

DIGITAL DIVIDE: CAUSES OF DIGITAL DIVIDE IN MALAYSIA AND ASEAN COUNTRIES

By

**Husna Sarirah bt Husin
(2002203924)**

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Abstract

Digital divide can come in the form of gaps in income, telecommunication infrastructure, race, gender, age and education. This divide is among those who have the access to Internet and those who cannot, which happens not only among developing and under-developing countries, but also within the country itself. This paper describes the causes of digital divide in Malaysia, and her neighboring ASEAN countries that include Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Brunei, the Philippines, Laos and Vietnam. The methodology used is descriptive and correlational methods. Descriptive method will describe the digital divide situation based on previous literature review and case studies. Secondary data are collected from various reliable source such as World Bank and UNESCO. Correlational method using Pearson Product-moment Correlation Coefficient is used to investigate relationship between factors of income, PC ownership, urbanization, telephone subscription and literacy rate to Internet penetration to Malaysia and the other ASEAN countries. Hypothesis testing is performed to determine whether the hypotheses are true. Recommendations and suggestions are tabled to close the digital gap in Malaysia in particular, and other ASEAN countries in general.

Keywords: Digital divide, Internet, PC ownership, GNI (Growth National Income), literacy rate

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INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background Of Study

Digital divide is a term that is widely used to describe the disparity between access to Internet between countries and also within the country itself. The reasons for this digital gap includes the difference in income, urbanization, affordability to own a computer, access to Internet by the means of telephone lines and also the ability to use the computer and Internet. Other reasons may include the ethnic background, gender and age. Each country has unique digital divide problems due to their infrastructure, national language, income per capita and the government policy towards Information Communication and Technology (ICT). This study will analyze the reasons for digital divide in general, while focusing on the problems of digital divide in Malaysia and her neighboring countries.

1.2. Scope Of Study

1.2.1. Definition

The definition of digital divide is presented in this study based on different perspectives referred to earlier works on digital divide.