

CHAPTER II

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN MEDIA

Media is considered a tool to fulfil information needs, and frequently people use media as their primary source of information. The public believes that what is conveyed by the media is merely truth and valid information. Apart from its function to fulfil information needs, the media also function as an educational tool about a specific issue. Information can be perceived as good or bad by society and it depends on how the event is defined and interpreted by the media that covers it. This chapter provides the profiles of media in Southeast Asia and how they cover the South China Sea issue.

2.1 The Jakarta Post

2.1.1 Profile of The Jakarta Post

Jakarta Post is one of the English-language daily newspapers in Indonesia. The company is owned by PT Niskala Media Tenggara, which is based in Jakarta, Indonesia. The newspaper was started as a collaboration between four media under the direction of late Minister of Information, Ali Moertopo and politician Jusuf Wanandi. After its first publication on Apr 25 1983, in 1991 the paper began to be a pro-democracy. The newspaper is also one of the news media which survived the 1997 Asian financial crisis. As of December 1998, the media has a circulation of 40.000 copies and 41.049 subscribers.

The Jakarta Post once had a Sunday edition and the Bali Daily to complement its leading newspaper. It's very first Sunday edition was published on Sept 18, 1994,

which includes well-reviewed articles, fictions and news from the entertainment industry that were not published in the daily edition. In 2006, the Indonesian Journalists Union (Persatuan Wartawan Indonesia) recognized 'The Jakarta Post' as one of the Indonesian newspapers that adhere to journalism ethics and standards. On Apr 9, 2012, The Jakarta Post then launched Bali Daily, a four-page daily based in Bali, although both of them no longer operate. The post is also well-known as a training platform for local and international reporters and has won many awards besides becoming the leader of Indonesia's English-language daily.

The Jakarta Post launched an online version in 2016 with a new, more interactive web page and various content, introducing new sections such as Community, Academia, and a long report called Longform. In addition to newspaper stories, the online version includes coverage that is only available on the internet. The Jakarta Post coverage focuses on political, economic, global issues, Southeast Asian issues, and issues about lifestyle. In 2018, The Jakarta Post began implementing a paywall system on its web pages to increase online subscribers' number. Non-subscribed readers can also read premium news from The Jakarta Post if they register, with a limit of 8 premium articles per month.

As one of Indonesia's most prominent media, The Jakarta Post has a reasonably strong audience base. The audience can be observed based on the number of followers on social media such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. On Twitter, the Jakarta Post has 917.8K followers, while on Instagram, the Jakarta Post has 62.7K followers. On the Facebook platform, the Jakarta Post has more than 1.5 million followers.

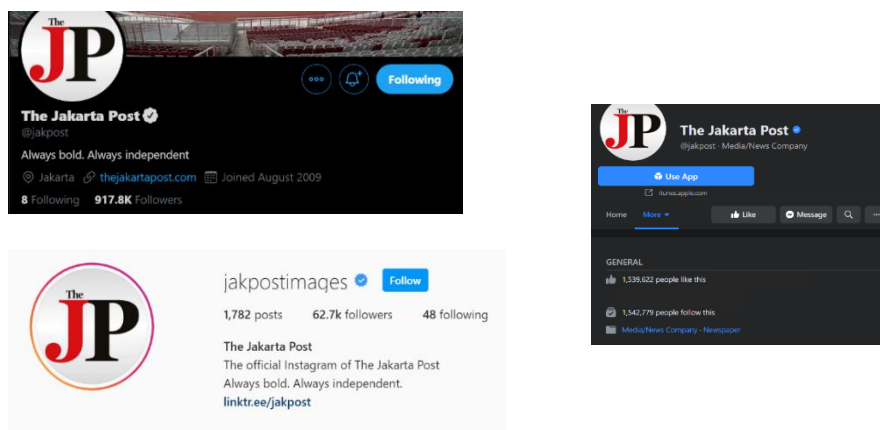


Figure 2.1 The number of The Jakarta Post's followers on three different social media platforms. Image retrieved from the Jakarta Post' official account on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Retrieved from twitter.com/jakpost, [Instagram.com/jakpostimages](https://www.instagram.com/jakpostimages), facebook.com/jakpost

Carrying the slogan "Always bold, always independent", The Jakarta post describes its vision as "driven by trustworthy professionals, The Jakarta Post is the information engine in Indonesia which strives to promote a more humane, civil society in this very diverse country" (Azmi, 2012). The vision then derived into several missions, which are;

- On trustworthy professionals

On trustworthy professionals means that the Jakarta Post consists of a professional team of people with high integrity, who care for others, have a pluralist view, are honest, efficient, and work thoroughly and are full of dedication.

- On information engine in Indonesia

On an information engine, the Jakarta post aims to be an organization that is continuously evolving in presenting reliable and up-to-date information on various issues around the world. Besides, The Jakarta Post also strives to provide useful information to a knowledge-based public by adhering to the highest journalistic principles, particularly in terms of accuracy, impartiality and reliability.

- On humane, civil society

Inhumane, civil society, the Jakarta Post strives to manifest the forerunner of an information-conscious community equipped with universal human values, including respect for human rights recognized by the United Nations.

2.1.2 Audience Profile of The Jakarta Post

The Jakarta Post's primary readers are Indonesian businessmen, foreigners, expatriates, scholars, and well-educated Indonesian. The Jakarta Post's readership consists of 74 percent male, 26 per cent female; comes from the upper economy class. About 95 per cent of the readers of this newspaper are university graduates, and only 5 per cent are high school graduates.

2.1.3 The Jakarta Post Coverage on the South China Sea conflict

There are around 4590 publications found on the Jakarta Post's page regarding South China Sea conflict issues. Although there are more than four thousand publications, not all of the articles were written by local staff, some of them were written by wire news agencies and were edited by the editors of the newspaper. The

media seems to cover more articles in the possible conflict between China vs the rest of the conflicted party. Here are the coverages published from April – June 2018 which will be analyzed;

No.	Title of Publications	Author	Date Published
1.	Air Force holds security drill on Indonesia-Singapore border	Fadli	Tuesday, Apr 3 2018
2.	China installs cruise missiles on South China Sea outposts	Reuters	Thursday, May 3 2018
3.	Duterte warned against complacency over Chinese missiles on PH reefs	Jerome Aning and Leila B. Salaverria Inquirer.net/Asia News Network	Sunday, May 6 2018
4.	Chinese bombers make debut landing on disputed South China Sea runway	AFP	Saturday, May 19 2018
5.	China Committed to peaceful settlement of South China Sea Dispute	Marguerite Afra Sapiie	Tuesday, May 8 2018
6.	RI, China talk peace, trade	Marguerite Afra Sapiie	Tuesday, May 8 2018
7.	IIS Defense Summit to focus on the South China Sea, regional challenges	Veeramalla Anjaiah	Thursday, May 31 2018
8.	US Weigh More South China Sea Patrols to confront 'new reality' o China Navy personnel	Greg Torode and Idrees Ali (Reuters)	Sunday, Jun 3 2018
9.	Philippines demands China stop taking fishermen's catch	Noel Celis	Monday, Jun 11 2018
10.	Japanese FM's visit highlights ASEAN's industrial hub, Indo-Pacific, and South China Sea	Agnes Anya	Monday, Jun 25 2018

Table 2.1 The data of publications covered by The Jakarta Post from the period of April-June 2018. Retrieved from thejakartapost.com. Copyright 2018 by the Jakarta Post.

2.2 The Star Online

2.2.1 Profile of The Star Online

The Star is an English language newspaper, member of the Asia News Network and owned by Star Media Group. The company was founded in 1971 as a regional newspaper in George Town, Penang and regarded as the highest-circulation English-language newspaper in Malaysia (2020). The newspaper's daily circulation is around 250,000 as per January 2017 and distributed in five editions. The two editions cover the northern part of Kedah, Penang, north of Perak, and Perlis. While the other two editions cover the rest of the state. The newspaper had a separate Sarawak edition later in March 2010.

In 1987, The Star was one of the newspapers whose publication licenses were withdrawn in Operation Lalang². The Star returned to operations in March 1988 after the accident. However, after the ban, The Star was seen to "lose the value of freedom".

On Jun 23 1995, The Star online was launched as the first news website in Malaysia. The coverage includes the latest news, sports, business, lifestyle, community, technology, and world news. According to the World Association of Newspaper and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA), The Star Online was named the best news portal in Asia in 2014. Recently, The Star Online has a remarkable international

² Operation Lalang, or Weeding Operation was a major crackdown in Malaysia. The event was carried out by the Royal Malaysian Police in the beginning 27 October 1987 to deter racial disturbances in Malaysia.

readership. According to Google Analytics, the total global audience for news portals increased to more than 7 million readers from March 2019 to March 2020.

The Star Online has a reasonably strong audience base, as shown by many followers on various social media platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook. On Twitter, the Star has 1.6 million followers, while on Facebook, it has around 1.2 million followers.

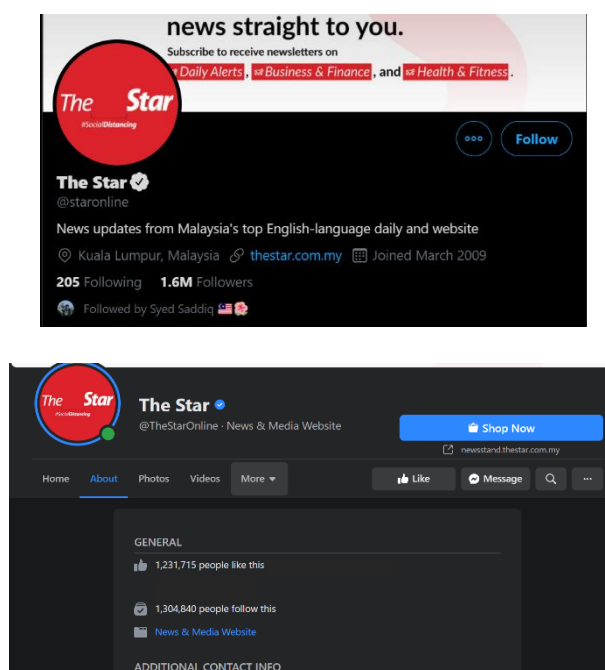


Figure 2.2 The number of The Star's followers shown in two different social media platform. Image retrieved from Facebook and Twitter page.

2.2.2 Audience Profile of The Star Online

Most of The Star Online readers ranged between 21-44 years old, which consist of business people, educators, scholars, and students. Based on the Alexa website, the Star Online audience is dominated by Malaysian which counts 65.2% of its total

reader, the United States which contribute to 6% of total readers then followed by Singaporean with 5.1% of the website's total readers.



Figure 2.3 Traffic Analytics of The Star Online by Alexa. Retrieved from <https://www.alexa.com/siteinfo/thestar.com.my>. Copyright 2019 by Alexa.

As per March 2019- March 2020, Star Online reaches 9.65 million international readers from all over the world. It is also noted that the site gained a total number of 20,589,643 unique visitors from various countries from March 1-March 31 2020. The number is increasing significantly compared to the same period last year, which was up from 8,415,868 readers. Following is the Star' global readership chart from the period of March 1-31 2020.

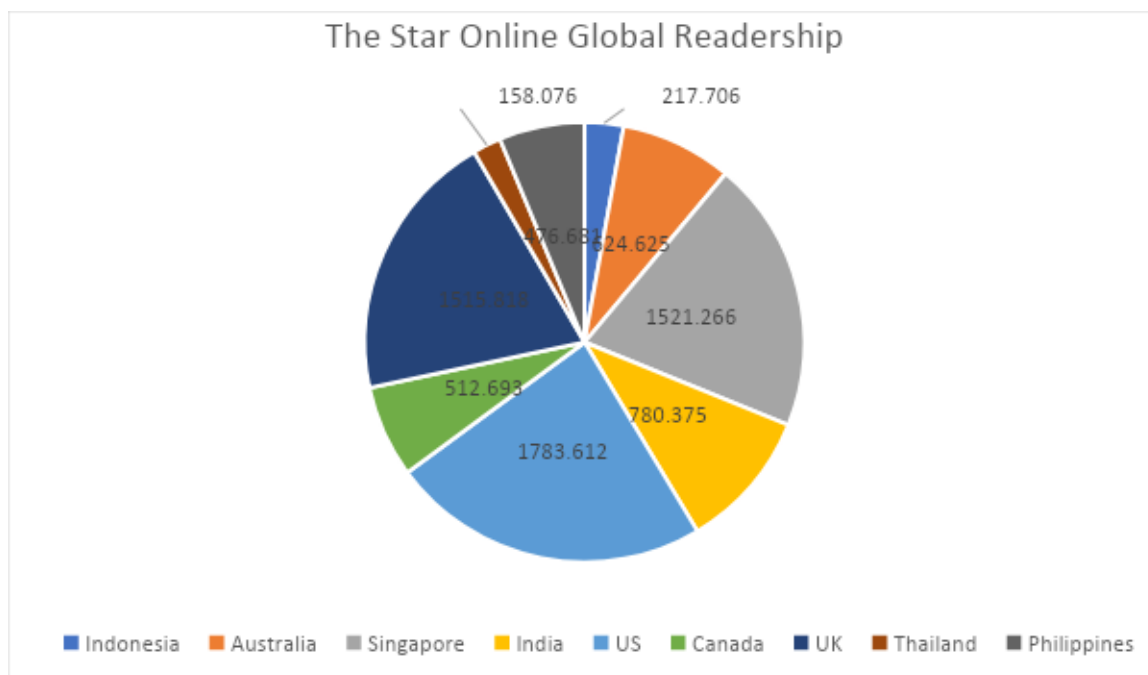


Figure 2.4 The numbers of global readers of The Star Online is dominated by the people from the United States, Singapore, and the United Kingdom. Retrieved from <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2020/05/20/star-online-gaining-global-traction>. Copyright 2020 by The Star Online.

2.2.3 The Star Online Coverage of South China Sea Conflict

The Star Online discussed the topic of the South China Sea conflict in various subtopics, including on the issue of AseanPlus, Nation, and Region. Majority of its news came from wire news agencies around the world. Most of its news coverage was quoted from high-ranking officials and elites. The media rarely interviewed ordinary people representing the marginalized population to speak regarding the South China Sea dispute.

No.	Title of Publications	Author	Date Published
1.	Remove missiles on Spratlys, Hanoi tells Beijing	ASEANPLUS News	Thursday, May 10 2018
2.	Philippines will not provoke China into a war	The Star, ASEANPLUS News	Tuesday, May 8 2018
3.	The Philippines ready for war if China harms its troops	The Star, ASEANPLUS News	Thursday, May 31 2018
4.	Modi urges Indo-Pacific nations to ease up on border disputes	The Star, ASEANPLUS News	Sunday, Jun 3 2018
5.	PM: Presence of warships in area sending wrong signal	The Star, Nation	Thursday, Jun 7 2018
6.	Mat Shabu: Royal Navy needs to be strengthened to protect nation's sovereignty	The Star, Nation	Thursday, Jun 7 2018
7.	'RMN ³ needs to be stronger'	The Star, Nation	Friday, Jun 11 2018
8.	We can guard our waterways	Farik Zolkepli	Friday, Jun 8 2018
9.	South China Sea' stable without outsider meddling'	The Star, Regional	Thursday, Jun 14 2018
10.	Dr M: Let Malaysia continue occupying islands in South China Sea	The Star, Nation	Tuesday, Jun 19 2018

Table 2.2 The data of publications covered by the Star Online from the period of

April-June 2018. Copyright 2018 by the Star Online.

³ RMN: Royal Malaysian Navy, the naval arm of the Malaysian Armed Forces which is accountable for Malaysia's maritime defense as well as surveillance.

2.3 The Daily Inquirer

2.3.1 Profile of The Daily Inquirer

The Philippine Daily Inquirer was a daily newspaper established by the columnist Max Solivén, publisher Eugenia Apóstol, and Betty Go-Belmonte on Dec 9 1985. It became one of the first private newspapers under the Philippine dictator regime's last days, Ferdinand Marcos (Congress, 2001). Later in 1997, the Daily Inquirer launched a website version of its newspaper which then converged on Inquirer platforms in desktop, mobile phone, smartwatch and tablet in 2016.

The Daily Inquirer is one of the top ten most trafficked websites in the Philippines. The survey done by Nielsen Media Index/Consumer and Media Views in 2011 shows that the Inquirer was the foremost preference of nearly half of the Filipinos in the National Urban Philippines, covering Metro Manila and 21 major cities in the region (Inquirer, 2012). Headquartered in Makati, Philippines, the Inquirer secures more than a million readers nationwide.

The Inquirer also keeps growing the number of its audience base. On Facebook alone, the online newspaper has around 6.4 million followers. While on Twitter, the media has approximately 3.1 million followers.



Figure 2.5 The number of followers of Philippine Daily Inquirer. Image retrieved from Facebook and Twitter page of Philippines Daily Inquirer

2.3.2 Audience Profile of The Daily Inquirer

The Philippine's Daily Inquirer's main audience is educated people in the Philippines and foreign citizens with upper-middle economic class. Meanwhile, the average age of readers of the Philippines Daily Inquirers is mature adults aged 34-45 years and empty nesters aged 45 years and over.



Figure 2.6 The primary readers of Philippine Daily Inquirer are Filipinos mature adults with middle and upper social status. Image retrieved from https://www.inquirer.com.ph/company/our_market. Copyright 2019 by Philippine Daily Inquirer

2.3.3 The Daily Inquirer Coverage of the South China Sea conflict

The Daily Inquirer published South China Sea dispute articles in a significant number, but less than The Star Online. The daily also one of the most vocal media on Philippines ownership towards the sea. The articles mostly focus on the Philippines vs China's side, covering some tension related to the disputes among the conflicted party and covering those Filipino fishermen who were in violent conflict with Chinese counterparts.

No.	Title of Publications	Author	Date Published
1.	Beijing, Hanoi promise to keep peace in South China Sea	Agence France- Presse	Monday, Apr 2 2018
2.	As China flexes muscle, US reaffirms support to PH with second carrier visit	Frances G. Mangosing	Saturday, Apr 14 2018
3.	PH, US hold drills amid fresh South China Sea concerns	Frances G. Mangosing	Wednesday, May 9 2018
4.	China soon to establish South China Sea exclusion zone	Frances G. Mangosing	Wednesday, May 16 2018
5.	Cayetano: Duterte ready fire War in West Philippine Sea	Marlon Ramos	Tuesday, May 29 2018
6.	Cayetano: PH, China agree fisherman can freely navigate the disputed South China Sea.	Anthony Q. Esquerra	Sunday, Jun 10 2018
7.	Aquino mismanaged PH sea dispute with China, says defence chief	Jeannette I. Andrade	Tuesday, Jun 12 2018
8.	Lorenzana: China's weapons escalating tensions in South China Sea	Frances G. Mangosing	Tuesday, Jun 19 2018
9.	Fil-Ams, Viet-Ams jointly protest China's sea incursions	Inquirer US Bureau	Friday, Jun 15 2018
10.	Carpio tells youth: Defend sovereignty	Marlon Ramos	Monday, Jun 25 2018

Table 2.3 The data of publications covered by the Daily Inquirer from the period of April-June 2018. Copyright 2018 by the Daily Inquirer.

2.4 The VietnamPlus

2.4.1 Profile of The VietnamPlus

Le Quoc Minh founded VietnamPlus on Nov 13, 2008. According to him, VietnamPlus is a website aimed at the general public and covers a wide variety of topics. Starting from politics, economics, social, culture, sports, to science and technology. VietnamPlus currently has more than 50 employees and is based in the Vietnamese capital, Hanoi (CFI, 2018).

In 2013 this media managed to win the WAN IFRA award in the creative field and was included in the five most innovative editorial teams globally, albeit with a small crew. The 360-degree photo/video feature, long-form news, and journalism data also played a role in the WAN IFRA award given to Vietnamplus. This award was even promoted by several well-known international media, such as the BBC, The Guardian, Canal + and NHK.

Since its launch in 2008, VietnamPlus has not been dependent on advertising revenue. Instead, direct advertising profit only accounts for 30% of turnover. This media generates profits by diversifying its activities by becoming the leading content supplier for MSN Vietnam and the Microsoft portal.

The VietnamPlus is continuously growing its audience by serving its contents in various languages, such as Japanese, English, Korean, Mandarin, French, Spanish, and Russian (2018). On Facebook, VietnamPlus has 90,218 active followers. While on Twitter, the media has more than two thousand followers. The number of followers is projected to be increasing over time.



Figure 2.7 The number of VietnamPlus' followers on social media. Image retrieved from Twitter.com and Facebook.com.

2.4.2 Audience Profile of VietnamPlus

The primary target audience for VietnamPlus is educated people aged 30-45 who live in urban areas. Later, in 2010, this outlet initiated to attract young readers by creating a mobile application that can be accessed using various languages. The launch of this application was successful and generated around 500,000 downloads.



Figure 2.8 The number of readers of VietnamPlus is dominated by people in the US and Vietnam. Traffic analytic provided by SimilarWeb 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.similarweb.com/website/vietnamplus.vn/>. Copyright by SimilarWeb.com

2.4.3 VietnamPlus Coverage of South China Sea Conflict

VietnamPlus mostly uses the terms "East Sea" to describe the disputed maritime border. Around 4923 of publications was found under the keyword "East Sea dispute", and only three news articles were located under "South China Sea dispute" keyword. The majority of the news in the media is quoted or interviewed elite people which includes high-ranking official states

No.	Title of Publications	Author	Date Published
1.	Vietnam condemns China's illegal activities in Hoang Sa, Truong Sa	VietnamPlus, Politics	Tuesday, Apr 24 2018
2.	G7 Foreign Ministers express concern about East Sea situation	VietnamPlus, World	Saturday, Apr 28 2018
3.	Vietnam asks China to maintain peace in East Sea	VietnamPlus, Politics	Tuesday, May 8 2019
4.	Conference analyses disputes in East Sea	VietnamPlus, Politics	Saturday, May 12 2018
5.	Vietnam asks China to stop bomber drills in Hoang Sa	VietnamPlus, Politics	Monday, May 21 2018
6.	Chinese military actions in East Sea face international criticism	VietnamPlus, World	Thursday, May 24 2018
7.	US concerns over China's military equipment in East Sea	VietnamPlus, World	Saturday, Jun 2 2018

8.	Ocean dialogue seeks ideas for cooperation, dispute management	VietnamPlus, Politics	Monday, Jun 11 2018
9.	Vietnam commits to observing 1982 UNCLOS	VietnamPlus, Politics	Thursday, Jun 14 2018
10.	ASEAN, China urges trust building measures in DOC implementation	VietnamPlus, World	Thursday, Jun 28 2018

Table 2.4 The data of publications covered by VietnamPlus from the period of April-June 2018. Copyright 2018 by VietnamPlus.