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Muhamad Lutfi Habibi & Nur Fadhilah Andini

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Muhamad Lutfi Habibi[a] (iD) ; Nur Fadhilah Andini[b] (iD)

[a]Department of Yogyakarta Communication and Islamic Broadcasting, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
[b]Department of Yogyakarta Communication and Islamic Broadcasting, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Abstract

The Malaysian diaspora is spread worldwide, and social media has become a useful tool for this diaspora to maintain a connection to their cultural identity. This research identifies the motivations for connections between Malaysian students studying at the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta through social media. This study aims to provide recommendations to strengthen positive cooperation in the field of education between Malaysia and Indonesia. Although much research has been conducted on the Malaysian diaspora, this paper focuses on a specific aspect of the diaspora that rarely receives attention, the student diaspora. This research employs the case study approach, a qualitative research method, that uses interviews as a data collection tool based on the Uses and Gratification theory. The research results show that Malaysian students connect through social media with several motivations, such as diversion, personal relationships, personal identity, and surveillance. They use social media as an escape through culinary content, a means of sharing recommendations for tourist attractions, strengthening religious and national identity, and monitoring current conditions in both Indonesia and Malaysia.

CONTACT *Muhamad Lutfi Habibi* ✉ *muhamad.habibi@uin-suka.ac.id &*

Nur Fadhilah Andini ✉ *20102010003@student.uin-suka.ac.id*

Introduction

The Malaysian diaspora is spread worldwide, including many places such as, Singapore, Australia, and the UK (Nations, 2020). These diaspora refer to emigrants and their descendants who have settled in areas far from their homeland (Ember, Ember, & Skoggard, 2004). Among the Malaysian diaspora, a number of young diaspora are studying to pursue a better future and career.

Many of these Malaysian student diasporas are studying in various countries, one of which is Indonesia, specifically Yogyakarta. This vibrant city, known for its rich cultural heritage and educational institutions, has become a second home for many Malaysian students. The distance that separates them from their homeland can sometimes create feelings of isolation and distance from their cultural roots (Behloul, 2016; Mahieu, 2019). These students often miss the familiarity of their own culture, traditions, and community events that are part of their everyday life in Malaysia.

However, social media has become a useful tool for this diaspora to maintain a connection to their cultural identity (Aziz, 2022; Soto, Bauwens, & Smets, 2023). Through platforms such as Instagram*,* they can communicate with colleagues from their home countries, sharing stories and experiences that help them stay connected to the cultural heritage they love. These platforms allow them to participate in virtual celebrations, follow updates on cultural events, and engage in discussions about their traditions and values. Social media also provides a space for them to express their cultural pride and showcase their heritage to a global audience, thereby reinforcing their sense of identity and belonging.

These diaspora are interconnected and operate at three levels: internet-specific, network-oriented, and embedded in broader social practices (Ponzanesi, 2020). These connections enable them to support each other and address challenges faced in their home communities and globally. One example of this connection is how the East Asian diaspora used a Facebook group called "Subtle Asian Traits*"* to express catharsis, shared concerns, and discursive activism when waves of racism and xenophobia hit them during the COVID-19 pandemic (Abidin & Zeng, 2020).

Diaspora connections can also fuel economic activity and small-scale businesses, as in Khartoum, Sudan, where highly educated women built transnational networks with diaspora abroad to supply international products such as traditional perfumes, cosmetics, and hijab to sell online to the global market (Steel, 2021). These networks not only help them access quality local products but also expand their business reach to a broader audience, improving their economic well-being.

In addition, social media is used to influence public opinion and loosen the grip of government control over media messages, as was the case in Cameroon during the

Sub-Saharan African crisis. Diasporas use platforms like Twitter to expand public narratives and connect with fellow diasporas in the country (Nganji & Cockburn, 2020). A similar trend is seen among the Indian diaspora in America, who used Twitter to create a multi-layered identity as individuals, an imaginary collective non-Muslim diaspora, and members of a populist radical right Twitter society expressing pro-Brexit and pro-Trump views (Leidig, 2019). This shows how social media can be a powerful tool to influence political and social discourse among diaspora communities worldwide.

Through this connection with social media, the Malaysian diaspora also establishes mutually beneficial relationships with many parties. With a total diaspora of 1.5 million people spread worldwide (Hugo, 2011), the Malaysian diaspora has significantly contributed to the international economy and social life. These individuals are often engaged in various sectors, ranging from education and healthcare to business and technology, making their mark in diverse fields across the globe. In several cases in developed countries, this diaspora has been empowered to dominate the global market in halal commodities (Fischer, 2015). The demand for halal products is rising worldwide, and the Malaysian diaspora has played a crucial role in meeting this demand through their extensive knowledge and adherence to halal standards.

Moreover, the Malaysian diaspora has been trained to become a skilled workforce according to global standards (Chow & Mathien, 2018). This training ensures that they possess the necessary skills and competencies to thrive in highly competitive environments, contributing significantly to the economies of their host countries. Their expertise and professionalism often reflect positively on Malaysia, showcasing the country's ability to produce world-class talent. This skilled workforce is instrumental in fostering innovation and driving economic growth in their respective fields.

Several efforts have been made to connect the Malaysian diaspora, primarily through digital channels. One of these significant efforts is the *Global Bersih* movement, which aims to strengthen the democratic role of the Malaysian diaspora by gathering support through websites and social media platforms (Lee, 2014). This movement has been instrumental in mobilizing Malaysians living abroad to participate in political advocacy and electoral processes, thereby ensuring their voices are heard and their rights are protected.

In addition to political mobilization, traditional Malaysian kinship concepts such as *silaturrahim,* which typically involve face-to-face interactions, have also shifted to the digital world. This shift allows the diaspora to stay connected with family and friends back home through online platforms (Adzmi & Bahry, 2020). Social media, video calls, and messaging apps have become essential tools for maintaining these familial bonds, providing a sense of continuity and emotional support despite the physical distance.

However, it must be underlined that most of these efforts are primarily driven by the adult diaspora, who possess the awareness and sense of obligation to contribute positively to both their country of origin and their host countries. These adults actively engage in initiatives that bridge the gap between Malaysia and their new homes, fostering a bi-cultural identity that enriches both societies. Until now, no research articles have specifically examined the connection between the young Malaysian diaspora living abroad with the primary goal of studying rather than working. This demographic, which represents a significant portion of the diaspora, experiences unique challenges and opportunities in maintaining their cultural identity while pursuing academic goals.

In Yogyakarta, many young members of the Malaysian diaspora choose to pursue higher education at various universities in the city. The presence of several Islamic campuses in Yogyakarta is particularly attractive to Malaysian students, given that Islam is recognized as an official religion in their home country (Department of Information Malaysia, 2016). These campuses offer a familiar cultural and religious environment, which eases their transition and supports their educational journey. One prominent example is the State Islamic University (UIN) Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, which has welcomed numerous Malaysian students, who are eager to develop their interests and talents within an Islamic-based educational framework. This university provides a conducive environment where Malaysian students can thrive academically and spiritually.

Beyond the regular academic curriculum, Malaysian students at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta receive special attention in areas such as language assistance and religious formation (Andany, 2020). These tailored programs are designed to help them overcome language barriers and deepen their understanding of Islamic teachings, ensuring that they can fully integrate into the academic community and excel in their studies. The support structures in place at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta not only facilitate their academic progress but also foster a sense of belonging and community among Malaysian students.

To find out the answer to this question, researchers conducted in-depth interviews with several representatives of Malaysian students studying at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta regarding their motivations for connecting with each other through social media. These interviews aimed to explore the underlying reasons and benefits that social media provides to these students in maintaining their connections and cultural identity. The questions addressed to the students were based on guidelines derived from motivation indicators in the Uses and Gratification theory, which include surveillance, identity, relationships, and diversion (West, 2000).

The surveillance motivation indicator pertains to how students use social media to stay informed about events and updates both back home in Malaysia and within their community in Yogyakarta. Identity motivations explore how social media helps them

express and maintain their cultural and religious identity. Relationships indicators examine how social media facilitates the building and sustaining of personal connections with family, friends, and fellow Malaysian students. The diversion motivation indicator looks at how social media serves as a source of entertainment and relaxation amidst their academic responsibilities.

The findings from this research provide valuable insights into the specific needs and preferences of Malaysian students in a foreign educational environment. Understanding these motivations can help educators and administrators at UIN Sunan Kalijaga and other institutions develop better support systems and programs that cater to international students' unique requirements. Furthermore, these insights can also be used as recommendations to enhance positive, cooperative relations in the field of education between Malaysia and Indonesia. By fostering a supportive and culturally sensitive environment, both countries can benefit from stronger educational ties, promoting mutual understanding and collaboration.

Materials and Methods

The method applied to reveal these findings is qualitative research and uses a case study approach because the phenomena studied are based on events that occurred in real life (Yin, 2012). The selection of this method aims to provide a more holistic picture of individual experiences. It allows researchers to capture the nuances and complexities of students' motivations by exploring the various aspects that influence their desire to connect through social media, including cultural, social, psychological, and other factors.

The data collection technique used was in-depth interviews with three participants. They included students from Malaysia studying at the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. The provision of this limitation is based on the existence of a language assistance program and religious formation, which is carried out intensively through one of the internal institutions within the faculty, *Buddy FDK*. The three students were selected as representatives from each study program in a faculty that accommodates Malaysian students, namely Communication and Islamic Broadcasting, represented by Mohammad Saiffullah bin Soffian (Saifful), Islamic Counseling Guidance, represented by Nurul Atiqah binti Ghafur (Nurul), and Da'wah Management represented by Nur Allia binti Mohamad Khalifah (Allia). The three participants agreed to be interviewed and have their names listed in accordance with the ethical clearance letter issued by the Institute for Research and Community Service UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta.

The questions presented to Malaysian student representatives were based on motivation indicators in the Uses and Gratification theory proposed by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch, which include surveillance, identity, relationships, and diversion.

The four indicators in this theory explain that surveillance is how individuals use media to obtain information and monitor their environment, identity is in what manner media helps individuals strengthen or explore their personal and social identities, relationships explains where media is used to build and maintain social relationships, and diversion illustrates how media provides entertainment and escape from the pressures of everyday life (West, 2000).

The findings were then processed using the Miles and Huberman data analysis model, which consists of three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. The first stage, data reduction, involves selecting, focusing, simplifying, and transforming raw data obtained from the field to make it easier to manage and understand. Second, data presentation is the process of arranging data in a systematic format, such as narratives, so that it can provide a clear picture of the information that has been collected. The third stage, concluding, involves interpreting the data that has been presented to find patterns, relationships, and deep meanings and to draw valid and accountable conclusions. These three stages are carried out iteratively and repeatedly to ensure comprehensive and in-depth data analysis (Miles & Huberman, 2018).

Results and Discussion

After conducting interviews with each student, data was obtained regarding the motivation for Malaysian students at the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta to connect with social media in the detailed findings below.

Food Content as an Escape

The Malaysian diaspora student often uses social media as the main channel to connect and access various content from Indonesia and their home countries. Amid busy schedules and academic activities, social media has become a place for them to practice self-healing. For Nurul, social media offers the opportunity to feel at peace without leaving the comfort of their home. The phrase "self-healing without leaving the house," conveyed by Nurul, reflects the important role of social media in helping her fight the boredom that is often found in the lives of students from abroad. By accessing content from various sources and interacting with fellow students, they can feel more connected and find emotional support in online communities. Social media is not just a platform for entertainment or communication but also an essential tool for the Malaysian diaspora student to maintain their mental and emotional balance amidst the challenges of life abroad.

As active social media users, Malaysian students show consistent interest in certain types of content, especially food content. They tend to access more content, such as culinary reviews, food recommendations, *mukbang* (eating broadcasts), and ASMR (Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response). This interest is driven by exploring various culinary

cultures and seeking new culinary experiences. What is more interesting is that the food content provides entertainment and has a significant relaxing effect on them. While watching or listening to such content, Malaysian students often feel distracted from academic pressures and daily routines. They find peace in their focus on culinary delights presented in audio-visual format. At this moment, social media has become more than just a communication tool; it has become a window into a fun and refreshing world. This is as expressed by Allia:

> When it comes to (social media), I prefer to open TikTok. It's like watching cooking videos and eating like that. I like hearing the sound of people eating or ASMR. I love hearing it and relax. The way I like it, I do not think about the problems of studying anymore. Just think about food.

Besides using food content as an escape from boredom, Malaysian students also use social media to express their interests and hobbies. An example is Nurul, who has a particular interest in cooking. She actively searches for recipe content on Instagram for Western and Indonesian dishes. For Nurul, Instagram is a platform for socializing and a source of inspiration and knowledge about culinary matters. Whenever she succeeds in cooking one of the recipes she finds on Instagram, she feels happy because she can apply her interest in her daily activities.

Not only Nurul, but also Saifful found a way to channel his interests through social media. Living in Yogyakarta as an international student from Malaysia, Saifful is interested in exploring various local culinary delights. He often looks for recommendations for places to eat through review videos or food reviews that he finds on social media platforms. Saifful even invited other Malaysian student friends to join the culinary adventure, making the experience of exploring Yogyakarta's culinary delights a way to unite their community. In this way, social media is a tool for content consumption and a platform for actualizing interests and hobbies, as well as building social ties among the Malaysian diaspora student. Saifful stated it as follows:

> For me, on Instagram, the FYP is more culinary; the closest ones are like this in Jogja (the local term for Yogyakarta). Then, if you meet someone nearby, you want to come there. I want to try that. During the pandemic, I was still studying online; I wanted to try it; it would be fun. However, I still need to go to Indonesia. So, after arriving in Indonesia, I immediately saw it before my own eyes and wanted to try it myself. I like watching food review videos, such as influencers taking food reviews and giving comments about food like that. I usually invite friends to come together if the place is near me. I usually tell my family in Malaysia about the different culinary tastes here and there.

Recommendations for Local Tourism Nearby

Apart from relying on social media to explore culinary content, the Malaysian diaspora student also actively uses this platform to exchange recommendations for tourist attractions in Yogyakarta and build relationships. They are looking for information about culinary delights, hiking locations, and natural attractions they can visit. Most are interested in natural destinations, so they often share information about interesting places in Yogyakarta and its surroundings.

For example, Allia enthusiastically shared information about natural tourist locations with fellow Malaysian students. This creates mutual involvement and collaboration between them, building a community that supports each other in exploring the natural beauty around Yogyakarta. In this case, social media has become more than just a means to socialize; it also provides a platform for the Malaysian diaspora student to share experiences and create bonds through a shared passion for nature exploration. Allia revealed:

> …we like looking for natural tourist locations like that. We want to climb a mountain or visit Bromo or Mount Andong. I share, for example, a video of that location with friends so they can invite them to go there. So, do not just eat, but also enjoy nature.

For Malaysian students, social media is not just a platform to share culinary recommendations and tourist attractions, but also a tool to show concern for each other. They maintain relationships with each other by staying in touch even though they are far from home and amid busy academic routines. Similar conditions and shared experiences make them feel connected. For example, Allia shows her concern for her friends' mental health by recommending relaxing natural tourist attractions. Saifful always invites his friends to explore the best culinary locations recommended to him. Meanwhile, Nurul sends funny content and tips about lifestyle, sports, and beauty to entertain and support her friends. In this way, social media becomes more than just a communication tool; it is a means of strengthening emotional ties between them, creating a solid support network amidst the busyness and challenges of life as students studying at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. Allia added:

> I often send memes, like those funny ones—or even beauty tips. Let us make this. We share sports and lifestyles like that. Invite me to go jogging somewhere like that.

Malaysian students often exchange news to maintain relationships and communication with family and relatives in Malaysia. For example, Nurul regularly sends messages to her family and relatives, informing them about the latest conditions in Yogyakarta and providing information about herself as a sign that she is doing well there. As a form of

mutual concern, Nurul also always asks how her family and relatives in Malaysia are doing, showing her care and desire to remain connected even though the distance separates her, as she said:

> Apart from parents, friends also usually tell us that there is an earthquake in Jogja. Let me know the weather. It is boiling, and it has not rained for a long time. More to report on my condition while in Jogja. Someone asked if it was raining in Jogja or not. Because there is a flood near here.

Allia has a different approach to maintaining communication with her family than Nurul. She rarely details current conditions to her family, such as the weather or her circumstances. Allia believes that providing too much information will only make her family worry about her situation abroad. Instead, she prefers to communicate with her family and relatives via social media, especially discussing the differences in the university atmosphere in Indonesia and Malaysia. Apart from that, Allia also actively provides recommendations for tourist locations that they should explore when visiting Indonesia, as stated below:

> I always share things about college, the learning atmosphere here, and tourist attractions like that. Like if Allia has been to Bromo, Allia will share what is going on here, what the weather is like, things like that.

In common with Allia, Saifful also tends to communicate more often with his family and relatives in Malaysia about unique culinary recommendations that they should try when visiting Indonesia. Both Allia and Saifful use social media to share culinary experiences and provide suggestions about places to eat that are worth visiting. Apart from that, Saiful's parents often ask about his eating habits and ensure that he can adapt to the food taste in Indonesia. They pay special attention to food because they understand it is an important part of their child's adaptation to a new country. This is as conveyed by Saifful as follows:

> If I am more interested in culinary delights in Jogja, I will share them with the family WhatsApp group. What is the difference? This food is the same as in Malaysia, and the price is cheaper. Another thing is that my mother often asks what the differences are between the food in Indonesia and Malaysia, such as Soto. The Soto in Indonesia is better than the one in Malaysia. Often asked, have you eaten or not? How many times do you eat a day? That is how it is with family.

Strengthening Religious and National Identity

Malaysian students use social media to maintain and affirm their religious identity as Malaysian citizens, especially in the context of Islamic beliefs. They remain loyal to

Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah (Aswaja), a teaching firmly adhered to based on Malaysian government regulations. Malaysia is known for its Muslim society, which has traditions and daily routines that adhere to the *Sunnah* (Prophet Muhammad's example for Muslims to follow). This difference can be seen in the homogeneous beliefs in Malaysia, in contrast to Indonesia, which tends to have diversity in understanding the Islamic religion, where *Muftis* (great clerics who often give Islamic judgment) are often used as references in everyday life. While in Indonesia, the Malaysian diaspora continues to follow the religious regulations of their home country, such as the first day of Ramadan fasting and the Eid al-Fitr holiday, which are often adopted from the teachings of the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in Indonesia. In maintaining consistency with their beliefs, the Malaysian diaspora uses social media to monitor news and developments related to Malaysia's religious regulations and strengthen their religious identity through content related to holiday celebrations and other important religious days.

For them, *Aswaja* is a personal belief and a shared guideline for maintaining their religious identity amid different environments. United in the same belief, they use social media to strengthen the bonds of their religious identity by sharing information, discussing, and voicing their shared beliefs. This illustrates that social media is a platform for social interaction and a space to strengthen beliefs and values that are important to them as individuals and as a community. As a representative, Nurul said the following:

> *Aswaja* is like a handle. Here there are [Islamic organization such as] *NU* and *Muhammadiyah*. However, in Malaysia, Imam Syafi'i and *Aswaja* are indeed in harmony. There are *Muftis* there who issue *fatwas* (Islamic judgment), so we follow that. Like yesterday, it was Eid al-Fitr, *Muhammadiyah* Eid first, so if we followed in Malaysia, we would still be fasting. We are together with *NU*. We know the development of information there from the *Mufti* of Religion. They have Instagram, too.

Apart from religious identity, national identity is also maintained by Malaysian students because they feel homesick for the place where they grew up. They use these platforms to play the Malaysian national anthem and popular songs from Malaysia, which take them back to memories of home. Video calls with family have become a necessary routine, providing an opportunity to feel the warmth of family relationships even though distance separates them. Apart from that, they also cure their homesickness by looking at archives on social media such as Instagram, which are often filled with memories of the places they left behind in Malaysia. It is not uncommon for them to monitor the condition of their home environment via Google Earth or Google Maps, trying to re-experience the atmosphere of the cities and villages they left behind.

Latest Surveillance in Indonesia and Malaysia

In terms of surveillance, Malaysian students also often monitor traditions and developments in Indonesia through news spread on social media. With easy access to social media platforms, Malaysian students can follow various events, cultures, and traditions in Indonesia in real-time. They often follow social media accounts that focus on news and content related to Indonesia to gain new insights regarding the similarities and differences in their culture. Nurul said:

> It is nice to read news about differences in ritual or traditions, like news from people celebrating *Tasyakuran* (a kind of thanksgiving), where the colors scatter to fight for blessings. Oh, that is all. In Malaysia, it is different.

Apart from his daily activities, Saifful also actively monitors developments in information related to safety in his surroundings. This includes monitoring information on police patrol points to check drivers licenses and information on criminal conditions that may occur while driving. Saifful realizes the importance of safety in driving and considers this information as a proactive step to avoid the risk of accidents or unwanted violations of the law, as he said:

> I follow the development of ticket information in the WhatsApp group. Information that seems close by. The problem is that it is sufficient if you leave the house but need to know the information. It is like *klitih* (kind of street crime) information, too.

Besides monitoring information developments in Indonesia, Malaysian students also often observe information developments in their homeland. They tend to pay more attention to climate and weather developments in Malaysia, as stated by Allia:

> More often follow weather developments. In Malaysia, there is now a lot of air pollution, such as fog. Moreover, it came from Indonesia because of forest fires.

Apart from monitoring weather conditions, they also follow information developments about scholarship programs provided by the Malaysian government for students studying in Indonesia. This is because scholarship opportunities from the Malaysian government for its citizens who wish to continue their studies in Indonesia still need to be expanded. The Malaysian government provides scholarships to citizens studying in Western and Eastern countries. In addition, Malaysian students also often look for information about job vacancies in Malaysia. With the differences in education systems and regulations between Indonesia and Malaysia, they hope to be able to adapt the

knowledge and skills they acquired while studying in Indonesia to apply well in their own country.

Discussion

Based on the data findings, it can be concluded that culinary content serves multiple purposes for Malaysian students beyond just an escape from their academic routine. It acts as a vital means for them to connect virtually with their peers, share recommendations and recipes, and find relaxation. The types of culinary content that particularly interest these students include recipes and ASMR videos. Recipes provide them with practical ideas for meals, allowing them to experiment with cooking and share these experiences with friends, thus fostering a sense of community and shared cultural heritage. ASMR content, on the other hand, offers a unique form of relaxation.

ASMR videos typically feature soothing sounds and visuals associated with cooking and food preparation, which have been found to have a calming effect on viewers. Malaysian students use these videos as a way to unwind and clear their minds from their various academic and social responsibilities. This aligns with research findings that state listening to ASMR content can induce relaxation and make listeners feel as if they possess the cooking skills demonstrated in the videos (Keating & Łapińska, 2023). The immersive experience of ASMR helps in reducing stress and provides a comforting distraction from the pressures of student life.

In the context of personal relationships, Malaysian students in Yogyakarta actively exchange information about tourist attractions through social media. This exchange of information demonstrates their concern and enthusiasm for helping relatives or friends who plan to visit Yogyakarta, guiding them to interesting and worthwhile destinations in the area. By sharing their personal experiences and recommendations, these students become trusted sources of information within their social circles. Their firsthand knowledge and experiences lend credibility to their suggestions, helping shape the expectations and experiences of their visitors.

As pioneers in their networking circles, Malaysian students are often looked upon as reliable guides, who can offer valuable insights into the best tourist spots in Yogyakarta. This role of information sharing not only strengthens their connections with friends and family, but also enhances the visitors' overall travel experience. Research supports this phenomenon, indicating that content shared for the first time by social media users significantly influences tourists' satisfaction when visiting a destination (Narangajavana Kaosiri et al., 2019). This initial sharing of information sets a precedent and creates a framework for visitors' expectations, contributing to their enjoyment and fulfillment during their travels.

Apart from that, being in a foreign country exposes Malaysian students to a variety of ideologies, which often strengthens their preference to maintain their original identity.

This preservation of identity is particularly evident in the religious context, where Malaysian students frequently follow *Aswaja* teachings via websites or Instagram. These digital platforms provide them with a continuous connection to their religious beliefs and practices, reinforcing their cultural and spiritual identity despite being far from home. The accessibility of such content mirrors the ease with which the Malaysian public can access religious guidance from the Mufti through various technology and information channels (Khairuldin et al., 2018).

This digital connection to their religious roots helps Malaysian students navigate the complexities of living abroad while maintaining their faith. Additionally, their longing for their homeland is expressed in other forms, such as listening to the national anthem, which evokes deep feelings of patriotism and national identity. This practice is not merely a nostalgic act, but is driven by a strong sense of loyalty and pride that has been instilled in them over time (B. Smith & Tryce, 2019; L. R. Smith, 2019; Storey, 2020).

These behaviors underscore the importance of cultural and national identity for Malaysian students in a foreign environment. By engaging with familiar religious content and national symbols, they create a sense of continuity and stability in their lives. This practice helps them cope with the cultural differences and potential isolation they might experience while studying abroad. It also highlights the role of digital media in maintaining cultural ties and fostering a sense of community among the diaspora.

Furthermore, in terms of supervision, Malaysian students utilize various social media channels to stay updated on the latest developments in both Indonesia and Malaysia. This practice helps them maintain a sense of connection and awareness about their surroundings and family conditions back home. When monitoring their families in Malaysia, these students often focus on climate and weather updates. Given Malaysia's tropical climate and susceptibility to seasonal changes and natural disasters, such as air pollution, keeping an eye on weather conditions becomes crucial. This vigilance ensures they are informed about any potential threats or disruptions that might affect their loved ones.

This focus on environmental monitoring aligns with broader trends observed on social media platforms like Twitter. Studies have shown that a significant portion of monitoring activity on Twitter revolves around environmental issues, particularly climate change (Becken et al., 2022). Users frequently share and seek information about weather patterns, climate anomalies, and related news, reflecting a growing global concern about the environment. For Malaysian students, this type of monitoring is not just about staying informed, but also about feeling connected to their homeland and ensuring the safety and well-being of their families.

Moreover, by using social media for such monitoring purposes, these students can quickly communicate any urgent information to their family members, advising them to

take necessary precautions. This proactive approach underscores the importance of social media as a tool for real-time information sharing and crisis management. It also highlights the role of technology in bridging geographical distances, allowing students to remain involved in their families' lives despite being physically distant.

Conclusion

The connection between Malaysian students studying at the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta via social media is driven by various motivations. These motivations include using social media as an escape through culinary content, sharing recommendations for tourist attractions, strengthening religious and national identity, and monitoring current conditions in their surroundings and back home. This multifaceted motivation arises from their busy academic schedules, their significant role as influential recommenders within their networking circles, the discomfort associated with the potential loss of identity, and their concern for popular issues at both local and global levels.

Based on the literature reviewed in the discussion, the motivational aspects of these students show several implications for using social media. First, students feel they have similar skills to the content they watch, such as cooking in ASMR videos. Second, they act as a credible source of information for relatives back home, especially regarding recommendations for tourist attractions and culinary delights. Third, social media facilitates accessibility to religious fatwas, allowing them to stay connected with religious teachings from the Mufti. Finally, climate issues are a favorite of netizens on social media, reflecting their concern for climate change and the environment and following general trends on platforms such as Twitter.

The findings from this study offer an opportunity to provide recommendations for future inquiries to expand the scope of Malaysian diaspora research. The main focus of this analysis is Malaysian students studying in Yogyakarta, but it is important to consider other distributions from various cities in Indonesia. By expanding the scope of the research to include the Malaysian diaspora from other cities in Indonesia, future researchers can gain a more comprehensive understanding of interactions and relationships with Indonesian culture.

Acknowledgments

Orcid

Muhamad Lutfi Habibi ⓘD *https://orcid.org/0009-0003-1686-2385*

Nur Fadhilah Andini ⓘD *https://orcid.org/0009-0008-7613-8694*

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