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Preferences toward News Sources of International News among Malaysian Academicians

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Abstract

The present world has been influenced and changed very rapidly by the technological development. The electronic media have become as phenomena of transitions which have opened new possibility for delivery of news and information to people. The main objective of this study was to determine the news sources that Malaysian academicians depended on to gain news and information about Arabs World and international world. Another objective is to examine the differences of news source according to the demographic data of the respondents. The study is based on a survey. A total of 300 respondents were Malaysian academicians in five public universities which were located in Klang valley. The findings indicated that the internet was the first or primary source for them to gain news (58.7%) followed by Astro (55%).

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Keywords: Electronic media; news sources; preferences; Malaysian academicians

1. Introduction

Technology is often believed to be pervasive in today's world. Therefore, one of the outcomes of the technology is news watching, as it had become the vital part of everyday life. In this regard, electronic media plays a very important role in distributing news, information and knowledge to the human development. Various categories are found in electronic media news sources namely Radio Broadcasting, TV (cable and satellite), movies and the

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internet (Fink, 2006). In 1989, Katsh reported the principal forms of electronic communication such as radio, television and computers.

Supplementary to that, as cited in Khan, Muhammad, Chaudhry and Khan, (2012) numerous research emphasized on radio and television as a tool for information dissemination. This notion is supported by Khan et al (2012) who asserted television as an essential electronic medium in providing means for the dissemination of interesting and appealing messages and news. More importantly, viewers have greater access in watching a wide range of programmes locally and foreign which may affect attitudes and behaviours (Shamsher and Abdullah, 2012). Apart from that, newspapers in particular are known as an important source of information about current issues (Kim, Scheufele, Shanahan & Choi, 2011).

In relation to this, the usage of the internet source can enhance people's knowledge on public and critical issues and news, expanding the sphere of access through e-mail facility and websites, and also groups (public chat rooms, bulletin boards, blogs, (Fink, 2006). Besides that, the social web becomes one of the early successes in the emerging social computing paradigm. Prominent social web includes large scale information, news, sharing communication such as Wikipedia, social media like YouTube, and web-based social networks like Facebook (Hsu, Caverlee & Khabiri, 2012).

In Malaysia, undoubtedly has revolutionize the communication technology through ASTRO by introducing a more 'sophisticated' viewing experience for its audience. ASTRO has currently offers various interactive television and multimedia services ranging from video on demand games, stock link, chatting, SMS, icon download, internet banking which were not available in the 'television market' previously (Wahab, 2006). However, Kenny (2002) pointed out that despite possessing crucial importance, internet technology has been facing various obstacles like networking (infrastructure), language problem, and illiteracy (cited in Khan, et al., 2012).

In this regard, this empirical research is to determine the preferences of international news in selected electronic media among Malaysian academicians. Furthermore, the researchers would also like to examine the differences of news sources preferences according to gender, age, religion, and academic qualifications. However, this study is only focused on five public universities that are located in in Kuala Lumpur. This is due to its status as the capital city in Malaysia which consists of academicians who come from different states in Malaysia. Therefore, this paper describes the results of the study of sources preferences. Several news sources were chosen as limitations of the electronic media news sources.

2. Literature reviews

Electronic media is a medium in transferring news, information, concepts, and ideas to both general and specific audiences. They are vital sources for communicating about the events at the local and international level. Numerous research studies have been conducted to determine the preferences of media sources among audiences. A study conducted by Riffe, Lacy and Varouhakis, (2008), revealed a notable percentage of people depend on the internet as a valued source of in-depth information in science, health, and business. Moreover, 31% to 50% of the respondents use the internet weekly for in-depth information in one of the three areas. In essence, these respondents valued the internet more than magazines, books, or even friends and families as sources of in-depth information.

In the perspective of television media, Zia (2007), in his study on the effects of cable television on women in Pakistan found that the respondents were asked to enlist their preferred cable television channels; local or foreign. The first overall preference was a foreign channel named Star Plus which is Indian channel. This was followed by Geo, ARY and Indus Vision, which are all local Pakistani channels. Western channels like Star Movies, HBO and BBC were the following preferences. Geo demonstrates Pakistani, Indian and Western cultures, which indicates a strong reason for its popularity. For foreign approval, it shows programmes with an international approach. From a different angle, a study of Khan et al. (2012) in the Pakistan context indicated that regarding ownership and general use of electronic media, the results showed more inclination towards television and mobile as compared to radio and telephone.

The most prominent purpose for using television, radio and internet was to obtain information and entertainment while mobile phone, help lines and telephone were used for the purposes of making contacts, information sharing and getting assistance. There is highly significant positive correlation between age of the respondents and use of radio but highly significant negative relationship in case of television. It has been noted that foreign channels are the most popular among the respondents. Findings from the same study also revealed an interesting result that the Indian channel 'Star Plus' has the highest followers among foreign and local channels

mainly because of its soap operas. Foreign channels are preferred by respondents which include Star Plus, Zee TV, Sony Entertainment TV, Star Movies, HBO and BBC, while Pakistani channels include Geo TV, ARY, Indus Vision and TV World.

On the same note regarding television media, another study carried out by Shamsher and Abdullah (2012) asserted the decline of Bengali norms and customs due to their high dependency on foreign satellite channels. Viewers are among the women and young generations who are attracted with programmes that vividly different to the local television programmes. These Indian and Western channels may adversely affect viewers' minds and activities. This is in line with the study of Hamada (2001) who revealed that about half of the sample (50.6%) depends on Western media as the main sources of information about the Arabs World. Western books and references come second (28%), while 8.5% only use Arabic media for information about the Arabs World. Supplementary to this, Gunter (1985) argue that both serious newspaper reading and network television news viewing are the most closely applied and posit. For example, when people were asked to name their sources of world news, about 90% of the British typically mentions television, about 75% mention newspapers, and over 40% mention radio (Independent Broadcasting Authority, 1982). Oskam and Hudson (1999) agrees with this notion and added that their respondents depend television the most, followed by newspapers, radio and magazines in terms of daily news and information, but depend newspapers the most in regards to advertising information.

Hence, there were differences in media preferences for advertising and news information based on respondents' demographic variables. In essence, television was the most believable mass medium for news, while newspapers were perceived as the most believable medium for advertising information. Media believability differed among respondents in relation to age and education.

3. Materials and method

This research was based on primary data using the quantitative approach. The respondents for this study belong to five public universities in Malaysia located in Klang Valley namely UiTM, UM, UPM, UKM, and IIUM. Questionnaires were distributed among academicians in only social and human science faculties. The population size was 2627, and a total of 300 respondents were selected for this study. A stratified sample was used based on the highest academic qualifications (Master and PhD). The questionnaires were distributed to 150 Masters' lecturers and 150 PhDs' lecturers, and during data collection process, the academicians were randomly chosen to answer the questionnaires. The collected data thus were analyzed by using SPSS version 20th in this study.

4. Findings and discussions

The electronic media under the present study include television (Astro, terrestrial Malaysian channels) and internet (news website, online newspapers, internet TV, and social media). This section of the article presents the results and discussions of the main findings of the study, which is based on the data collected through the survey questionnaires on the following main points: i) international news sources preferences, ii) differences of news sources according to demographic data of the respondents, however the respondents have been allowed to tick more than one option.

4.1. Academicians preferences of international news sources

This table shows that majority of respondents (58.7%) prefer to use internet for watching and browsing international news followed by Astro (55%) as the second source and terrestrial Malaysian Channels (32%) as third source.

Table 1. Preferences toward International News Sources

Sources	Preferences						Rank
	Yes		Sometimes		No		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Astro	165	55	70	23.3	65	21.7	2
Internet	176	58.7	84	28	65	21.7	1
Terrestrial channels	96	32	85	28.3	119	39.7	3
Other	27	9.0	-	-	273	91	4

“Other” category refers to other sources used by the respondents such as newspapers, Australian channels, listening to BBC podcast and Sky News, academic reading journals, cable TV, Hypp TV, New Straits Times and Utusan Malaysia newspaper, and friends who are staying over sea .

4.2. Academicians preference of Astro news channels

The data presented in Table 4.2 clearly indicated that among news channels that broadcasted in Astro, the majority of respondents (36%) prefer Bernama TV for international news followed by Aljazeera English (30%), BBC (28.3%) and CNN (27.7%).“Other” category here records 10%, the majority of respondents refer to Astro Awani, and some other refers to TV3, TV9, Sky News and local channels.

Table 2. Astro channels

Astro channels	Preferences						Rank
	Yes		Sometimes		No		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Bernama TV	108	36	67	22.3	125	41.7	1
Aljazeera English	90	30.0	79	26	131	43.7	2
CNN	83	27.7	83	27.7	134	44.7	4
BBC	85	28.3	75	25.0	140	46.7	3
Other	30	10	-	-	270	90	5

4.3. Academicians preference of terrestrial Malaysian channels

This table shows that TV3 records the highest percentage (53.7%) while TV2 records the lowest percentage (15.3%). “Other” category here records (6%). It is referred to 12 respondents refer to TV9 and another 6 respondents refer to NTV7 and TV8.

Table 3. Terrestrial Malaysian channels

Terrestrial channels	Preferences						Rank
	Yes		Sometimes		No		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
TV1	69	23	77	25.7	154	51	3
TV2	46	15.3	63	21.0	191	63.7	4
TV3	161	53.7	65	21.7	74	24.7	1
Alhijrah	113	37.7	78	26.0	109	36.3	2
Other	18	6	-	-	282	94	5

4.4. Internet sources

This table clearly indicated that the three top internet news sources that respondents like to use for international news are online newspapers (57%), followed by news websites (53%) and Facebook (32.7%) while internet TV(13.3%). Twitter records 9.3%. Other (2.3%) refers to Yahoo websites, and Yahoo Messenger.

Table 4. Internet sources

Internet application	Preferences						
	Yes		Sometimes		No		Rank
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
News websites	159	53	67	22.3	74	24	2
Online newspapers	171	57	66	22	63	21	1
Face book	98	32.7	63	21	139	46.3	3
Twitter	28	9.3	33	11	239	79.7	7
Blogs	49	16.3	68	22.7	138	61	5
You Tube	70	23	80	26.7	150	50	4
Internet TV	40	13.3	62	20.7	198	66	6
Other	7	2.3	-	-	293	97.6	8

4.5. The differences of news sources according to demographic profile

Table 4.5 shows behaviors toward news sources based on demographic factors. Both males and females showed the same distribution of news sources preferences. Around (58%) of males and around 52.4% females claimed they use Astro.

Table 5. Differences of news sources

Demographic Variables		Astro		Internet		Terrestrial	
		%	χ^2 & p	%	χ^2 & p	%	χ^2 & p
Gender	Male	58.2%	$\chi^2=1.137$	70.1%	$\chi^2=14.66$	27.6%	$\chi^2=3.095$
	Female	52.4%	P=.566**	49.4%	P=.001*	35.5%	P=.213**
	35 or below	56%		61.3		33.3	
Age	36-45	57.9%	$\chi^2=13.099$	54.7	$\chi^2=4.774$	30.8	$\chi^2=7.815$
	46-55	53.9%	P=.041*	61.8	P=.573**	25	P=.252**
	56 and above	81.2%		59.4		50	
Religion	Islam	95.6		59.5		32.60	
	Buddhism	25		25		25	
	Christianity	25	$\chi^2=8.557$	50	$\chi^2=4.630$	25	$\chi^2=4.536$
	Hinduism	66.70	P=.381**	66.7	P=.796**	33.3	P=.806**
Highest Academic	Sikhism	100		33.3		0.0	
	PhD	54	$\chi^2=.193$	64.7	$\chi^2=4.455$	27.3	$\chi^2=3.944$
	Master	56	P=.908**	52.7	P=.108**	36.7	P=.139**

*significant **no significant

There was also a significant difference in term of internet sources preferences by gender ($\chi^2=14.166$, $p=.001$). Majority of males (70.1%) prefer to use internet to obtain news, followed by females (49.4%). Table also shows that there was a statistically significant association between age and use the Astro as source for international news. 81.2% of the respondents aged from 56 and above preferred using Astro, and respondents aged between 36-45 (57.9%). In terms of religion, and highest academic qualifications, it is clearly indicated that there is no statistically significant between religion and academic qualifications. Both of them are equally preferred.

5. Conclusions

The results indicated that majority (58.7%) of the respondents use internet to obtain international news and to get information about the Arabs World. Among the internet applications that were used in this study, the online newspapers were the primary source of respondents with a percentage of 57%. Besides that, about 55% of the respondents depended on the Astro to watch international news. Bernama TV news has come as the first source (36%) while Aljazeera, an Arabic English news channel became the second source (30%). Apart from that, Western news channels became the third preference.

The news media sources, primarily cable and internet source are dominated among elite people. Several researches attribute the electronic media including news media news coverage contributing to the perception and attitude of public in such events and issues. Due to the availability and accessibility of enormous amounts of news sources, users are interested in a certain news source rather than others. Furthermore, the result indicated that the respondents are more attracted to the news sources that are more informative and objective.

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