figures could get instant Like and Engagements. Based on the author observation the audience of PPMFB prefer plain text with Malay studies topics and image of Academy of Malay Studies surrounding. Both content mostly received Likes and more engagement. This shows that the audience of the Facebook page are the Academy community or has relation with it and University of Malaya.

Table 1: User Content preference

Period	Content Type	Description	Page Reach	Engagement	Rank	Rank (overall)
1st-30th April 2021	Newspaper cutting (image)	Utusan- Jikey dance	177	3	1st	1st
	Talk poster	DBP-Prof Asmah	122	4	2nd	3rd
	News Url Link	MSN-Sg -Batu	37	3	3rd	
	Plain Text		12	0	4th	
1st-31st May 2021	Image	PPM Library	148	4	1st	2nd
	Plain Text	Hari Raya Greeting	59	9	2nd	
	image	Library book-reshare	47	9	3rd	
	Image	Library Book	46	7	4th	
1st-31st June 2021	Plain Text	Quote- Prof Rahmah	106	18	1st	
	Text with graphic	Quote -Prof Muhd	100	9	2nd	

	Text with graphic	Quote-HAMKA	63	3	3rd	
	Plain Text	Prof Rahmah Passed Away	58	7	4th	

The Table 1 shows Newspaper cutting image had highest Page Reach (177) in the first month. But it received low Engagement score. The gap between Page Reach (177) and Engagement (3) was too wide by 174 points (177). This means Users Viewed and may read the content but only 3 of them found it relevant. In the following month, the image of new APM stairs ranked as the first, since it had 148 Page Reach, and 4 Engagement. However, in the third month, Plain text of quote by the late Prof Emeritus Dr Rahmah Bujang ranked as the 1st. It received 106 Page Reach and 18 Engagement, it acquired 3 times higher Engagement rate if compared to the Newspaper cutting in the first month. There were 12 contents analysed within the period. Seven (7) Images, four (4) Plain texts and one (1) url Link. Averagely Plain text received 0- 18, engagement whereas Image 3- 9. But, if we based on overall page reach rank, the image content type placed at all the top 3 ranks.

Based on this analysis, image content type is preferred by PPM Facebook users. Apparently, they always have option to choose but they opted to view the PPM content on their devices. even though the colour and graphic are appealing, it is still dependent about the content. If it is relevant, it might have more Engagement rate. In contrast, the strength of plain text content type is fully relied on the subject and its context because it does not have any other attraction factor as available in image.

SOURCES

Preparing a content in Facebook for users is a daunting task challenging task. A content provider must know its users and topic of interest or subject and the type of information needed to serve them right. This will give insight to determine the purpose of Facebook site. The clear objective helps to provide relevant content. Objective should be shared to users either as a title or page and it must be right and brief. Page title will give information to user at a glance. It could attract potential visitors to the site. In order to maintain the information for the Facebook posting, adequate resources must be available.

Malay studies Library (PPM) Facebook is a subject-specific content provider on Malay Studies. Relevant available resources are selected from the library as content. As a guide in selecting a resource, five (5) main division of subjects offered by the Academy of Malay Studies as basis of reference: 1) Malay Language, 2) Malay literature, 3) Malay Linguistics, 4) Malay Socio- culture, 5) Malay Arts. Users of PPM Facebook whose mainly students from the academy are familiar with the subject divisions. Other users may also be familiar with the division since they are common themes of Malay discourse.

The type of sources for content are derived from selected printed from open and closed stack collection of the library. Table 2 shows some of the titles and its relevant subject division. However, during MCO, whenever the Work from Home directive imposed on university staff. The constant supply of information from the library is affected.

Alternatives for this is by recycling previous posts, referring online sources and utilising available resource at librarian home.

Table2: Example of content sources of PPM Facebook.

No.	Subject	Sources	Hashtags
1	Malay Language	Wadiassofi Jaafar (2020). Kekalkan kecemerlangan Bahasa Melayu dalam pendidikan.Pelita Bahasa. 20(12). 6.	#bahasamelayu
2	Malay Literature	Abdullah Hussain. (2016). Kamus simpulan bahasa. (2nd. ed.). Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan	#sasteramelayu
3	Malay Linguistics	Faridah Nazir. (2015). Pengantar linguistik Bahasa Melayu. Selangor: Sasbadi	#linguistikmelayu
4	Malay Socio-Culture	Ahmad Zahiruddin Mohd Zabidi. (2020). Khurafat, tahyul & mistik di alam Melayu. Selangor: PTS Publishing House. p. 23.	#sosiobudaya
5	Malay Arts	Rahmah Bujang. (2008). Glosari keseniaan: Seni visual & seni persembahan. Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Malaya, Akademi Pengajian Melayu.	#kesenianmelayu
6	Research guide	Sivachandraliggam, Sundara Raja. Noraini Mohamed Hassan & Chong, W. L. (2016). Kaedah Penyelidikan dan Panduan Penulisan.Kuala Lumpur:Universiti Malaya	#panduanpenyelidikan
7.	Wisdoms	Tenas Effendy. (2004). Tunjuk ajar Melayu: Butir-butir Melayu Riau.Yogyakarta: Balai Kajian dan Pengembangan Budaya Melayu.	#hikmah

AUDIENCE

As 16th July 2021 PPM Facebook has 718 lifetime Page Likes from its audience. Those are the most engaged people to PPM Facebook. The group gender represented by 408 (57%) of man and 305 (43%) of woman. 38% are between the age of 25-34 years old followed by 12%, 35-44 and 5%, 55-54 years old. Most of the audience are from Kuala Lumpur City. Origin countries of the audience are Malaysia (664), Indonesia (22), Thailand (11), Singapore (6), Egypt (3), and Brunei (3). It has 724 Page Reach. The total number of people who follows the PPM Facebook news update are 752 followers.

PAGE PERFORMANCE

To evaluate the performance of PPM Facebook a three-month data of key performance metrics from 1st April to 31st July 2021 were analysed. The Facebook built- in Insight in Creator Studio module is used to get the performance overview. On the specified period the number of people who saw the PPM Facebook content or "People Reached" were 1,191 people. Whereas the number of people who gave reactions to the site were totalled as 624 "Engagement". While the number of clicks within post that led to destinations or experiences on or off Facebook are 16. The number of comments were 15. PPM Post earned 64 shares. Emotion reactions such as like, love , haha, wow, sad or angry on Posts had received 323 reactions. The Photo views got 25 click views. Within the 3 months period the site had 12 new followers.

TOOLS

Software
Tools are necessary to enhance its presentation and delivery. In general, tools can be divided into two categories. Software and hardware. Anything that posted in the Facebook may get audience response. But improving the look and presentation of the content could attract more audience to the posting. Software: Most of the time. Image taken from smartphone will be edited with this two software. First: The Samsung Gallery. It is a native image gallery app for Samsung smartphone. It is a great convenience to use the app because it has all needed functions for editing an image such as Transform: Rotate, Flip, Ratio, Perspective and Lasso.; Tone: Contrast, Saturation, Brightness an hue. To pursue creativity, there are several effects to choose for example Classic, Evegreen, Stardust and others. Most of the effect recolour the image automatically. Secondly, Snapseed is another Android based image editing software by Google. It has more advanced features than Samsung Gallery. It has 35 Tools, 11 image styles or effects and 38 text styles. For all of these good tools user can get Snapseed for free from Google Play Store. However, the app is text style function is frequently used, M6 and M8 text style are favourites.

To create textual image. The Pic Monkey app is applied. It is a commercial Android photo editing   app. Although textual image could be created by the previous two apps but creating it, is a lot easier with Pic Monkey. It has more than 70 Sans Serif and Serif fonts range from Formal, fancy, futuristic and handwriting categories. It produces clean, sharp and crisp textual image.

Hardware
The most important tool to prepare a content and managing a Facebook is a smartphone. Smartphone with Large screen, powerful processor, high RAM, sufficient storage as well as stable network coverage is necessary. The smartphone that being used by PPM Facebook administrator is Samsung Galaxy Note 9. To manage a Facebook page, any smartphone is eligible. But, by author personal experience the mentioned smartphone has offered much convenience.

Due to its performance consistency quick charging, compatibility, screen size, and S-Pen. Since 2018, the Samsung Galaxy Note 9 is a close companion of PPM Facebook. It never caught with any problem. The 4000AMH battery capacity is adequate for one day use. Quick charging feature with type C port is outstanding. Facebook is battery drainer. Hence

a Power bank is necessary to get consistent power supply. So far, The Note 9 is compatible with most app installed from the Google Play store. But it is best to ensure only necessary app is installed to save a storage. The 6.4 inches screen size is eye convenience and enough to get around. S-Pen is an excellent feature of the smartphone. It enhances precision and accelerates a typing task to prepare a content.

CHALLENGES

The Malaysian government has put its efforts to control the spread of the COVID-19 virus in this country to ensure the well-being of its people. Movement Control Order (MCO) is one of the enforced measures. Besides of its effectiveness in curbing the virus widespread. MCO adding up to pre-existing challenges in managing the PPM Facebook page:

1.Network instability
Stable internet connection is one of key factors of the content delivery success. Whenever the MCO was launched caused slower internet speed because people remaining indoors all times and resulted unprecedented surge of bandwidth demand (Tee, 2020). This delays PPM Facebook posting.

2. Limited resources
With the compulsory instruction to work from home (WFH) from the top management of University Malaya, author no longer has access to the printed resources in the Malay Studies Library. Previously, author could just select and pick any information he desired. However, this obstacle has opened another door for improvement. It is crucial to have the collection online.

3. Interchanging Subjects
The Academy Malay studies Academy separates Malay language and Malay Linguistics as department so does the courses. People outside the field may face difficulty to differentiate between them. For example, in Malay language department. The study of about dialect is focussed on Malay ethnics dialects, Whereas in Malay linguistics it focuses on dialectology a branch of knowledge in linguistic. But sometimes author found these two subjects are discussed interchangeably. Careful reading is necessary to understand the context.

4. Motivation Ups and Downs
Maintaining a Facebook is a commitment. It is time consuming task. You need to find and select the right material. It involves a lot of work just for a single post for your audience. It is a repetitive step and could be tiresome. There are times you feel demotivated in doing this.Especially when you did not get the information that you plan to share. This may happen when your post did not get expected reaction from audience.

5. Less audience reactions
Since 2014 when the PPM Facebook was initiated. It receives less reaction such as Like, share and comment from audience. This probably due the nature of its content which mostly facts and textual. The objective of the Facebook itself is focussing to provide information on Malay Studies, facilitate learning and research in the field. The information

in the post is derived from existing authentic and reliable sources. The content which is mainly academic may not that attractive. Thus, casual user may feel the content is not suitable for him. Even though the site does not get much attention its fan   is gradually growing yearly.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In general, The PPM Facebook has positioned itself as a source of information in Malay Studies. How significant and relevant this contribution to the users probably can be reflected from the retrieved performance data. Out from 754 followers, PPM Facebook get 624 Engagement such as Likes, Comments and share within 3 months period. In other words, approximately 82% of the followers have shown their commitment to the PPM Facebook. This percentage indicated the Facebook has some significance and contribution to its followers. Therefore, it is important to continue and to do necessary improvement to the content to increase engagement from the users.

As long as the pandemic is not over library users will continue to use online resources. For this reason, more resource on Malay Studies should be made accessible available online in any platform now and in the future.

CONCLUSION

The presence of social media platform in these trying times is crucial. It is to enable users communicate their information needs to the library. This channel will help library to understand the required information. Furthermore, library itself is using the platform to feed users with relevant information. To ensure this relation workable, librarian   must be actively presence in the platform. The sense of responsibility to help users on this matter could be realized by mobilizing the existing social media platforms for that purpose. In the case of the Malay Studies Library. Facebook is one of the solutions. After all this is the struggle of the library in fulfilling its user information needs.

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