

THE FUNCTIONS AND PROGRESSION OF CHINESE MEDIA IN COSTRUCTING MALAYSIA MADANI SOCIETY - A CASE STUDY OF SIN CHEW DAILY

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Abstract: As a culturally diverse nation, Malaysia necessitates robust interethnic communication and comprehension of ideological and cultural nuances to effectively advance the contemporary aspirations of a Madani Society. This research endeavors to investigate the roles and evolution of Chinese-language media in shaping Malaysia's Madani Society, focusing on an examination of pertinent articles within Sin Chew Daily. A purposive sampling approach will be employed, targeting 100 headline articles from Sin Chew Daily for comprehensive analysis, including scrutiny of accompanying netizen feedback. This inquiry will employ coding techniques to categorize article themes, reporting patterns, source diversity, and frequency of coverage. Furthermore, it will scrutinize netizen responses to discern prevailing public sentiments regarding the selected reports. Subsequently, the study will scrutinize Sin Chew Daily's initiatives aimed at fostering national cohesion and inclusivity within Malaysia's Chinese community. Finally, recommendations will be proffered on how Chinese-language media can enhance their role in advancing the realization of a Madani Society within Malaysia.

Keywords: Madani Society, Sin Chew Daily, Chinese Media, Function, Progression

INTRODUCTION

In Malaysia, Madani society underscores the profound respect for human rights, echoing universal principles cherished worldwide. It stands as a testament to the rich moral

fabric inherent in Islam when practiced conscientiously. Through its principles and practices, Madani society serves as a beacon of ethical conduct and communal welfare, demonstrating the enduring relevance of Islamic teachings in fostering a just, equitable, and inclusive society. From an epistemological point of view, both commonalities and differences between Madani society and civic society, the term in the discourse system of the Western world. (Ahmad Mukri Aji, Havis Aravik & Nur Rohim Yunus, 2020; Nik Khusairie Jaafar¹ & Azmi Aziz, 2023).

The mass media play an important role in promoting the building of Madani society by disseminating information, fostering dialogue, shaping perceptions, forging consensus, punishing evil and preserving culture. In the case of the Chinese language media in Malaysia, they also share the same responsibilities and obligations as public media (Ng, M. L. and Y. B. Lee, 2018). The framing of media coverage varies greatly from one position to another in response to different topical events in Malaysia (Manimegalai Ambikapathy & Hasmah Zanuddin, 2018; Kenneth Lee Tze Wui & Wong Win Wei; 2022). Previous studies have mainly focused on the perspective of traditional media, this study combines the new features of traditional media news production and social media distribution, delving into the functions and progression of Chinese media, with a specific focus on Sin Chew Daily, in contributing to the construction of a Madani Society in Malaysia.

METHODS

The study employed purposive sampling and selected 100 high-concerned articles from 2022 to 2024, in Sin Chew Daily (over 10,000 reads and over 100 reads on Facebook) and utilized content analysis to estimate the issue types, reporting tendencies, information source dimensions and the degree of reporting concentration through related coding. Additionally, netizen comments associated with these articles are analyzed to summarize public sentiment and reactions on Facebook. Through these evidence, this study discussed the functions and progression of Sin Chew Daily in construction of a Madani Society in Malaysia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present study reached initial findings through the systematic analysis of 100 news articles extracted from Sin Chew Daily's publications spanning the period from 2022 to 2024. Employing a purposive sampling methodology, the research applied coding techniques to discern patterns related to various attributes including the thematic focus, racial representation, reporting inclinations, sourcing dynamics, and the extent of thematic concentration within the sampled articles. Additionally, thematic analysis was conducted on the netizen feedback associated with each news item to elucidate prevailing sentiments and perspectives within the online community.

In assessing the functions and progression of Chinese media towards the realization of a Madani Society, several key observations emerge.

1. The characteristics of reports of Sin Chew Daily

The content analysis revealed that Sin Chew Daily focused on Chinese-speaking readers in the selection of topics, but also took into account topics from other ethnic groups to ensure a reasonable coverage.

(1) Political issues. In terms of political

coverage, it tended to fight for the rights and interests of the Chinese community, and was keen to report on government affairs, corruption and lawsuits.

(2) Economic issues. In terms of economic coverage, it mainly reported on the behaviour of Chinese enterprises and Chinese associations. Topics about consumer disputes, tourism services were widely reported to criticize and reflect on the lack of Malaysian services.

(3) Education issues. In education coverage, it mainly showed the achievements of Chinese education and the attractiveness of the Chinese language education system to other ethnic groups.

(4) Culture issues. In terms of traditional culture, there were more reports on Chinese calligraphy, Chinese literature, food and beverage culture, wedding customs and festivals, as well as reports on ethnic blending in culture, such as Malay couples hold weddings according to Chinese customs.

(5) Emergency issues. In terms of breaking news and case reports, the main focuses were on car accidents, frauds, sexual assaults, domestic violence and other incidents that attracted public attention.

(6) Family issues. Family dispute-type stories were easy to spotlight on social media. Such topics mainly focused on conflicts between couples, parents and children, and couples over household, filial paternity and living expenses.

2. The characteristics of netizen comments of Sin Chew Daily

(1) Chinese speaking netizen expected a fair and just political environment, but they also believed in conspiracy theories and the existence of subterfuge.

(2) Chinese speaking netizen had a clear sense of right and wrong, blessing the good

and criticizing the ugly, sympathizing with the weak and wanting the strong to be more public-spirited. But very often they also used a sarcastic, flirtatious and mocking tone of voice. In the face of disasters or bad things, the two most common words said by Chinese speaking netizen were Namo Amitabha Buddha and cheering up.

(3) Chinese speaking netizen showed a high level of media and information literacy, such as inquiring about the source of information, calling for deeper coverage of sensitive topics, discussing social issues rationally, and showing inclusiveness and criticality towards social phenomena.

3. Functions of Chinese-language media in building Madani society

(1) Maintaining the unity and stability of the country through criticism and supervise public power.

(2) Providing information that Chinese people care about.

(3) Striving for indiscriminate national treatment for the Chinese community, and reflecting the political demands of the Chinese.

(4) Highlighting the importance of the Chinese community in economic development.

(5) Inheriting and develop Chinese culture and promoting Chinese education.

(6) Providing the platform for Chinese-speaking users to communicate, vent, and entertainment.

(7) Building a window for the world to understand Malaysian Chinese.

CONCLUSIONS

With the newspaper's philosophy of justice above all else and love on earth, the Sin Chew Daily is playing an important role in the process of building a Madani society. In

general, there are common room for improvement of Chinese-language media in Malaysia.

(1) Covering multi-ethnic reporting issues as broadly as possible.

(2) Reporting politics issues that promote the development of the entire country rather than focusing on a single ethnic.

(3) Reporting diverse economic issues that promote the integral prosperity of Malaysia.

(4) Preserving traditional Chinese culture, getting reasonable treatment for the Chinese community, and promoting exchanges and dialogues among ethnic groups, it is also seeking the attention of the young people of Generation Z. Not only calling for national funding for the Chinese education ,but also taking into account the education status of other ethnics.

(5) Paying attention to the characteristics and integration of cultures.

(6) Uncovering the in-depth social reasons behind breaking news and case reports.

(7) Expanding the richness of coverage of family issues rather than focusing solely on money.

In conclusion, the construction of a Madani society necessitates that Chinese-language media adopt a public-oriented approach, transcending mere pursuit of commercial success and online viewership metrics. Media entities should engage in comprehensive coverage of significant societal issues, eschewing undue catering to the transient interests of internet users. Embracing a more substantive journalistic ethos, they ought to delve into matters of significance and depth, thereby contributing meaningfully to public discourse and societal development within the framework of Madani values.

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