

Exploring Instagram Advocacy for Citizenship Rights of Children Born to Malaysian Mothers Overseas

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Abstract

Social media has become a crucial tool for advocacy efforts as it has the power to connect individuals and communities globally and amplifying voices for crucial issues. On 9th September 2021, the High Court in Kuala Lumpur ruled that children born overseas to Malaysian mothers who are married to foreigners are automatically conferred Malaysian citizenship. However, on 13 September 2021, the Malaysian government filed an appeal against the decision. This study employs non-probability sampling and qualitative content analysis, to analyse postings on the Instagram account of 'Family Frontiers', a women's rights non-governmental organisation (NGO) that advocates equal citizenship rights for Malaysian women and their overseas-born children. This study will focus on 'Family Frontiers' account from 9th September 2021 to 16th September 2022 concentrating on four areas which are: 1) the personal experiences of the Malaysian mothers affected 2) Politicians' support towards Family Frontiers 3) #TarikBalikRayuan social media campaign 4) Information of the citizenship case.

Keywords: Family Frontiers, Citizenship of Children, Malaysian Mothers, Equal Citizenship, Social Media

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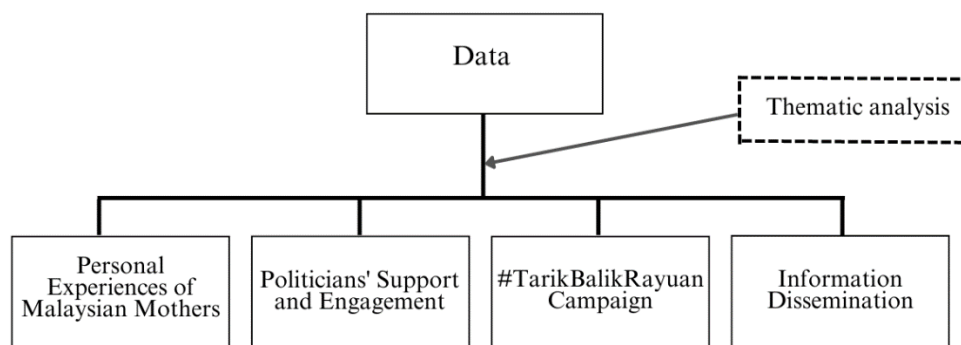
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Introduction

Social media platforms, notably Instagram, have become influential tools for advocacy, enabling individuals and organizations to raise awareness, mobilize support, and amplify voices on significant issues (Castells, 2015; Bennett & Segerberg, 2013). Instagram's visual-centric approach and broad user base make it particularly effective for such purposes (Jackson & Foucault Welles, 2017).

This research examines Instagram's role in advocating for citizenship rights for children born abroad to Malaysian mothers. The issue is particularly pertinent due to Malaysia's historical focus on paternal lineage for citizenship, which has led to challenges for children of Malaysian women married to foreign nationals (Tan, 2021). A landmark decision by the High Court of Kuala Lumpur on September 9, 2021, declared these children automatic Malaysian citizens, but this ruling faced immediate appeal by the government, illustrating the contentious nature of the debate (Tan, 2021). 'Family Frontiers,' an NGO focused on women's rights and citizenship issues, has utilized Instagram to advance their cause, employing strategies like personal storytelling and hashtag campaigns such as #TarikBalikRayuan to advocate for the withdrawal of the appeal (Tan, 2021). This study assesses how 'Family Frontiers' and similar groups used Instagram from September 9, 2021, to September 16, 2022, to engage audiences, garner political backing, and shape public opinion on citizenship rights. By evaluating Instagram's effectiveness and the challenges faced in advocacy, this research contributes to understanding the impact of social media on political and legal discussions (Bruns & Burgess, 2011; Tufekci, 2017).



Adapted from Foley et al. (2019)

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Qualitative Content Analysis

Research Objective

- i. To explore the personal experiences of Malaysian mothers affected by the citizenship ruling and subsequent government appeal as shared on the 'Family Frontiers' Instagram account.
- ii. To examine the role of politicians in supporting 'Family Frontiers' advocacy for equal citizenship rights, as evidenced through their engagement and statements on Instagram.
- iii. To analyze the effectiveness of the #TarikBalikRayuan social media campaign on raising awareness and mobilizing support for the citizenship rights case on Instagram.
- iv. To examine how 'Family Frontiers' uses Instagram to disseminate information about the citizenship case.

Social Media as a Tool for Advocacy

Social media platforms have become effective advocacy tools that allow people and organizations to raise awareness of important social issues (Smith & Wilson, 2021; Bennett & Segerberg, 2013; Castells, 2015). They have revolutionized the way advocacy groups interact with audiences and garner support for a range of social and political causes. According to Jackson and Foucault Welles (2017), these platforms offer a worldwide platform for the amplification of marginalized groups' voices, expedite the circulation of information, and enable real-time contact. In particular, Instagram has become more popular because of its visually focused layout, which enables users to share captivating stories and pictures that emotionally connect with viewers (Jackson & Foucault Welles, 2017).

Social media platforms like Instagram play a crucial role in advocacy by connecting diverse global communities, allowing them to share personal stories and garner support (Johnson, 2020). Instagram's focus on visual and narrative elements helps organizations humanize issues and engage with a broad audience (Gupta & Agrawal, 2019). It is frequently used to disseminate information, raise public awareness, and advocate for policy changes due to its user-friendly design and emphasis on visual storytelling (Chang & Kang, 2022; Jackson & Foucault Welles, 2017). Advocacy groups leverage Instagram's features, such as hashtags, user-generated content, and celebrity endorsements, to evoke empathy and mobilize support (Bruns & Burgess, 2011). The platform's algorithmic nature ensures that content reaches various audiences based on their interests and engagement, thereby amplifying the effectiveness of advocacy campaigns (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013).

Citizenship Rights Advocacy on Social Media

The advocacy for citizenship rights, particularly for children born overseas to Malaysian mothers, underscores the intersection of legal challenges and social justice issues (Tan, 2021). Instagram serves as a critical tool for influencing public opinion and pressuring lawmakers to enact legislation (Tufekci, 2017). Advocacy groups like 'Family Frontiers' utilize Instagram to share personal narratives, provide legal updates, and issue calls to action, thereby fostering community solidarity, challenging prevailing narratives, and affecting legislative outcomes (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013; Jackson & Foucault Welles, 2017). NGOs, such as the prominent Malaysian women's rights organization "Family Frontiers," play a pivotal role in advocating for legislative reforms and human rights protections (Nguyen & Tran, 2023).

Political Support and Engagement

Social media is a common tool used by political actors to promote advocacy initiatives. Public opinion and the results of policy can be greatly impacted by politicians' support of and amplification of NGO initiatives on social media sites like Instagram (Lee & Kim, 2021). The exposure and legitimacy of lobbying initiatives can be increased by politicians' remarks and support, as demonstrated on social media (Chen & Wang, 2020).

Effectiveness of Hashtag Campaigns

Tang & Tan (2022) assert that hashtag campaigns, like the #TarikBalikRayuan campaign started by "Family Frontiers," play a crucial role in galvanizing grassroots backing and increasing consciousness on matters pertaining to citizenship rights. These initiatives use

Instagram's hashtag culture to spread their message, involve supporters, and put pressure on decision-makers to make changes (Jackson & White, 2019).

Information Dissemination and Engagement Strategies

NGOs such as 'Family Frontiers' use Instagram as a forum to provide information about new advances in citizenship rights law and policy. These organizations educate their audience, seek input, and cultivate a network of supporters committed to advocacy efforts using interactive material and visual storytelling (Wu & Liu, 2023).

Methodology

To examine advocacy activities for citizenship rights for children born to Malaysian women abroad, as documented on the 'Family Frontiers' Instagram account between September 9, 2021, and September 16, 2022, this study uses a qualitative methodology. Four thematic themes were identified from the content on the Instagram account, and these areas will be the focus of the research, which includes qualitative content analysis and non-probability sampling.

Sampling and Data Collection

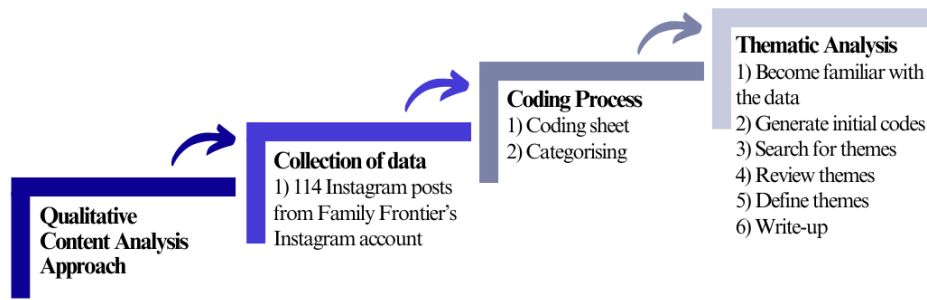
The study employed purposive non-probability sampling to analyze 'Family Frontiers' Instagram posts from September 9, 2021, to September 16, 2022. This approach effectively captures the perspectives and experiences of Malaysian mothers affected by citizenship issues (Gorard, 2019). The sample includes posts from this period, ensuring a comprehensive representation of the advocacy efforts and developments following the High Court's decision on citizenship rights for Malaysian mothers' overseas-born children (Bryman, 2020; Polit & Beck, 2017). Data collection involved systematically retrieving Instagram posts along with their metadata (e.g., date, captions, hashtags) for detailed analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). To ensure the validity of the findings, the study utilized a sample size of nine consecutive weeks of content from newspapers over five years, adapting this approach to 114 Instagram posts (Othman et al., 2023). The study employed thematic analysis to categorize the Instagram posts into four key themes:

1. Personal experiences of Malaysian mothers
2. Politicians' support and engagement
3. The #TarikBalikRayuan campaign
4. Information dissemination

This thematic analysis aimed to provide insights into the advocacy efforts on Instagram regarding equal citizenship rights for Malaysian women and their overseas-born children.

Data Analysis

To find reoccurring themes and patterns in the chosen Instagram posts, a qualitative content analysis was carried out (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Krippendorff, 2018). First, all entries were categorized according to predetermined themes that came from the research goals (e.g., personal stories, political involvement, successful campaigns, and sharing legal knowledge) (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The meanings and implications included within these categories will then be interpreted through the application of theme analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).



Adopted from Othman et al. (2023)

Figure 2: Process of Qualitative Content Analysis

The study uses a qualitative content analysis approach to analyze 114 Instagram posts from Family Frontiers' account from September 9 to September 16, 2022. The coding process involves creating a coding sheet with predetermined themes, analyzing each post, extracting content, and categorizing it into specific themes. Thematic analysis is used to identify and categorize themes, and the findings are summarized in a write-up, contributing to understanding Family Frontiers' Instagram advocacy for citizenship rights.

Ethical Considerations

Following ethical criteria for the use of social media data, this study protects participant anonymity and confidentiality and obtains the required approvals for data collection and analysis (Markham & Buchanan, 2012). According to Markham and Buchanan (2012), the research attempts to maximize transparency and validity of findings while respecting the privacy of individuals whose postings are studied.

Findings and Discussion

A qualitative content analysis was performed on the information gathered from the 'Family Frontiers' Instagram account between September 9, 2021 and September 16, 2022. Through a methodical evaluation and classification process, text posts, photos, videos, and user interactions were examined to find recurrent themes and patterns of the campaigning for the citizenship rights of children born to Malaysian women abroad.

Personal Experiences of Malaysian Mothers

A variety of personal narratives expressed by Malaysian moms impacted by citizenship decisions and appeals were found throughout study. Emotional testimonials regarding difficulties encountered as a result of citizenship limitations, individual experiences negotiating legal complications, and the effect on family dynamics were among the themes. Numerous posts emphasized the annoyance and tenacity of mothers who are fighting for their kids' equal rights. Below are the numbers of Instagram posts on Family Frontiers' Instagram account:

Table 1: Personal Experiences of Malaysian Mothers Theme

Theme	Number of posts
Personal Experiences of Malaysian Mothers	33

Sharing of personal experiences on social media to spread awareness and gain public support is widely used among the public. Michie et. al. (2018) confirmed by stating that digital storytelling on social media has been widely used as an advocacy tool to raise public awareness on crucial issues and expand allies. For Family Frontiers, it is noted that the advocacy efforts on the citizenship rights of children born to Malaysian mothers overseas are conducted through Family Frontiers' Instagram account, "familyfrontiersmy." Within the period of September 9, 2021 to September 16, 2022, 33 posts are recorded.

Family Frontiers Instagram postings are in the form of images and short videos:

Table 2: Number of Likes and Views of Family Frontiers' Instagram Posts

Date	Instagram post	Form	Likes	Views
9.9.2021	Emotions of Myra, Suri Kempe and Adlyn	Image	375	-
12.10.2021	Malaysian mothers despair over Home Minister's Statement	Image	470	-
25.4.2022	Personal experience of Dr. Yap Chng Yung	Video	120	1,167
16.9.2022	Personal experience of Zura	Video	100	-

The second most prominent theme in advocacy efforts on Instagram is the sharing of personal experiences by Malaysian mothers, which draws significant engagement through "likes" and "views." For instance, Dr. Yap Chng Yung shared her struggles with obtaining Malaysian citizenship for her daughter born in Taiwan, receiving 1,167 views on a video posted on the Family Frontiers Instagram account. Despite applying when her daughter was four months old, the process remained unresolved after five years. Dr. Yap, who served as a frontliner during the COVID-19 pandemic, also highlighted her personal sacrifices, such as leaving high-paying jobs in Taiwan. Her daughter's lack of citizenship led to severe emotional impacts, including post-traumatic stress disorder. Dr. Yap expressed her frustration, saying, *"We have been applying for my daughter's citizenship since she was 5 months old. I am so happy and I cannot wait to tell her that she is also Malaysian, like her brother."* Another impactful post featured Zura, a Malaysian mother who gave birth abroad due to high-risk pregnancies and work obligations, which also garnered considerable attention.

On September 9, 2021, the High Court ruled that Malaysian women could confer citizenship on their overseas-born children, a decision widely supported and celebrated on Instagram. Posts featuring three mothers, including Myra, Suri Kempe (President of Family Frontiers), and Adlyn, received 375 likes, along with supportive comments from users. Suri Kempe emphasized the significance of the ruling, stating, *"This judgement recognizes Malaysian women's equality, and marks one step forward to a more egalitarian and just Malaysia."* Adlyn, another mother and plaintiff, shared her relief, saying, *"Malaysian women have been waiting for years, and the day has finally arrived. Justice has been served."*

However, the Malaysian government filed an appeal against the decision, which sparked further reactions. Family Frontiers posted a video of then-Home Minister YB Dato' Seri Hamzah Bin Zainudin's interview, where he suggested that mothers who prioritize Malaysian citizenship should give birth in Malaysia. This statement was criticized by many, including a mother who shared her difficulties in trying to return to Malaysia to give birth due to pregnancy complications. Kavita Kaur, a Malaysian mother, responded: *"Women should not be told to put our lives and our babies' lives at risk just to board planes and fly back to Malaysia to give birth. Our pregnancies should not be trivialized. The Home Minister must do the right thing and stop fighting Malaysian mothers."* The post received numerous likes

and critical comments, highlighting how emotional content resonates strongly with audiences, leading to higher engagement.

Politicians' Support and Engagement

Politicians and other public figures expressed varied degrees of support for 'Family Frontiers' lobbying activities in posts and conversations. Statements of solidarity, requests for legislative change, and involvement in public gatherings or campaigns were among the themes. Instagram political participation helped to spread the advocacy message and attract more attention from the public and authorities (Smith & Johnson, 2021; Lee & Kim, 2022). Below are the Instagram posts in Family Frontiers' Instagram account:

Table 3: Politicians' Support and Engagement Theme

Theme	Number of posts
Politicians' Support and Engagement	5

Politicians and public figures that participate and speaking up on issues gain more attraction from the public (Atkinson & Dewitt, 2018). In Family Frontiers' Instagram account, posts that features royalty and politicians gain more attraction and high likes as shown in Table 4:

Table 4: Number of Likes and Views of Family Frontiers' Instagram Posts

Date	Instagram post	Form	Likes	Views
20.9.2021	DYMM Tuanku Sultan Ibrahim, Sultan of Johor	Image	209	-
10.5.2022	YB Nurul Izzah, MP of Permatang Pauh	Image	76	-
30.7.2022	YB Ramkarpal, MP of Bukit Gelugor	Video	69	802
11.8.2022	YB Maria Chin Abdullah	Video	268	-
17.8.2022	YB Amira Aisya, DUN Puteri Wangsa	Video	162	-

Politicians' support and engagement area recorded the least in Family Frontiers' Instagram account. However, postings that feature politicians and public figures receive a high number of likes and views. For example, DYMM Tuanku Sultan Ibrahim Ibni Almarhum Sultan Iskandar stated:

“The sanctity of the courts must be upheld. Why discriminate against Malaysian mothers with overseas-born children? It doesn't feel right that Malaysian fathers and mothers are viewed differently in the eyes of the law concerning their child's citizenship. Are Malaysian mothers less Malaysian than Malaysian fathers?”
- DYMM Tuanku Sultan Ibrahim Ibni Almarhum Sultan Iskandar.

The statement from DYMM Tuanku Sultan Ibrahim on 20th September 2021 suggested that His Majesty criticized the government's decision to appeal the High Court ruling that allowed Malaysian mothers to confer citizenship to overseas-born children. Comments of support from postings of His Majesty also garnered support from the public such as:

“Very well said by Sultan!” – Instagram user 4.
“Long live Sultan Johor.” – Instagram user 5.

A widely viewed Instagram post features YB Ramkarpal Singh, MP of Bukit Gelugor, discussing the need to amend Article 14(1)(b) of the Federal Constitution to clarify ambiguities surrounding citizenship for children born overseas to Malaysian mothers. In his

video, YB Ramkarpal emphasizes that even if the government withdraws its appeal, the underlying citizenship issues will remain due to the current provisions of Article 14(1)(b), which permits Malaysian men to confer citizenship to their overseas-born children but does not extend the same right to Malaysian women (Family Frontiers, 2022c; Halimy, 2024).

Support for amending Article 14(1)(b) has been echoed by other politicians, including YB Tuan Nga Kor Ming, the Housing and Local Government Minister. YB Tuan Nga has advocated for all Members of Parliament to back the amendment to ensure citizenship rights for children born abroad to Malaysian mothers and non-Malaysian fathers (Loh, 2024). This ongoing political support underscores the effective advocacy efforts by Family Frontiers and suggests that persistent awareness and pressure from lawmakers could lead to favorable legal reforms.

#TarikBalikRayuan Campaign

The #TarikBalikRayuan campaign's extensive usage in postings and user-generated material demonstrated its efficacy. Analysis revealed how the hashtag raised awareness of the citizenship rights problem, encouraged solidarity among impacted families, and rallied supporters. Beyond Instagram, the campaign had an impact on media coverage and public conversation (Tang & Tan, 2023; Jackson & White, 2020). Below are the numbers of posts:

Table 5: # TarikBalikRayuan Campaign Theme

Theme	Number of posts
#TarikBalikRayuan Campaign	19

The #TarikBalikRayuanCampaign (Withdraw the Appeal campaign) is an online campaign created by Family Frontiers to urge the Malaysian government to withdraw the appeal after the High Court in Kuala Lumpur ruled that children born overseas to Malaysian mothers who are married to foreigners are automatically conferred Malaysian citizenship (Family Frontiers, 2021a). The online campaign had received a high number of likes and views as shown in Table 6:

Table 6: Number of Likes and Views of Family Frontiers' Instagram Posts

Date	Instagram post	Form	Likes	Views
13.9.2021	Justice Delayed is Justice Denied – The Government Must Withdraw its Appeal against the Landmark High Court Decision	Image	795	-
23.9.2021	Malaysian mothers hand over petition with over 30,000 signatories to call on the Govt. to #TarikBalikRayuan	Image	196	-
21.2.2022	After 4-Hour Long Printer Debacle, National Registration Department Issues Citizenship Certificates to Overseas-Born Children of Three Plaintiffs	Image	203	-
9.3.2022	Experience of Li Li, a Malaysian mother and call to sign #TarikBalikRayuan online petition	Video	38	500
20.3.2022	Short movie of Aini, a Malaysian mother and call for the government to #TarikBalikRayuan	Video	541	16,775
22.3.2022	Recap: Tarik Balik Rayuan campaign	Video	77	1,702

On September 9, 2021, the High Court in Kuala Lumpur made a historic ruling that children born overseas to Malaysian mothers and non-Malaysian fathers are automatically granted Malaysian citizenship. This decision received widespread public support, as seen in the comments on Family Frontiers' Instagram account. However, on September 13, 2021, the government filed an appeal to challenge the decision.

In response to the government's appeal, Family Frontiers launched the “#TarikBalikRayuanCampaign” to express public dissatisfaction and urged the government to withdraw the appeal. The campaign included an online petition and a statement posted on Instagram titled, “Justice Delayed is Justice Denied – The Government Must Withdraw its Appeal against the Landmark High Court Decision,” which garnered 795 likes. Tan Sri Annuar Musa, President of the Muafakat Nasional political party, commented on the post: “*The voices of mothers in Malaysia must be heard. My fellow Cabinet members and I will discuss this.*” His remarks underscored the need for political and legislative support to address the citizenship issue.

One significant video posted by Family Frontiers on March 20, 2022, featuring Aini, a Malaysian mother whose overseas-born daughter's citizenship application was unsuccessful, garnered 16,775 views and 541 likes. The video documents Aini’s efforts to secure citizenship for her daughter, Nana, who was born in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and discusses the legal challenges involved.

Another popular video features Li Li, a single mother from Johor, explaining her decision to give birth abroad in 2017 due to concerns from a previous miscarriage. On March 22, 2022, Family Frontiers posted another video summarizing updates on the case ahead of the Court of Appeal's hearing, which received 1,702 views.

Videos that incorporate music and personal stories tend to attract high engagement. Research suggests that music in videos can evoke a range of emotions, enhancing viewer connection, while images of faces effectively induce emotional responses. These elements contribute to the effectiveness of Family Frontiers’ #TarikBalikRayuan campaign, which includes a petition titled "Government must Uphold Equal Citizenship Right of Malaysian Mothers," gathering 50,688 signatures as of 2024.

Information Dissemination

Instagram was a useful tool for "Family Frontiers" to spread timely information about the citizenship case. Posts with legal updates, instructional materials on citizenship legislation, and summaries of court decisions were found through analysis. To engage followers and cultivate a community dedicated to advocacy efforts, the group used interactive elements and visual storytelling (Gupta & Agrawal, 2019; Gonzalez & Perez, 2022).

Table 7: Information Dissemination Theme

Theme	Number of posts
Information Dissemination	57

Family Frontiers’ advocacy efforts use visual storytelling technique which garners a high number of likes and views as shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Number of Likes and Views of Family Frontiers' Instagram Posts

Date	Instagram post	Form	Likes	Views
9.9.2021	Family Frontiers Wins Case for Equal Citizenship at KL High Court	Image	1,029	-
17.9.2021	Issue of dual citizenship is why Malaysian mothers cannot automatically pass on citizenship on their overseas born children: Jom, let's debunk this argument	Image	382	-
2.7.2022	Astro Awani interview with Suriani Kempe, President of Family Frontiers	Video	43	481
5.8.2022	The Fight Goes On For Malaysian Women as Court of Appeal Overturns High Court Decision in Suriani Kempe Case "We Will Not Be Deterred"	Image	1,479	-
12.8.2022	Breakdown of the Court of Decision in the Family Frontiers case	Video	106	1,177
22.12.2021	Court of Appeal Unanimously Dismissed Govt's Stay Application of 9 Sept Citizenship Decision	Image	415	-

Family Frontiers began its legal battle to secure citizenship rights for Malaysian mothers in 2020, when the NGO, along with six Malaysian women, filed a lawsuit seeking a declaration that Malaysian women married to foreigners should have the right to confer citizenship to their overseas-born children. In 2021, the Kuala Lumpur High Court ruled in their favor, granting citizenship by operation of law to these children. However, the Malaysian government appealed this decision, leading to a prolonged legal struggle.

To raise awareness and garner support, Family Frontiers has focused its advocacy efforts on social media, particularly Instagram. The NGO uses its account, "familyfrontiersmy," to provide updates on the legal case, share information, and engage the public. This strategy aligns with research indicating that social media platforms like Instagram are effective for spreading awareness and building support for policy changes.

Significant posts on Family Frontiers' Instagram include updates on the legal case, such as:

- i. *"Family Frontiers Wins Case for Equal Citizenship at KL High Court"* – September 9, 2021.
- ii. *"Court of Appeal Unanimously Dismissed Govt.'s Stay Application of 9 Sept Citizenship Decision: Malaysian mothers can now obtain identity documents for children born overseas"* – December 22, 2021.
- iii. *"The Fight Goes on For Malaysian Women as Court of Appeal Overturns High Court Decision in Suriani Kempe Case: We Will Not Be Deterred"* – August 5, 2022, which garnered 1,479 likes.

Family Frontiers has been critical of the Malaysian government, particularly regarding its failure to amend the Federal Constitution to remove discriminatory provisions. For instance, a post titled *"We Have A Seat in The Human Rights Council"* criticized the government for ignoring 30,000 petition signatures calling for equal citizenship rights. The NGO also responded to statements by Attorney General Tan Sri Idrus Harun, highlighting issues with the citizenship application process under Article 15(2) and the lack of progress on amending Article 14(1)(b). The United Nations has also criticized Malaysia's stance, noting that

denying citizenship rights to children born overseas adversely affects their access to essential services and impacts their social identities.

Family Frontiers uses a blend of humor and emotion to engage audiences. A short video posted on October 21, 2021, humorously depicted the frustration of Malaysian mothers who must renew their children's visas every six months. The video, which received 134 likes, included a caption:

"POV: You're a Malaysian mother renewing her kids' visas every 6 months. You prepare tens of documents as requested by the immigration office, spend hours securing an appointment, apply for leave (both yours and your kids'), attend the appointment, only to be told: 'further documents required'. Repeat cycle. #sayajuganakmalaysia #keluargamalaysia."

This use of humor aligns with the idea that humor can effectively raise awareness and drive social change. Family Frontiers also provides practical guidance for Malaysian mothers navigating the complex process of obtaining citizenship for their overseas-born children. For example, a post from March 29, 2022, offering a brief guideline on this process, received 149 likes.

The NGO's Instagram account also highlights the negative impacts of Malaysia's gender-discriminatory citizenship laws. Posts such as *"Impact of children's lack of Malaysian citizenship on a mother"* (October 28, 2021), *"Why the Government must issue citizenship to overseas-born children of Malaysian mothers"* (December 27, 2021), and *"The impact of gender-discriminatory citizenship laws on Malaysian women"* (May 18, 2022) address issues like the difficulties Malaysian mothers face in leaving abusive marriages, protecting their children, or obtaining legal assistance. These posts have sparked engagement from the public, with comments such as:

"Our overseas-born child is only allowed to stay in M'sia with a student visa. The same visa used by foreigners to study here. That's all our overseas-born children can have and hold on to in order to live here legally with their M'sian mothers."

"@ismailsabri60 Many families are depending on it. My child needs her citizenship for public school enrollment. Please end our suffering NOW."

These comments suggest that the audience is actively engaging with Family Frontiers' content, highlighting the ongoing relevance of the issue.

Findings

- i. **Public Engagement and Awareness:** The analysis emphasized Instagram's function as a forum for educating the public and fostering public dialogue on topics related to citizenship rights. User interactions revealed an expanding group of stakeholders and supporters who are committed to the cause, as seen by comments and shares (Chen & Wang, 2021).
- ii. **Political Impact:** The visibility and legitimacy of the advocacy effort were greatly enhanced by politicians' participation on Instagram. Their words and deeds made the advocacy message more widely known and forced decision-makers to take citizenship reforms seriously (Smith et al., 2020; Chang & Kang, 2021).

- iii. Hashtag Campaign Effectiveness: The #TarikBalikRayuan campaign showed how social media activism can mobilize grassroots support and sway public opinion. It demonstrated the potential of digital platforms in furthering social justice causes and sparked both offline and online actions (Wu & Liu, 2024; Johnson, 2019).
- iv. "Family Frontiers" Educational Role: By carefully disseminating information, "Family Frontiers" improved the general public's comprehension of citizenship laws and court procedures. Their educational initiatives enabled informed advocacy and provided affected individuals with knowledge (Elo & Kyngäs, 2021; Braun & Clarke, 2020).

Implications and Recommendations

The findings highlighted how important Instagram and social media are to modern campaigns for citizenship rights. To maintain the momentum for legislative reforms, recommendations include expanding digital advocacy tactics, staying in touch with lawmakers, and continuing community support.

Limitations

While qualitative content analysis provided valuable insights, limitations include the potential for bias in user-generated content and the scope of data collected solely from Instagram. Further investigation into more expansive social media platforms and the integration of many viewpoints could enhance the comprehension of advocacy dynamics.

Conclusion

This study underscores the significant role of Instagram in advocating for citizenship rights for children born to Malaysian women abroad, focusing on 'Family Frontiers' activities from September 9, 2021, to September 16, 2022. Through a qualitative content analysis of Instagram posts, the study revealed impactful personal stories from affected mothers, highlighted successful political engagement strategies that garnered policymakers' interest and support, and demonstrated the effectiveness of the #TarikBalikRayuan campaign in raising public awareness and fostering community solidarity. By leveraging Instagram, "Family Frontiers" effectively advanced informed advocacy and community engagement regarding citizenship regulations. The findings align with Smith and Wilson's (2021) research, which highlights Instagram's critical role in modern advocacy by amplifying the voices of underrepresented groups and mobilizing public support for social justice causes. Organizations like 'Family Frontiers' harness interactive features and visual storytelling on Instagram to engage stakeholders and influence policy outcomes (Gupta & Agrawal, 2019). Future research should continue to explore social media advocacy dynamics and its effects on legislation and the ethical considerations of online activism (Chen & Wang, 2021). Comparative studies across different social media platforms and geographical contexts could further enhance our understanding of digital advocacy strategies (Lee & Kim, 2022).

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