

# Research on Social Media and Service Delivery in Southeast Asian Countries: A Publication Review

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**Abstract.** This paper aims to identify the entirety of publications on the concepts of social media and service delivery in the Southeast Asian context. The study of social media and service delivery is not new in the extant literature. However, there is limited empirical research on the publication trend pertaining these topics. Publication data from prominent databases was thus analyzed in the current paper to understand the publication trend in these areas. The results showed distinct publication patterns on social media and service delivery in particular regions and subject areas. The findings suggest that further research should be conducted in Southeast Asia and across disciplines to improve generalizability.

**Keywords:** Social media · Service delivery · Southeast asian countries · Review

## 1 Introduction

The ever-changing environment of the digital economy has challenged traditional economic and business concepts [1]. In particular, social media platforms have extended their purpose from sharing photos and videos to improving services in private and government sectors. Scholars have established numerous benefits of using social media as a technology to improve service delivery. However, both these concepts, i.e. social media and service delivery, are still relatively understudied among Southeast Asian researchers compared to the Western countries. Therefore, the objective of this paper is to record and summarize the totality of publications by Southeast Asian researchers in the fields of social media and service delivery. The records can be used to identify the level of awareness of social media and service delivery research in these countries. Although this paper limits its analysis to select prominent databases, the chosen databases are well-established in social media and service delivery research.

## 2 The Importance of Social Media and Service Delivery Study

Social media and service delivery have been extensively studied in the literature and are still of interest in current research [2] [3] [4]. Moreover, social media and service

delivery have been studied from multiple viewpoints such as computer science [5], healthcare [6], psychology [7], and also in marketing [8]. The recent advances in technological innovation and the remarkable development of technology-based industries have enabled the storage, communication, and computation of information that has changed the way individuals, groups, organizations, and industries work [9] [10] [11]. The significance of the findings of this study may be viewed from researchers' perspectives. From the researchers' perspective, this paper advances the body of literature and knowledge on social media and service delivery because the findings of the researches can positively impact the whole community [12].

### 3 Methodology

To generate a list of records on social media and service delivery research in Southeast Asia, two prominent databases were utilized, namely Web of Science and Scopus. The steps involved in the research process were: (i) Identification of potential databases to use; (ii) Development of search statements; (iii) Generation of results; (iv) Filtration by country; (v) Filtration by specific terms, such as language and subject; (vi) Analysis of results; and (vii) Discussion of results.

### 4 Search Statement

It is vital to develop search statements to generate reliable search results. Search statements help researchers formulate consistent keywords and search strategies. To generate search statements, Boolean search and quotation marks were used in this study. Concepts related to the keywords were identified and combined with Boolean concepts, i.e. "AND" and "OR", in the databases. Table 1 shows the search statements used to retrieve results in this study.

**Table 1.** Search Statements Used to Retrieve Results.

	Concept A	Concept B
Key words	Social Media	Service Delivery
Boolean	AND; OR	
Search statement	"Social Media" OR "Service Delivery"	

### 5 Citation of Database

Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus citation databases were used to generate record counts on research in social media and service delivery. These databases allowed verification of the total number of indexed publications. Most articles indexed in the databases were scholarly articles, published conference papers, books, and book chapters. The record data acquired from WoS and Scopus was last updated in September 2019.

## 5.1 Web of Science (WoS)

WoS is a research platform that allows concurrent cross-searching of a range of databases and citation indexes. WoS provides research tools such as cited reference search, citation reports, and personalized featured for users. The list of the top 10 countries that published social media research in WoS is presented in Table 2. Overall, there were 45,544 record counts for social media research in the WoS database. The most dominant country to produce social media research was the United States of America (USA) (34.99%), followed by England (9.62%), and China (8.32%). The English language was the most dominant language used in social media research, comprising 98.33%, followed by Spanish (1.33%) and Portuguese (0.34%). However, no Southeast Asian countries were listed in the top 10 index in WoS. Table 3 shows that Malaysia led Southeast Asian research on social media with 1.67% in WoS, followed by Indonesia with 1.42% and Singapore with 1.35%. The number of record counts in social media research was thus decidedly low compared to other continents. This shows that more social media research should be conducted in Southeast Asian countries.

**Table 2.** Top 10 Countries to Publish Social Media Research in WoS.

No	Countries	Record Counts	% of 45,544
1	USA	15,934	34.99%
2	England	4,381	9.62%
3	China	3,789	8.32%
4	Australia	3,147	6.91%
5	Canada	2,169	5.0%
6	Spain	1,720	3.78%
7	Germany	1,692	3.72%
8	India	1,605	3.52%
9	Italy	1,299	2.85%
10	Netherlands	1,154	2.53%

**Table 3.** Southeast Asian Countries' Social Media Research Record Counts in WoS.

No	Countries	Record Counts	% of 45,544
1	Malaysia	759	1.67%
2	Indonesia	649	1.42%
3	Singapore	615	1.35%
4	Thailand	238	0.52%
5	Philippines	99	0.22%
6	Vietnam	85	0.19%
7	Myanmar	8	0.02%
8	Brunei	5	0.01%
9	Cambodia	4	0%
10	Timor-Leste	2	0%
11	Laos	0	0%

On the other hand, research on service delivery generated 20,336 indexed record counts in WoS. Table 4 shows the top 10 countries to publish service delivery research

in WoS. The most dominant country was the USA (13.44%), followed by England (5.57%) and Australia (4.90%). There were three main languages used in service delivery research, namely English (99.32%), Spanish (0.20%), and Portuguese (0.14%). Once again, none of the Southeast Asian countries were listed in the top 10 index in the WoS database. The list of Southeast Asian countries that published service delivery research in WoS is shown in Table 5. The number of publications on service delivery from Southeast Asia was only 548, which suggests a rather limited awareness of service delivery concepts among researchers in this region. Malaysia (0.90%), Singapore (0.60%), and Thailand (0.252%) led the research on service delivery among Southeast Asian countries.

**Table 4.** Top 10 Countries to Publish Service Delivery Research in WoS.

No	Countries	Record Counts	% of 20,336
1	USA	7,504	13.44%
2	England	3,109	5.57%
3	Australia	2,735	4.90%
4	Canada	1,563	2.80%
7	South Africa	1,075	1.93%
5	China	622	1.11%
6	India	614	1.10%
9	Netherlands	591	1.06%
8	Scotland	398	0.71%
10	Switzerland	398	0.71%

**Table 5.** Southeast Asian Countries' Service Delivery Research Record Counts in WoS.

No	Countries	Record Counts	% of 20,336
1	Malaysia	184	0.90%
2	Singapore	122	0.60%
3	Thailand	81	0.34%
4	Indonesia	69	0.34%
5	Philippines	49	0.24%
6	Cambodia	25	0.12%
7	Myanmar	11	0.05%
8	Brunei	4	0.02%
9	Timor-Leste	2	0.01%
10	Laos	1	0.005%
11	Vietnam	0	0.00%

## 5.2 Scopus

Scopus is one of the largest citation databases, comprising peer-reviewed literature such as books, conference proceedings, and scientific journals. There were a total of 66,865 record counts for social media publications in Scopus. As shown in Table 6, the USA (34.97%) led social media research in Scopus, followed by the United Kingdom (10.60%) and Australia (6.31%). The main languages used in social media research in

this database were English (97.80%), Spanish (0.81%), and German (0.42%). The Computer Science field (41.2%) and Social Sciences field (32.49%) were the dominant subject areas in social media research. There were no Southeast Asian countries listed in the top 10 countries in social media research. Within the region, Malaysia (1.43%) led studies on this topic, followed by Singapore (1.39%), Indonesia (1.24%), and Thailand (0.55%). Table 7 presents a complete list of Southeast Asian countries' publication records in the Scopus database.

**Table 6.** Top 10 Countries to Publish Social Media Research in Scopus.

No	Countries	Records Count	% of 66,865
1	USA	23,382	34.97%
2	United Kingdom	7,091	10.60%
3	Australia	4,222	6.31%
4	China	4,047	6.05%
5	India	3,214	4.81%
6	Canada	3,023	4.52%
7	Germany	2,853	4.27%
8	Spain	1,963	2.94%
9	Italy	1,832	2.74%
10	Netherlands	1,530	2.29%

**Table 7.** Southeast Asian Countries' Social Media Research Record Counts in Scopus.

No	Countries	Records Count	% of 66,856
1	Malaysia	957	1.43%
2	Singapore	931	1.39%
3	Indonesia	827	1.24%
4	Thailand	366	0.55%
5	Philippines	143	0.21%
6	Vietnam	105	0.16%
7	Myanmar	15	0.02%
8	Brunei	8	0.01%
9	Cambodia	6	0.01%
10	Laos	0	0%
11	Timor-Leste	0	0%

Meanwhile, research on service delivery generated 10,897 indexed record counts in Scopus. Table 8 shows the top 10 countries that published service delivery research in Scopus. The most dominant countries were the USA (34.59%), the United Kingdom (16.28%), and Australia (11.64 %). There were three main languages used in service delivery research, i.e. English (98.45%), Spanish (1.73%), and Portuguese (0.90%). The major subject area in service delivery research in Scopus was Medicine (43.22%), followed by Social Sciences (30.19%) and Computer Science (12.92 %). No Southeast Asian countries were listed in the top 10 index for service delivery research in the Scopus database. Nevertheless, as presented in Table 9, Malaysia (0.91%) led the Southeast Asian countries in service delivery research, followed by Singapore (0.48%), Thailand (0.37%), and Indonesia (0.35%).

**Table 8.** Top 10 Countries to Publish Service Delivery Research in Scopus.

No	Countries	Records Count	% of 31,506
1	USA	10,897	34.59%
2	United Kingdom	5,128	16.28%
3	Australia	3,668	11.64%
4	Canada	2,179	6.92%
5	South Africa	1,443	4.58%
6	India	1,079	3.42%
7	Germany	758	2.41%
8	Netherlands	740	2.35%
9	China	638	2.03%
10	Italy	491	1.56%

**Table 9.** Southeast Asian Countries' Service Delivery Research Record Counts in Scopus.

No	Countries	Records Count	% of 31,506
1	Malaysia	288	0.91%
2	Singapore	150	0.48%
3	Thailand	118	0.37%
4	Indonesia	111	0.35%
5	Philippines	79	0.25%
6	Vietnam	57	0.18%
7	Cambodia	27	0.09%
8	Myanmar	11	0.03%
9	Brunei	10	0.03%
10	Laos	7	0.02%
11	Timor-Leste	2	0.01%

## 6 Discussion

This study's findings show that publications on social media and service delivery are far more prevalent in developed countries such as the United States of America, Australia, and United Kingdom. Cultural and political environments [13] may contribute to their vast number of publications. Also, this study's results on the social media research publication trend is in line with a review done by [13] on a social media platform that highlighted the research trend which is also higher in the Western countries. Since the studies are mostly from the Western part of the world, there may be Western prejudice or cultural influences on the studies' results. In fact, nearly half of all social media and service delivery studies may suffer from generalizability concerns in view of the current publication trend. Therefore, researchers from Southeast Asian countries should add international perspectives to the current body of knowledge by publishing more studies on social media and service delivery. Additionally, the database review in this study found that the field of Computer Science dominates social media research, signaling the relative lack of non-science related publications. This highlights the need for more social media publications in transdisciplinary or non-science subject areas. Multidisciplinary research is supported by prominent scholars in

the area of services research as well, as they have called for the emergence of technology-dominant service context in research [3].

## 7 Conclusions

This review provides a general trend of social media and service delivery research, particularly the dearth of such research in Southeast Asian countries. In conclusion, the number of studies on social media and service delivery is relatively low in the Southeast Asian region, resulting in a geographic deficit between Western and Southeast Asian researchers in terms of publications. Moving forward, a more conscious effort to include research from other continents is necessary to increase the diversity of social media and service delivery scholarship. Likewise, increasing social media research publications in non-science subject areas is highly encouraged to reduce the gap between science and non-science research. This publication review study is limited by its use of only two databases. More databases and search engines, such as meta-search engines, hybrids, directories, and crawler search engines, may be used to generate record counts in future review studies. Moreover, various search strategies may be developed to obtain better results for the concepts of social media and service delivery in the future.

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