Facebook engagement in Malaysian Ministry 2024

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	In the era of digital governance, social media platforms, particularly Facebook, have become essential tools for government communication and public engagement. This study examines the dynamics of Facebook usage within selected Malaysian Ministries, focusing on objectives, strategies, and outcomes of engagement. The research aims to identify the ministries' communication goals and analyze the types of content that elicit the highest audience interaction. Employing a quantitative content analysis, 3,902 Facebook posts published between January and June 2023 were analyzed across three ministries: the Ministry of Communication and Digital, the Ministry of Home Affairs, and the Ministry of Women, Family, and Community Development. Data on likes, comments, shares, and post characteristics were systematically coded and assessed using SPSS. The findings reveal that the majority of posts adopt a one-way Public Information model, with limited evidence of two-way symmetrical communication. Engagement was highest in the Ministry of Communication and Digital, where posts generated over 115,000 likes and 53,000 shares, while the other ministries recorded substantially lower interactions. Content emphasizing public announcements and informational updates attracted the most responses, whereas dialogic communication remained minimal. This study contributes to the understanding of how government agencies in emerging economies utilize social media as a strategic communication tool, highlighting both strengths and gaps in fostering meaningful two-way interaction. The results underscore the need for ministries to enhance dialogic strategies to strengthen trust, responsiveness, and citizen participation in digital governance.

1. Introduction

In the era of digital interconnection, social media platforms have become indispensable tools for public communication and engagement (Crain & Nadler, 2019). Governments worldwide have acknowledged the potential of these platforms, with ministries and agencies actively utilizing Facebook to connect with citizens, disseminate information, and foster dialogue (Kraus, 2022). In Malaysia, ministries have increasingly adopted Facebook as a strategic communication channel to engage with the public and influence digital discourse (Duffy, 2023; Theocharis, 2023).

This study specifically examines the Facebook engagement of the Ministry of Home Affairs and other selected ministries, focusing on how they communicate with citizens, the nature of their

content, and the patterns of interaction that emerge. Understanding these dynamics is crucial, as social media engagement not only reflects public responsiveness but also serves as a measure of government transparency, trust-building, and inclusivity in policymaking (Ali, 2023; Zhuang, 2023).

The urgency of this research lies in the fact that while government institutions are active on social media, their strategies often remain one-directional, focusing on information dissemination rather than two-way communication. This creates a gap between public expectations for interactive governance and the reality of digital communication practices. Addressing this gap is essential for enhancing citizen participation, improving trust in government, and strengthening democratic practices in a rapidly digitizing society.

The main objectives of this study are to investigate how ministries use Facebook to achieve their communication goals and to identify the types of content that generate the highest audience engagement. By conducting a systematic content analysis of posts over a six-month period, this research provides empirical insights into the strengths and limitations of current practices.

The contribution of this study is twofold. First, it offers a deeper understanding of government social media strategies in the Malaysian context, enriching the academic discourse on digital governance in developing countries. Second, it provides practical implications for policymakers and communication practitioners by highlighting effective engagement strategies and suggesting improvements for fostering meaningful two-way interactions with citizens.

2. Theoretical Framework

Social Media and Government

Social media encompasses many digital platforms and tools, including Facebook, which are increasingly employed for public health communication (Heldman et al., 2013). Health organisations globally utilise social media platforms, particularly Facebook, as the main method of alternative communication channels to distribute health messages, carry out disease surveillance, raise awareness about health, and address public health issues to the general population (Lwin et al., 2018). Facebook, or FB, has emerged as a powerful platform that has several advantages over conventional communication routes. According to Fraja et al.,(2010), it has proven to be an efficient and economical method for disseminating health messages, allowing for the specific targeting of marginalised groups to enhance public health interventions. In recent times, there has been an increasing trend in Malaysia where the population is more inclined to search for health information online, particularly regarding personal health difficulties, such as Covid-19. Local studies have provided evidence suggesting that the public perceives the information provided as valuable and reliable (Dwivedi, 2021; Vrontis, 2021). Consequently, people are more likely to seek direct advice from healthcare professionals about their health concerns through social media (Appel et al., 2020). The increase in people searching for health information online and the abundance of unauthorised health websites and social media accounts that spread inaccurate health information while endorsing unproven alternative medical products and unregistered private health services have forced health organisations to engage with internet users on social media platforms in a targeted and effective manner (MOH Malaysia Guidelines For The Use of Social Media among Health Care Providers, 2018). Moreover, there is evidence suggesting that different technical factors, such as the characteristics of health information, the characteristics of posts, the timing of posts, marketing elements, as well as individual factors like socio-demographic circumstances, Internet literacy, and educational background, have a substantial impact on the level of engagement of Internet users on social media platforms (Washington, 2022). The objective of this study was to improve the

interchange of information between the Ministry of Health, Malaysia and Facebook users. The final purpose was to enhance health literacy by effectively sharing and consuming information. The findings of this study could aid health organisations in Malaysia and beyond in improving their health communication strategies on social media platforms. Moreover, it could inspire health authorities to actively interact with their online followers by creating more impactful content.

Engagement, in the context of the current technological era, refers to the mutual benefits obtained by health organisations and internet users (Duberry, 2020; Vermesan et al., 2022). The main goal of academics and health promoters was to improve the efficiency of health information dissemination by health organisations by encouraging active engagement of internet users on social media platforms (Biddle et al., 2020; Duplaga, 2020). This was accomplished by placing a strong emphasis on engaging with users through social media platforms. Engagement can be enhanced by utilising the potential of viral reach (through sharing), implementing effective appraisal (through liking), and encouraging message debate (through commenting) (Seo & Evans, 2019). The observed interacting behaviours were influenced by four main factors: authority, privacy, evidence, and incentive appeals. The aforementioned characteristics have a crucial role in influencing individuals' interpretation of health information (Khairina & Saleh, 2021). Moreover, there is evidence suggesting that different technical factors, such as the characteristics of health information, the characteristics of posts, the timing of posts, marketing elements, as well as individual factors like socio-demographic circumstances, Internet literacy, and educational background, have a substantial impact on the level of engagement of Internet users on social media platforms (Mavrodieva et al., 2019). The objective of this study was to improve the interchange of information between the Ministry of Health, Malaysia and Facebook users. The final purpose was to enhance health literacy by effectively sharing and consuming information. The findings of this study could aid health organisations in Malaysia and beyond in improving their health communication strategies on social media platforms. Moreover, it could inspire health authorities to actively interact with their online followers by creating more impactful content.

Facebook and Government

Facebook is one of the most popular social media in the world. As a social media, Facebook is a media cyber that is a classification of new media being developed in the study of Communication Science today. Facebook was founded by Mark Zuckerberg under the alias "The Facebook" in February 2004 (The Guardian, 12 December 2023).

Users can also use Facebook anytime. They can access it easily through gadgets (mobile phones), computers, and laptops. Users can also make friends with people they know or do not know on Facebook. As the leading social network in the world, based on monthly active users (MAU), the Facebook network had over 2.9 billion active users in the middle of January 2023 (Data Reportal, 12 December 2023). Since its founding in 2004 to 2023, Facebook has undergone many company structure and technology changes.

Social media, also known as Socmed, is extensively utilised and has now become a crucial component of public discourse and communication in contemporary culture. Social media has become an amusing addition that is deeply ingrained in almost every area of daily life (Wharton 2019). The escalating prevalence of social media usage has had a profound influence on both individuals and society, establishing a new standard wherein people have immediate access to knowledge at their disposal (SimpliLearn, 2020). This is due to the pervasive integration of social media into various facets of our lives, resulting in a significant impact on our overall lifestyle. According to Wharton (2019) in Maqsoud (2019), social media has had a significant impact on

various aspects of daily life and has been widely integrated for increased awareness. The widespread use of social media has altered the significance of information and the role of individuals. The membership of the social media page is increasing. Social media has emerged as an excellent platform for the dissemination of knowledge and has continued to improve as a means of communication and collaboration.

Social media is a widely used digital medium where individuals establish and cultivate connections. In addition to facilitating social interactions, social media serves as a platform for communication and the widespread distribution of information. According to Bernama (2019), Malaysians dedicate an average of five hours and 47 minutes per day to social media. This places Malaysia in the top five countries in Southeast Asia with the highest usage of mobile social media in 2019. According to the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) 2018, over 78% of the total population of 32 million Malaysians were actively engaged in utilizing social media. Furthermore, a significant majority of 97.3% prefer to use Facebook as their primary platform for social communication (Arora, 2019; Cao, 2020; Plantin, 2018). Social media is a digital platform considered an extension of static web 2.0. It serves as a medium for enhanced connection and facilitates improved communication. People increasingly spend a significant amount of time on the Internet, using social media to obtain information and engage in conversation with others (Gregorio et al., 2019).

Inspired by the private sector's effective and progressive use of technology, government agencies have started incorporating social media applications to revolutionize their communication methods and service delivery to the public. This is mainly aimed at enhancing public performance, productivity, and efficiency (Alenzi & Miskon, 2024; Criado & Villodre, 2022; Idris, 2018; Wukich, 2022). In addition to that, the government offers round-the-clock access to information, forms, and common transactions for the public. The use of social media platforms, like blogs, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, extends beyond mere idle conversation or leisurely pastime. It serves as a means for government officials, specifically, to delve into the issues faced by individuals and engage with the community. Social media has become a widespread communication network that is used by people of all ages and positions in society, including teenagers, adults, and leaders. Government agencies worldwide have eagerly embraced the utilisation of social media as a means to enhance public contact and facilitate crisis management. Social media applications have the potential to improve responsiveness, impact, efficacy, and cost savings in the public sector (Mansoor, 2021; Tang et al., 2021).The Prime Minister issued the initial declaration of the movement control order (MCO) in Malaysia on March 16, 2020. This order mandated the prohibition of large gatherings for any activity (News Straits Times, 2020).

The implementation of the Movement Control Order (MCO) by the government resulted in restrictions on physical movement and communication, particularly face-to-face interaction. Amidst the uncertainty surrounding the new epidemic, individuals are actively seeking reputable sources of information and exploring alternate means of communication. Social media has emerged as the most dependable platform, offering two-way contact and immediate responses. Governments utilise social media extensively to mitigate public fear, confusion, discomfort, and anxiety (Chen et al., 2020). Social media's attributes, including transparency, dialogism, and involvement, provide substantial advantages in disseminating information to the general public.

During the COVID-19 epidemic, social media played a crucial role in spreading information in many countries. However, it was also associated with the widespread dissemination of false or misleading information (Iannelli & Marino, 2022; MacKay et al., 2022). Dissemination of false information can lead to tumultuous situations and potentially undermine the credibility of the data

(Hossain et al., 2020). As an illustration, a significant number of Iranians lost their lives following the circulation of viral stories on social media suggesting that ingesting alcohol may cure COVID-19 (BBC news, 2020). As of March 24, 2020, the Quick Response Team in Malaysia has identified and clarified 205 instances of fake news being circulated on social media. However, the Minister of Communications and Multimedia has cautioned Malaysians to exercise caution when sharing material that has not been validated.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has led to an unprecedented surge in public engagement with government social media platforms, particularly in seeking health-related information. This work has garnered unanticipated attention, and the use of social media as a means of disseminating information has been extensive. The news media, including live conferences, direct messaging, and interactive interactions with health and government authorities, played a crucial role. Previous studies have found a significant correlation between the frequency of providing information and statements and the level of trust in those statements (Meng & Kobayashi, 2019; Yavetz & Aharony, 2020).

Facebook Engagement

Local governments have embraced and utilised social media to connect with the public after recognising its inherent usefulness in communication. According to Lam et al., (2021), the rise in popularity of social media has led to a change in local government public relations tactics. These strategies now involve the integration of traditional websites with social media platforms. Facebook is a popular social media network regularly used by organisations (DePaula et al., 2018; Madyatmadja et al., 2019).

Facebook provides the most distinct opportunities for a prolonged engagement between the public and the local government among all the existing social media platforms (Kujur & Singh, 2020). Facebook enables users to build a profile where they may share various details about themselves, including their occupations, religious and political beliefs, and preferred films and bands. On this profile, both the user and their acquaintances can share hyperlinks, images, and videos of interest. In addition, Facebook allows sending private and public messages to other users and engaging in real-time instant chat. The wide range of features offered by Facebook and the ability to create applications, groups, and fan pages contribute to its widespread popularity as a platform for online socialising (Yavetz & Aharony, 2020).

One could hypothesise that Facebook users engage in social interactions in order to obtain information, such as by putting inquiries in their 'status update' or speaking through instant messages. If individuals who use Facebook to seek or share information predominantly rely on social connection, it is possible that they prefer these methods over more intellectually challenging approaches to obtain information, such as reading newspaper articles and research papers (Junco, 2012).

Facebook provides local governments with the opportunity to have a more intimate understanding of their citizens. Unlike traditional media like television, radio, and print media, which only allow for one-way communication, a two-way conversation can be sustained. By engaging in online conversation, local government can reap numerous advantages, such as gathering comments, ideas, and opinions that enhance public policies and services. Local government would have the opportunity to acquire valuable guidance and enhance the level of confidence among citizens. Furthermore, through direct interaction, citizens might better understand the local government's projects (Nwaoboli et al., 2024).

Social media platforms have facilitated the rise of user-generated content, enhancing socio-political discussions, amplifying the range of expressed perspectives, and enabling unrestricted dissemination of knowledge and self-expression (Bonsón et al., 2012). Facebook offers innovative platforms that facilitate the efficient engagement of communities and allow stakeholders to to voice their preferences continuously. Interactions on social media platforms are two-way communication, affording frequent communication and feedback between government representatives and the public.

Designing and operating social media platforms like Facebook requires less technical skill, time, and financial resources compared to traditional websites. This is because Facebook offers free accounts and includes default dialogic features (Gil de Zúñiga, 2012). Social media has expanded the potential for interpersonal and organizational communication. Researchers have analysed how Facebook contributes to the development of social capital among individuals (Dolan et al., 2019). In general, Facebook has provided new chances for people to interact, communicate, and have conversations with each other in ways that are distinct from what traditional websites offer.

The Malaysian Public Sector as A Content Study

Local research has offered evidence suggesting that the general public has a favourable impression of the information shared on social media, deeming it valuable and trustworthy. This positive view motivates individuals to directly seek advice from healthcare professionals through social media platforms (MCMC, 2017). The increase in people searching for health information online and the growing number of unauthorised health websites or social media accounts that share misleading health information, often with the intention of promoting unproven alternative medical products and unregistered private health services, highlights the need for health organisations to effectively and strategically interact with internet users on social media platforms. The guidelines set forward by the Ministry of Health Malaysia (2018) underscore the importance of this need in relation to the use of social media by healthcare providers.

Engagement is a crucial measure in today's digital world, reflecting the reciprocal advantages gained by health organisations and internet users (Steward et al., 2018). Researchers and health promoters have focused on the concept of social media engagement, acknowledging its crucial role in improving the efficiency of health information distribution by promoting interactive behaviours among internet users. Engagement stimulation frequently entails the dissemination of content through viral means (sharing), the assessment of content effectiveness (liking), and the thoughtful consideration of messages (commenting) (Keller et al., 2020). The interactive behaviours are impacted by four essential aspects - authority, privacy, proof, and incentive appeals - which alter users' perceptions of health information (Anderson et al., 2021).

Research has shown that several technical factors, such as the type of health information, the content of posts, the timing of posts, marketing strategies, and individual factors like socio-demographic circumstances, internet literacy, and educational background, all have a significant impact on how engaged internet users are on social media platforms (Tandoc et al., 2019). Within the confines of this study, the Ministry of Health, Malaysia, and Facebook users engaged in interactions with the goal of improving health awareness by efficiently distributing and consuming information. The findings of this study possess the capacity to direct health organisations in Malaysia and worldwide, allowing them to enhance and fine-tune their health communication strategies on social media platforms. Furthermore, the study advocates for health authorities to cultivate relationships with their online audiences by creating influential and captivating posts.

3. Method

This research employed a quantitative content analysis to examine the use of Facebook by three Malaysian ministries: the Ministry of Communication and Digital, the Ministry of Home Affairs, and the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development. Content analysis was selected as it enables systematic examination of online communication patterns and provides quantifiable insights into audience engagement (Floreddu & Cabiddu, 2016).

The unit of analysis consisted of all Facebook posts published on the official pages of the selected ministries between January and June 2023. In total, 3,902 posts were collected and coded, comprising 2,596 posts from the Ministry of Communication and Digital, 559 posts from the Ministry of Home Affairs, and 747 posts from the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development. Each post was examined based on its engagement metrics (likes, comments, shares) and post characteristics, including type of content and communication model. To guide the analysis, the study adopted Grunig and Hunt's Four Models of Public Relations (Publicity/Agentry, Public Information, Two-Way Asymmetrical, and Two-Way Symmetrical). Each post was categorized into one of the four models based on its content and communicative purpose. This classification enabled the researchers to assess whether ministries prioritized one-way dissemination of information or encouraged two-way interactive communication.

Data were recorded and organized using Microsoft Excel, and further analyzed with SPSS to identify descriptive statistics and patterns of engagement. Reliability was ensured through a systematic coding procedure, with multiple coders involved in the categorization process to reduce bias and maintain consistency (Berger, 2016). Any discrepancies were discussed and resolved collaboratively to achieve a high level of inter-coder agreement. By combining engagement metrics with theoretical categorization, this methodology provides a comprehensive picture of how ministries utilize Facebook to communicate with the public, the extent of interaction achieved, and the alignment of their practices with established communication models (Bergin, 2018).

4. Result and Discussion

Ministry of Communication and Digital

Table 1 shows the total engagement that happened on the Facebook page for the Ministry of Communication and Digital.

Table 1. Total Engagement

ENGAGEMENT	TOTAL
Post	2596
Like	115849
Comment	5101
Share	53128

Table 1 displays the level of involvement on Kementerian Komunikasi dan Digital's official Facebook page, as measured by the number of likes, comments, and shares on posts made between January 2023 and June 2023. A total of 2596 posts were analysed and categorised over a period of six months. The engagement rate based on likes is the greatest, with a cumulative total of 115,849 likes from the posts throughout the specified period. Subsequently, the number of shares reaches a commendable 52128, surpassing both the number of likes and comments to secure the second highest position. Comments are least prevalent in the posts on the official Facebook page of the Ministry of Communication and Digital.

Table 2. Four Models of Public Relations

4 Model Public Relations	N	%
Public Agentry/ Publicity (One Way)	192	7.4%
Public Information (One-Way)	2381	91.7%
Two-Way Asymmetrical (Two-Way)	29	1.1%
Two-Way Symmetrical (Two-Way)	0	0.0%
Total	2596	100%

As seen in Table 2, a total of 2596 posts were categorised. Among the four models of public relations, the Public Information model had the most posts (n=2381) from January 2023 to June 2023, accounting for 91.7% of the sample. The Public Information model has a much higher number of posts compared to other models. The model used in this study is Public Agentry, which consisted of 192 posts, accounting for 7.4% of the total sample. The sample consisted of 29 postings, which accounted for 1.1% of the total, and followed a two-way Asymmetrical model. Regarding the two-way symmetrical model, none of the posts adhered to the model, resulting in zero contribution to the overall percentage of the posts. (Refer to Table 1 for a comprehensive overview).

Ministry of Home Affairs (KDN).

Table 3 shows the total engagement that happened on the Facebook page for the Ministry of Home Affairs (KDN).

Table 3. Total Engagement

ENGAGEMENT	TOTAL
Post	559
Like	42,808
Comment	2,634
Share	2,023

Table 4 displays the level of engagement on the official Facebook page of the Ministry of Home Affairs (KDN), as measured by the number of likes, comments and shares on posts made between January 2023 and June 2023. A total of 559 posts were analyzed and categorized over a period of six months. As seen in Table 3, the engagement rate based on likes was the largest, with a cumulative total of 42,808 likes from posts over the stated period. Subsequently, followed with the number of comments reached 2,634, surpassing the number of shares by 2,023. Shares are least prevalent in the posts on the official Facebook page of the Ministry of Home Affairs (KDN).

Table 4. Four Models of Public Relations

4 Model Public Relations	N	%
Public Agentry/ Publicity (One Way)	15	2.7
Public Information (One-Way)	493	88.2
Two-Way Asymmetrical (Two-Way)	51	9.1
Two-Way Symmetrical (Two-Way)	0	0.0
Total	559	100

In total, 559 posts were coded. Of the Four Models of Public Relations, Public Information had the highest number of posts (n=493) from January 2023 until June 2023, which contained 88.2% of the sample, as seen in Table 4. Other models only had a few posts compared to the Public Information model. The following model is Two-way Asymmetrical, which had 51 posts that covered 9.1% of the sample. Public Agentry model could be found in 15 posts, making up 2.7% of

the total sample. As for the Two-way symmetrical model, no post followed the model, which did not contribute any percentage to the post's total.

Ministry of Women, Family Community Development.

Table 5 below shows the total engagement that happened on the Facebook page for the Ministry of Women, Family Community Development.

Table 5. Total Engagement

Engagement	Total
Post	747
Like	9040
Share	2022
Comment	708

Table 5 shows the engagement of The Ministry Women, Family and Community Development official Facebook page based on likes, comments and share on posts from January 2023 until June 2023. Total posts that were coded for the six months are 747 posts. The sum of likes, comments and share from the total of post are 9040, 2022 and 708.

Table 6. Four Models of Public Relation

4 Model Public Relations	N	%
Public Agentry/ Publicity (One Way)	66	8.8%
Public Information (One- Way)	677	90.6%
Two-Way Asymmetrical (Two-Way)	0	0.0%
Two-Way Symmetrical (Two-Way)	2	0.3%
Total	747	100%

Table 6 show, in total, 747posts were coded. Of the four models of public relations, Public Information had the highest number of posts (n=677) from January 2023 until June 2023, which contained 90.6% of the sample. Other models only had a few posts compared to the Public Information model. The following model is Public Agentry, which had 66 posts that covered 8.8% of the sample. As for the two-way symmetrical model could be found in 2 posts, making up 0.3% of the total sample.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that the majority of Facebook posts across the three ministries, Communication and Digital, Home Affairs, and Women, Family and Community Development, primarily adopt the Public Information model, which emphasizes one-way dissemination of information rather than two-way interaction. This result aligns with Grunig and Hunt's (1984) Four Models of Public Relations, in which government agencies often rely heavily on the one-way communication model due to institutional priorities of authority, control, and risk minimization. While this approach ensures efficiency in information delivery, it limits opportunities for dialogic engagement with citizens.

Previous studies have highlighted the potential of social media, particularly Facebook, to foster participatory governance through two-way symmetrical communication (Maiwada, 2025; Smit, 2024). However, the absence of such symmetrical communication in the ministries' Facebook practices suggests that Malaysian ministries have yet to fully utilize social media as an interactive governance tool (Kim et al., 2021). This is consistent with earlier findings in Southeast Asia, where government social media accounts often function as digital notice boards rather than platforms for genuine dialogue (Kostner, 2023). In terms of engagement, the Ministry of Communication and Digital recorded the highest interaction levels, with more than 115,000 likes and 53,000 shares, compared to significantly lower engagement in the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development. This pattern suggests that ministries dealing with issues directly related to digital communication and public services are more likely to attract citizen attention and interaction. This finding supports the argument of Brooks & Waters (2010) that content relevance and perceived public value significantly influence engagement rates on social media.

Moreover, the predominance of informational content echoes earlier studies indicating that citizens tend to engage more with posts that provide timely updates, announcements, and practical information (Nurhidayah & Fadillah, 2024). However, the relatively low number of comments across all ministries suggests limited deliberative interaction. This reflects Kotler & Keller (2016) observation that while social media can generate reach (via shares) and appraisal (via likes), it does not necessarily guarantee deeper engagement such as debate or policy feedback.

The study further highlights the strategic gap between the ministries' objectives and the expectations of a digitally literate public. While ministries achieve high visibility, the lack of dialogic practices may undermine their capacity to build trust, transparency, and long-term citizen engagement. This gap is critical given the urgency of enhancing government responsiveness in a society where citizens increasingly expect interactive and participatory communication (Chen et al., 2020). Therefore, the contribution of this study lies in showing that although Malaysian ministries have successfully embraced Facebook as a key communication platform, their reliance on one-way communication limits its potential as a democratic and participatory tool. For future practice, ministries should adopt dialogic communication strategies, incorporating feedback mechanisms, interactive content, and citizen-centered messaging. Such strategies not only align with the principles of two-way symmetrical communication but also enhance public trust and policy legitimacy in the digital era.

The findings of this study provide several practical implications for government ministries in Malaysia. First, ministries should shift from a predominantly one-way Public Information approach to more dialogic and citizen-centered strategies. This can be achieved by integrating interactive features such as polls, Q&A sessions, live streaming, and timely responses to public comments, which would foster two-way symmetrical communication and enhance public trust. Second, ministries need to tailor their content strategies by prioritizing posts that resonate with public needs and daily concerns, ensuring that communication is not only informative but also engaging. Third, adopting advanced analytics tools to monitor audience behavior and sentiment can help ministries refine their social media strategies, making them more adaptive and evidence-based. Finally, training communication officers in digital engagement and crisis communication can strengthen the government's capacity to maintain transparency and responsiveness in the digital public sphere.

5. Conclusion

This study highlights the need for Malaysian ministries to strengthen their strategic communication on Facebook by aligning content with public interests and fostering deeper two-way engagement. Regular evaluations of public opinion and interactive responses can enhance relevance, visibility, and trust. While ministries are active in disseminating information, their reliance on one-way communication underscores the urgency of adopting dialogic approaches. To improve efficiency, the use of automated systems for content analysis is recommended, enabling more systematic and adaptive monitoring of engagement trends.

For future research, broader investigations across ministries and longer timeframes are necessary to capture evolving patterns of communication. Mixed methods, including interviews or focus groups, could offer richer insights into both institutional strategies and citizen expectations. Comparative cross-country studies would situate Malaysia's practices within global contexts, while advanced techniques such as sentiment and network analysis could deepen understanding of the quality and nature of government–public digital interactions. Ultimately, this research contributes to the broader scholarship on digital governance and government communication by demonstrating how social media can both enhance and constrain public engagement in emerging democracies.

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