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#*BLOCK
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*WAVE
EXPRESSION
OF
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***A JOURNEY OF
EXPLORATION
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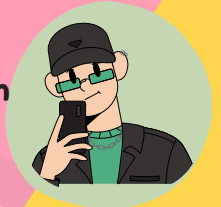




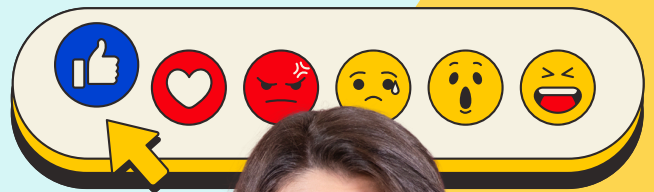
EMPOWERING Legal Literacy:

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS IN MALAYSIA

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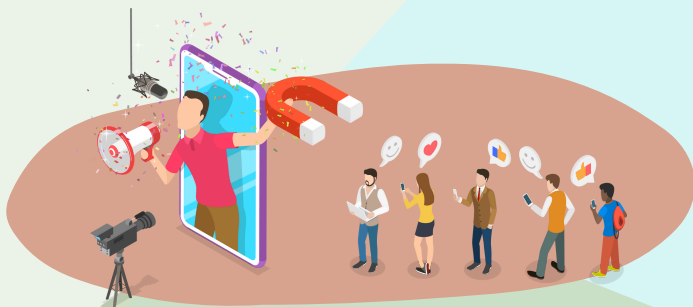


SOCIAL media influencers are individuals who use significant power in shaping consumer decisions and opinions through their online presence and interactions with followers (Worthington, 2023). They play a crucial role in various spheres, from marketing products and services to disseminating political information and influencing societal attitudes. As of 2023, Malaysia had around 30 million active social media users, which represents a significant portion of the population. This widespread usage indicates a vast potential audience for influencers, including those focusing on legal issues. In the legal spectrum, social media influencers can shape legal awareness through their content in social platforms (Zainuddin & Salle, 2022; Cai & Zhang, 2023).



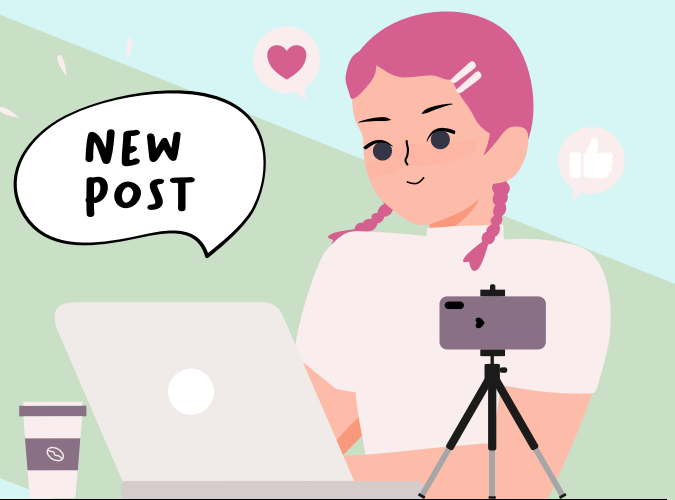
In Malaysia, social media influencers play a significant role in raising legal awareness due to their broad reach and influence on various social media platforms such as Tik Tok, Instagram, X(twitter) and Facebook. Official social media accounts of Tun Laila, Lawyers of Malaysia, Reina Lum, Aminahatul Mardiah, Roshan Kanesan, and lawyersrespond; just to name a few, are actively using their social media platforms in engaging the audiences with their legal contents.

Legal terms according to Felder (2017) often involve jargon words that can create barriers to understanding for individuals outside the legal profession. Hence, these social media influencers can use their platform to simplify the legal information. They can break down complex legal jargon into easy-to-understand content. Through videos, infographics, blog posts, and social media updates, they make legal information accessible to the public. Other than that, social media influencers also advocate through participating or initiating awareness campaigns about important legal issues such as consumer rights, cyber laws, human rights, and more. By leveraging their large followers, they can disseminate crucial information to a wide audience.



Many influencers also host or participate in podcasts, live discussions, webinars, and Q&A sessions on legal topics. These platforms allow for interactive engagement, where followers can ask questions and get immediate responses from legal experts. Interestingly, the followers or viewers can watch and play these platforms anytime and anywhere as mostly they are recorded. Frequently, social media influencers use their social platforms by sharing their personal legal experiences that can resonate strongly with their audience. This humanizes legal issues and often makes the information more relatable and impactful. For instance, an influencer discussing their experience with a legal scam, or a court case that can provide practical insights and cautionary advice. Surprisingly, many of them also shared their own experiences as law students back then and the struggles and challenges they have faced during study time, aside from the interesting tips one should consider if they wish to pursue law one day.

One thing that followers always look up for these influencers is when they need updates on the current issues which have legal repercussions. Here, they spread current legal updates, and they help to keep the public informed about the latest legal developments, such as new laws, amendments, and significant court rulings. This ensures that their audience is aware of changes that might affect their rights and obligations. Earlier this year, Federal court has ruled that sixteen (16) Islamic laws of Kelantan are void and unconstitutional in a landmark decision that could have major implications for the country's legal system. The case has sparked uproar among some conservative Muslim groups, who fear the challenge could undermine the position of Islam in Malaysia. However, after some social influencers had explained in non-legal terms over this case in their own videos, most of the comments and feedback received stated that they just knew and were aware about what had happened and decisions are made not because of political reasons, but merely on legal grounds.

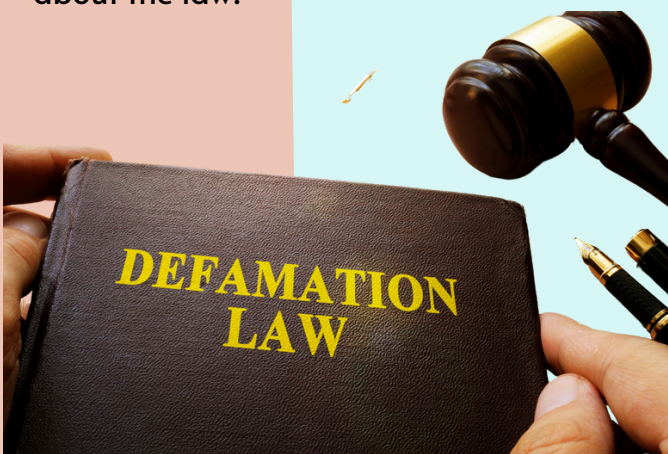


Many of these social media influencers also educate their followers by creating educational content. They specifically aimed at educating their followers about legal rights and responsibilities. This can include videos explaining legal processes, rights under specific laws, and steps and procedures to take in case of legal issues.

Social media influencers face several challenges in spreading legal awareness in Malaysia. These challenges stem from both the nature of legal content and the social media environment. Despite the followers enjoying watching any legal posts in social media, the truth to be told is that the legal issues are often complex and require detailed explanations. Simplifying these for a general audience without losing accuracy can be difficult. Influencers must balance between making the content accessible and ensuring it is legally sound. In fact, simplified legal information can sometimes be misinterpreted by the audience, leading to misunderstandings about the law.



Public perception and credibility often have put some challenges to the social media influencers. Gaining and maintaining the trust of the audience is crucial. Influencers need to establish their credibility as reliable sources of legal information, which can be challenging, especially for those without formal legal qualifications. Worst case scenario is the spread of misinformation on social media will undermine the efforts of influencers. Thus, they must continuously work to correct false information and combat rumours.



One of the consequences the social media influencers may face is the risk of being sued for defamation. Discussing legal issues, especially those involving public figures or ongoing cases, can expose influencers to defamation and libel suits. They must be careful about the content they share to avoid legal repercussions. Aside from that, influencers must ensure their content complies with legal standards and regulations, such as the Sedition Act, Communications and Multimedia Act, and other relevant laws in Malaysia.

Sometimes, discussing certain legal and political issues can be sensitive. Influencers risk censorship or legal action from the government, particularly when addressing controversial topics. Influencers must navigate the legal boundaries carefully to avoid violating laws related to sedition, public order, and other sensitive areas. They are put in difficult situations. On one hand, they want their post to get viral and engage more with followers. At another hand, they also need to be carefully aware of legal consequences that may occur, if any. Thus, balancing commercial interests with legal compliance poses challenges for influencers (Verdoodt & Feci, 2019).



Despite the challenges that the social media influencers may encounter, the constant legal awareness they have made through their own social media accounts has helped to increase awareness to the public. The efforts of these influencers result in a more informed public, aware of their legal rights and the resources available to them. Other than that, by demystifying the law, influencers empower individuals to take informed actions, seek legal help when needed, and stand up for their rights. On top of that, having an interactive nature of social media allows for direct engagement, fostering a community that is more engaged with legal matters and discussions.



Overall, social media influencers play a crucial role in spreading legal awareness in Malaysia. They have a substantial impact on legal awareness in Malaysia. They act as bridges between the legal community and the public, making legal knowledge more accessible, understandable, and engaging. Having said that, strategic planning, collaboration with legal experts, and careful content management are essential for social media influencers to engage in this important work effectively and safely.

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