



 Thursday,  
13 April 2023

 10:00 am -  
11:30 am

## The Appetite for Broadcast News and Implications of Changing Viewing Patterns



**MS. KASTHURI SRI THARAN**

Deputy Director, Research  
Enterprise Department, MCMC

MODERATOR



**MS. MEDIHA MAHMOOD**

Executive Director, Content Forum  
(CMCF)

PANELLIST



**PROF. DR. JOANNE LIM  
BEE YIN**

University of Nottingham  
Malaysia

PANELLIST



**DR. COLLIN JEROME**

Universiti Malaysia  
Sarawak

PANELLIST

Online Via  zoom



# **Accessing News in the Digital Era: The Case of Sarawak, Malaysia**

**Collin Jerome, Ting Su Hie, Ahmad Junaidi bin Ahmad Hadzmy, and Humaira binti Raslie**  
**Faculty of Language and Communication**  
**Universiti Malaysia Sarawak**



# Acknowledgement

- The study was funded by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) and supported by the Research, Innovation and Enterprise Centre (RIEC), Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (NAT/F09/MCMC/85422/2022).
- The study was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee (Non Medical) of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak on 22 September 2022 (No. of Ethics Approval: HREC (NM)/2022 (1)/23).



# **Table of Content**

- **Introduction**
- **Research Aim and Questions**
- **Methodology**
- **Findings and Discussion**
- **Conclusion and Recommendations**
- **References**

# Introduction

- **The decline of television news** (hereafter TV news) viewing among the masses has been attributed to the rise of digital media. Young audiences have shifted away from TV news and turned to digital media as their main source of news and information.
- While many have argued that this trend has already eroded TV news viewing and traditional TV viewing in general, one should not underestimate **the power of future events** induced by natural and human/man-made disasters.

# Introduction

- This is because TV consumption has increased dramatically in the past years due to the **COVID-19 pandemic**, with thousands of viewers tuned in to watch TV news broadcasts for the latest up-to-date news and reports on the deadly disease.
- One possible explanation is that traditional news sources such as **TV and print news have become more credible sources** of COVID-19 information compared to social media that have magnified the spread of misinformation about the deadly disease (Cinelli et al. 2020; Knowles, 2021; Sullivan & Molay, 2020).
- As the world is entering the post-COVID-19/endemic phase, questions regarding TV news viewing remain: **Will watching TV news become obsolete? Will people continue to watch TV news?**

# Introduction

- Answering these questions will enable us to understand TV news viewing among the general population of the country.
- This is because while recent trends show that people around the world are increasingly accessing news via mobile devices and digital platforms (e.g., search engines, social media), more needs to be known whether such trends exist in countries such as Malaysia where a large number of people continue to access news from traditional media outlets (e.g., TV, radio, print media).

# Research Aims and Questions

- Our study aimed to examine TV news-viewing among Malaysians, particularly those living in Sarawak.
- We were interested to find answers to the following two questions:
  1. How are Sarawakians accessing news in today's digital era? - what are their knowledge, attitudes and practices towards TV news-viewing, as well as the contributing factors?
  2. Are Sarawakians ready for potential changes to the current format of news broadcasts?



# Why Sarawak?

- Sarawak was chosen for the study mainly because a large number of its **2.9 million population** (Sarawak Government, 2023) continue to access traditional news outlets in the digital era. One possible explanation for this is the **technology penetration issue** (e.g. Internet, smartphone) that many Sarawakians face, especially those living in rural areas.
- A study by Horn and Gifford (2022) revealed that people living in remote areas of Sarawak experienced **limited infrastructure and limited or unreliable access to mobile and Internet connectivity**. The study further revealed relatively low rates of internet use in these areas compared to the rates in urban parts of Sarawak and other parts of Malaysia.



Source:

<https://constitutionnet.org/news/restoring-constitutional-status-sabah-and-sarawak-first-step-long-journey-redemption>

# Why Sarawak?

- Another reason is accurate and credible reporting of news.
- The then-state director of the information department, Abang Sardon Abang Hasyim maintained that the **Sarawak public still relies on traditional media** such as television and newspapers to access news because of its accurate and credible reporting (Borneo Post Online, 2015).



Source  
: <https://m.facebook.com/Bumilban/photos/selamat-kerebak-tawas-bumi-ibanradio-baka-di-baruh-tok-beguna-amat-ba-bansa-kita/1681377268622913/>



Source: <https://suarasarawak.my/tentang-kami/>

# Methodology

- We employed both **quantitative and qualitative research approaches** as it allowed us to investigate how Sarawakians accessed news and whether they were ready for potential changes to the current format of news broadcasts.
- Our study was theoretically informed and guided by the **Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) model** that is commonly used in the field of family planning and public health research that aims to collect data from the general population as a way to develop policies and measures to address a certain issue or problem.
- **The survey** (i.e., online questionnaire) was used to gather information from the respondents such as their characteristics, perceptions, opinions, and attitudes.
- **Interviews (i.e., face-to-face and focus groups)** were used to support the survey in gathering further information from the respondents.

# Methodology

- The target sample size was 500 (we managed to gather complete questionnaire from 512 respondents) and 43 respondents for the interviews. Non-probability sampling techniques (e.g., voluntary response and snowballing) were used to recruit the respondents from major districts in Sarawak such as Kuching, Kota Samarahan, Sibul, Bintulu, and Miri.
- The recruitment criteria were as follows:
  - (1) aged between 18 and 64, and 65 and over;
  - (2) of Malaysian nationality from various racial/ethnic groups or communities; and
  - (3) may have some knowledge of TV news and TV news viewing.

# Methodology

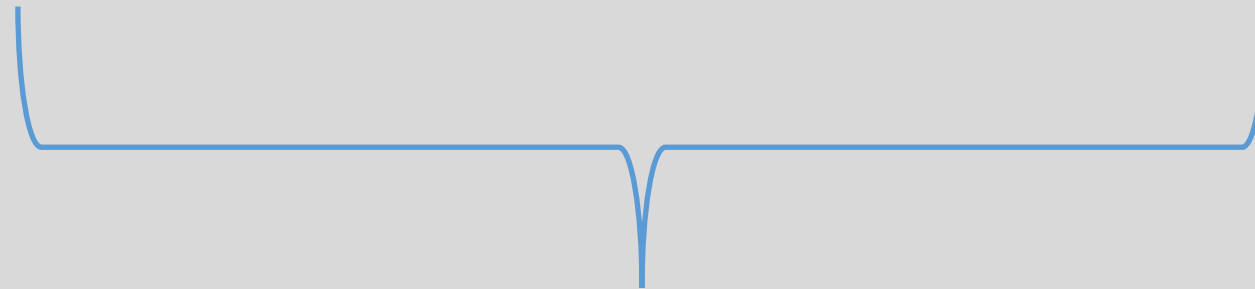
- The question items were adapted from those used in *two previous studies*: (1) a study by the Pew Research Center titled *Measuring news consumption in the digital era (2020)* and (2) a study by the Reuters Institute for Study of Journalism titled *What is happening to television news? Digital news project 2016 (2016)*.
- The questionnaire was made up of **five sections**: (1) demographic questions, (2) questions on knowledge of TV news and TV news viewing, (3) attitudes towards TV news and TV news viewing, (4) TV news viewing practices; and (5) views on openness to change the current formats of news broadcasts.

# Methodology

- The survey was conducted from **September 2022 to December 2022** using Google Forms with the link sent to the respondents who met the recruitment criteria via email and telephone, as well as social media such as Facebook and WhatsApp.
- **Print/Paper-and pencil survey** was used with respondents living in rural areas with little digital accessibility and low digital literacy levels.
- All respondents gave their informed consent either online or written before the data collection commenced.
- The collected data were analyzed descriptively and quantitatively to reveal the patterns of accessing news among the respondents and their readiness for change.

# Findings

- **1. How are Sarawakians accessing news in today's digital era?**
- **2. Are Sarawakians ready for potential changes to the current format of news broadcasts?**



Key Findings

# Questionnaire Results

**N=512 Sarawakian respondents**

## Demographic characteristic

Gender	195 male 317 female
Ethnic background	261 Sarawak Indigenous 190 Malay 53 Chinese 8 Indian
Age	215 aged 16-23 71 aged 24-25 66 aged 26-35 65 aged 36-45 49 aged 46-59 46 aged 60 and above

## Employment status

220 working  
94 unemployed/retired  
198 studying

## Monthly income

273 not working  
128 below RM2000  
51 RM2000-RM3999  
24 RM4001-RM6000  
20 RM6001-RM8000  
8 RM8001-RM10000  
8 RM10001 and above

## Education

39 primary 6 and below  
17 Form 3  
103 Form 5 and equiv  
64 Form 6 and equiv  
241 Degree  
48 Masters/PhD



# Questionnaire Results

**N=512 Sarawakian respondents**

## Demographic characteristic

Locality	173 rural 51 suburban 288 town
----------	--------------------------------------

9. **A8. Are you living in an urban or rural area?/Anda tinggal di kawasan bandar atau pedalaman?** \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Rural - village or kampung/Pedalaman - perkampungan
- Suburban (e.g., Siniawan or places with a population of less than 10,000)/Pinggir bandar (contoh, Siniawan atau kawasan yang mempunyai populasi kurang daripada 10,000)
- Town (e.g., Betong, Bintangor, Tatau, Kuching 7th Mile, 10th Mile)/Bandar (contoh Betong, Bintagor, Tatau, Kuching Batu 7, Batu 10)

**Do Sarawakians still  
watch news on TV?**



# E1. Do you think Sarawakians still watch TV news?

30 No

153 not sure

**329 Yes**



# **Popular** TV news channels for news and information among Sarawakians

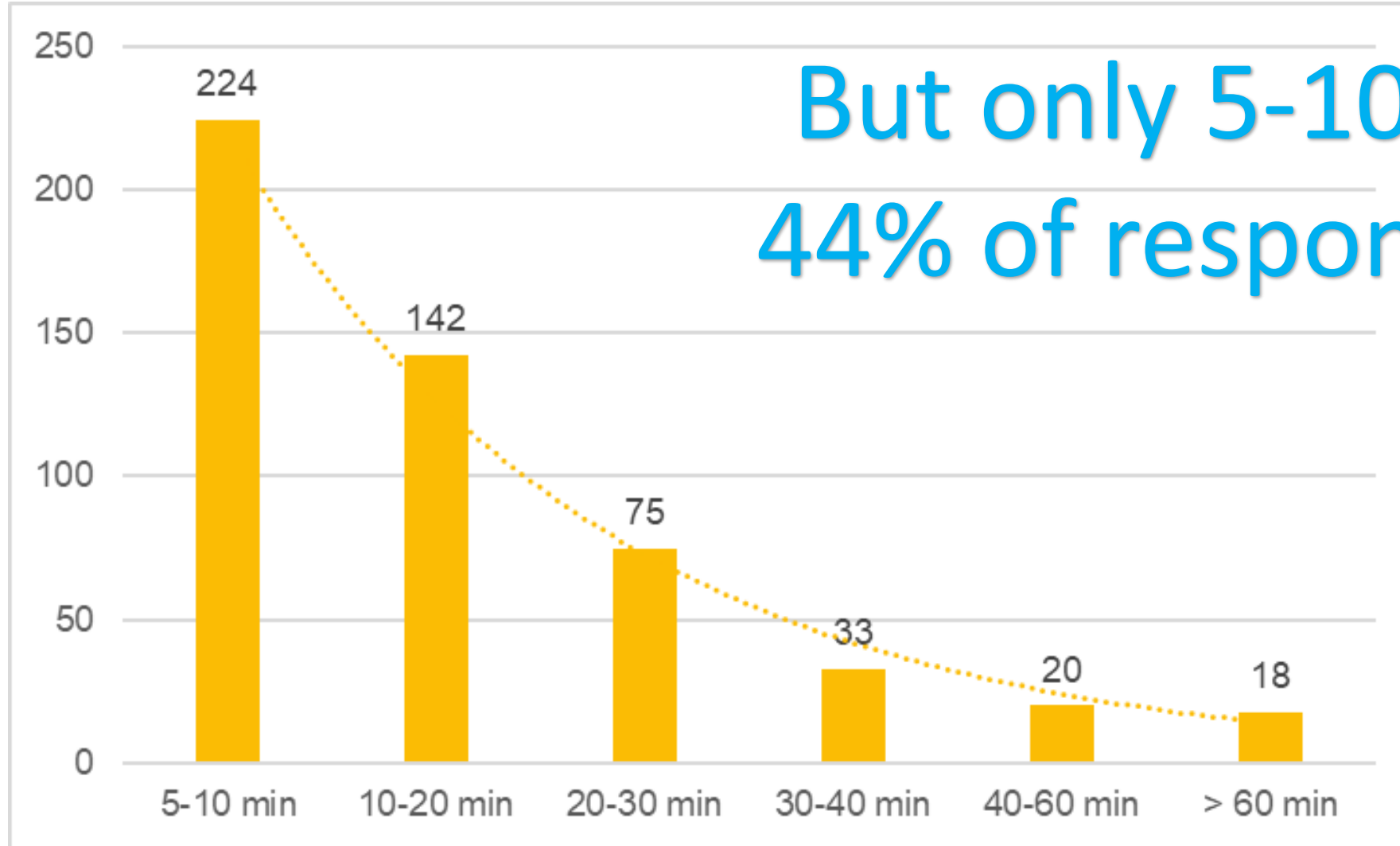
Popular TV news channel	Frequency
-------------------------	-----------

TV Sarawak	346
TV3 Media Prima	344
RTM TV1	169
RTM TV2	81
Bernama TV	53
Astro Prima	40
RTM TV Okey	39

## Yes to TV news

Less popular TV news channel	Freq
NTV7 Media Prima	23
UTV Media Prima	21
TV9 Media Prima	24
TV Alhijrah	32
Astro Ria	31
Astro Ceria	11
Astro Awani	23
None	8

## Amount of time spent on watching TV news in a day



But only 5-10 min,  
44% of respondents

**Are there notable shifts  
in how Sarawakians  
now acquire news  
content?**

**Yes for the majority of respondents**

# A10. What mobile gadgets do you use to **get news**

Gadget	Own
None	37
Smartphone	322
Smartphone and laptop computer	136
Tablet	157
eReader	3
Smart watch	45

Get news
99
251
151
35
1
0



Probably TV (20%)



**Only 111 of 512 subscribe to online news portals. 401 do not subscribe.**



Gadget	Frequency
None	297
Roku streaming stick	3
Chromecast with Google	157
Nvidia Shield TV	6
Apple TV 4k	3
Evpad free streaming tv box	9





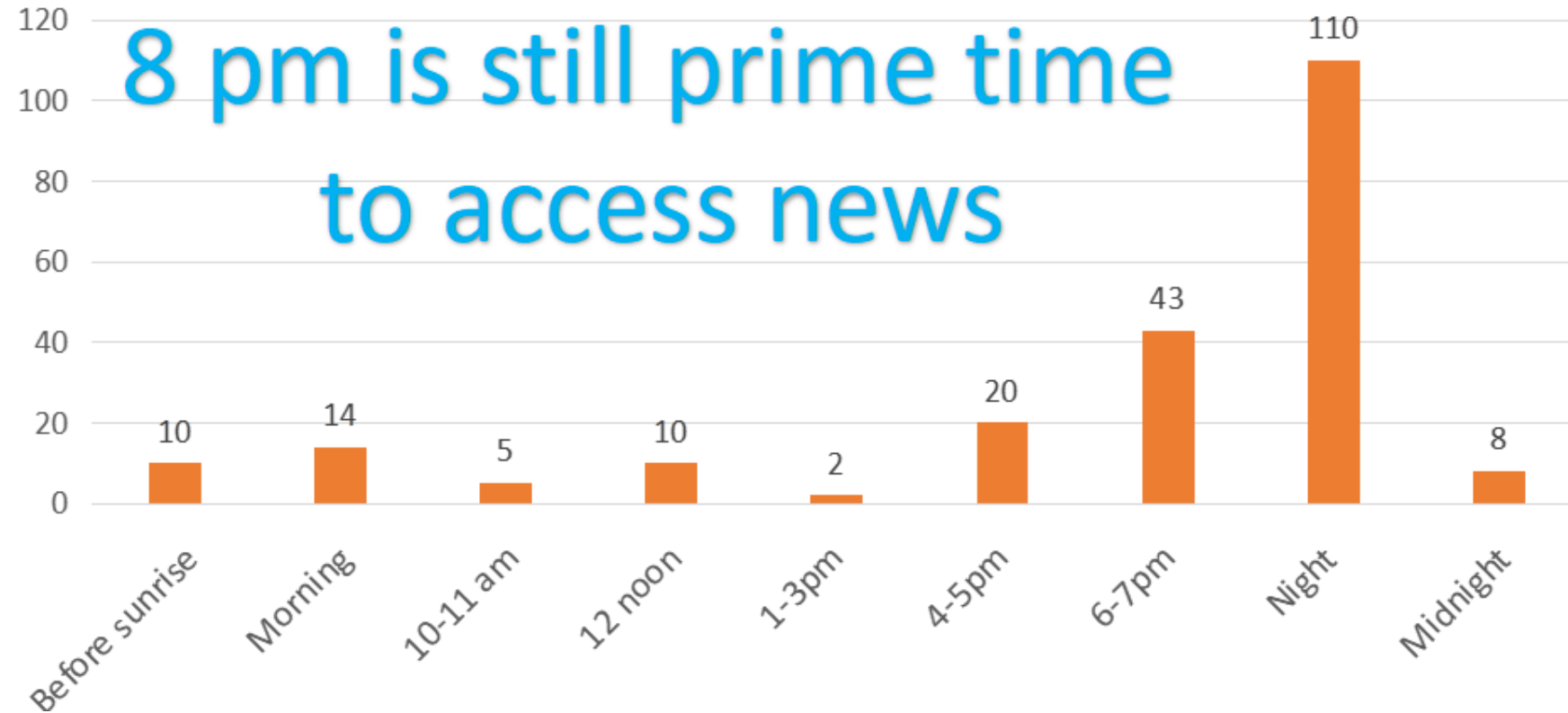
## B1/B3. What are the forms of news that you are familiar

Form of news	Frequency
TV news	471
Radio	411
Print newspaper	301
Online newspaper	362
Printed news magazines	91
News video	135
Live news streaming	185
Pod cast	210
Astro (Free and Pay TV)	415
UNIFI TV (Free and Pay TV)	199
myFreeview (Free-to-Air)	58
Sirius TV (Pay TV)	4



**Is 8 p.m. news still  
important to  
Sarawakians?**

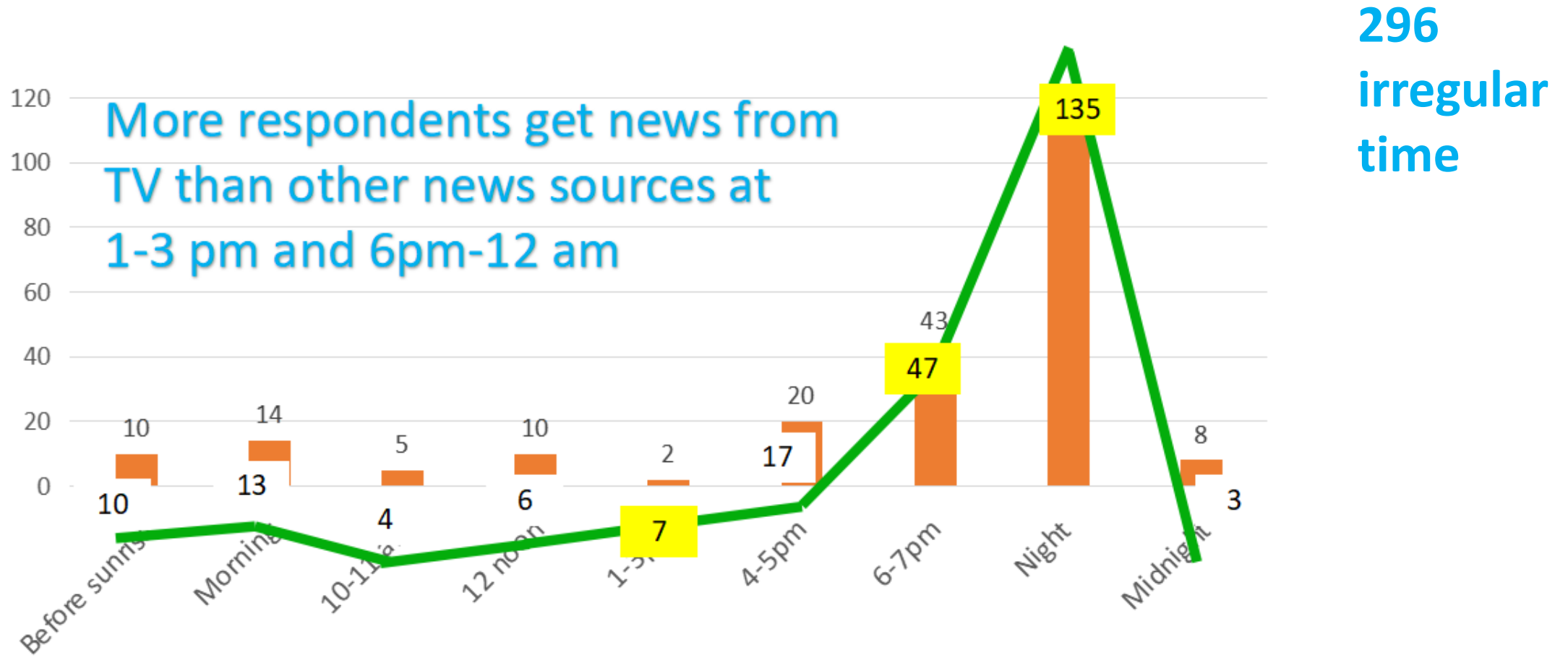
## D2. Evening and Night – Most popular time to **access news**



290  
irregular  
time



# D4. Evening and Night – Most popular time to watch TV news



**Why do Sarawakians  
watch news?**

## Positive Attitudes towards watching news on TV




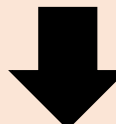

Item	Mean
C1. I <b>enjoy</b> watching news on TV.	3.7
C2. When watching news on TV, it is important for me to get an <b>overview of the top news</b> .	4.1
C3. When watching news on TV, it is important for me to get news on topics of <b>interest</b> to me.	4.1
C7. In your opinion, Malaysia TV news is a <b>reliable</b> source of news.	3.8

Likert scale: 1 strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 neutral, 4 agree, 5 strongly agree  
3 is the mid-point. Scores above three show positive attitudes

## C4. Sarawakians' views on **current** role of broadcast news in Malaysia

Role of broadcast news	Frequency
To update citizens with info <b>about social issues</b> and problems.	438
To deliver news on <b>current national interest</b> (e.g., COVID-19 development, economic development, economic matters	465
To discuss current <b>political agenda</b>	319
To trigger <b>imagination</b> and curiosity	181
To inform citizens about current trends in <b>entertainment</b>	213
To <b>educate</b> citizens on specific health, social or war, crisis	395

## C4. Sarawakians' views on **future** role of broadcast news in Malaysia

Role of broadcast news	Current role	Future role
To update citizens with information <b>about social issues</b> and problems.	438	438
To deliver news on <b>current national interest</b> (e.g., COVID-19 development, economic development, economic matters)	465	448 
To discuss current <b>political agenda</b>	319	276 
To trigger <b>imagination</b> and curiosity	181	 217
To inform citizens about current trends in <b>entertainment</b>	213	166 
To <b>educate</b> citizens on specific health, social or war, crisis	395	 422



## 25. Which of the following do you think is **NOT** or **less relevant** to be included in Malaysian news?

Not relevant to include	Frequency
Stories that can lead to racial tension	387
Viral incidents which do not add value to Malaysian interest	304
Personal stories or issues of an individual	225
Controversial issues in entertainment industry	120
Suicide	110
Marketing a product	106

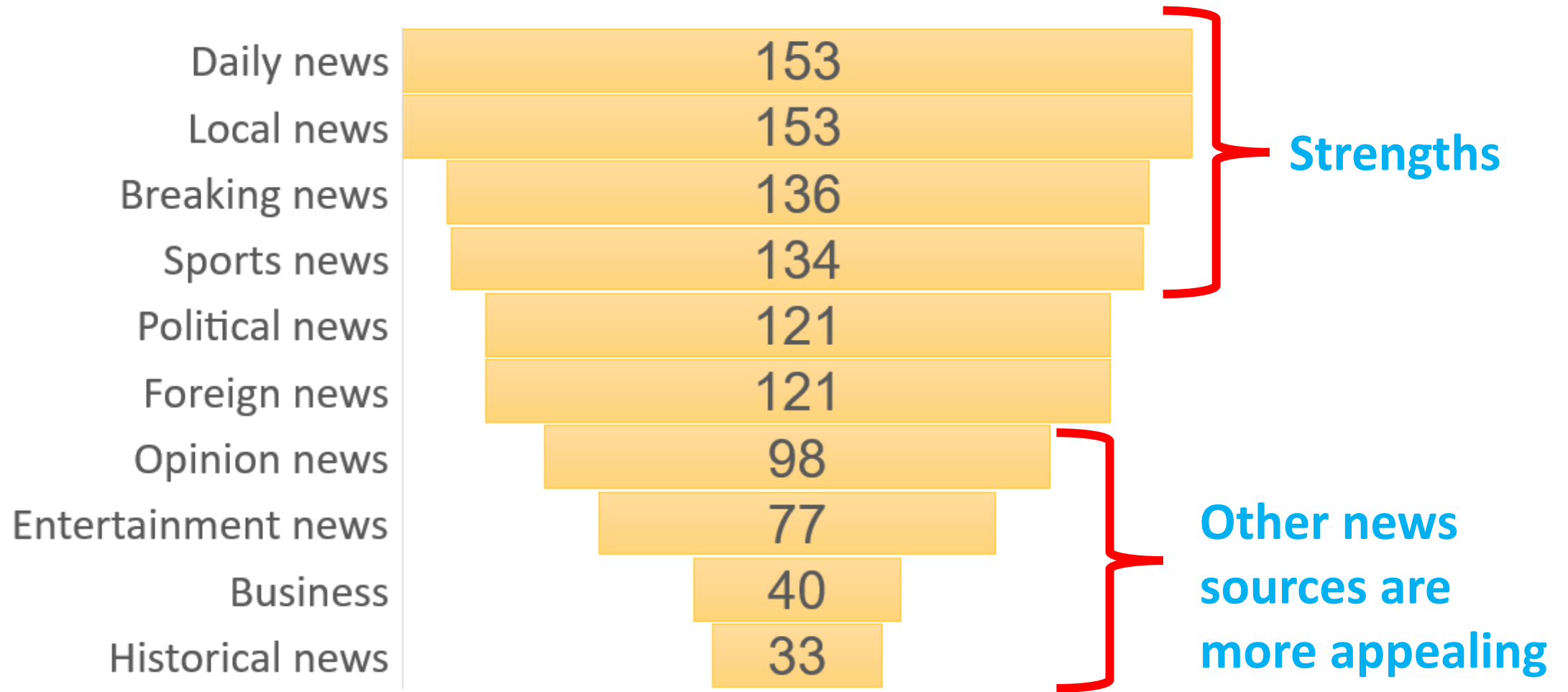


**“Feel good” news**

**Sarawakians want TV news to promote the cultural cohesion and identity of Malaysians**

***Which types of news  
attract Sarawakians?***

# Which types of TV news do Sarawakians watch everyday? (Details on next 2 slides)



### D3-D10. What type of news do you watch on Malaysia's TV news? (part 1)

Item - How often do you watch Malaysian TV to get ...	Not at all	A few times a year	A few times a month	A few times a week	Every day
D3. ... <b>daily news</b> ?	77	83	91	108	153
D6. ... current/ <b>breaking</b> news?	69	104	96	107	136
D7. ... <b>historical</b> news?	168	182	80	49	33
D8. ... <b>local</b> news?	66	93	107	93	153
D9. ... <b>business</b> /economic news?	218	120	66	68	40
D10. ... news on <b>foreign</b> affairs?	114	100	75	102	121

## D11-14. What type of news do you watch on Malaysia's TV news? (part 2)

Item	Not at all	A few times a year	A few times a month	A few times a week	Every day
D11. ... <b>entertainment</b> news?	158	75	97	105	77
D12. ... <b>opinion</b> news?	160	98	83	73	98
D13. How often do you watch Malaysian TV to get <b>sports</b> news?	128	98	87	65	134
D14. ... news on <b>politics</b> (national/ regional/ international)?	133	106	84	68	121

**What are the competing  
news sources?**

## D. Continued popularity of newspapers as news source

**406 of 512 prefer local news outlets, 279 prefer international news outlets**

How often do you read news from ...	Not at all	A few times a year	A few times a month	A few times a week	Every day
D18. <b>local/independent</b> news outlets (e.g., Malaysiakini, The Malaysian Insider)?	167	79	124	96	46
D19. <b>international</b> news outlets (e.g., CNN, The New York Times, CNA)?	258	79	77	76	22
D20. <b>mainstream</b> news outlets (e.g., The Star Online, Berita Harian online)?	152	71	129	112	48
D21. <b>other local</b> news platforms (e.g., Says.com, BuzzFeed, Cilisos)?	283	69	77	61	22

## D. Social media and search engines are gaining traction as a news source

How often do you read news from ...	Not at all	A few times a year	A few times a month	A few times a week	Every day
D22. Internet forum/ Discussions boards (e.g., Quora, Reddit)?	295	68	63	64	22
D23. WhatsApp/instant messaging platforms?	160	46	120	94	83
D24. search engines/ news aggregator sites (e.g., Press Reader, Google/Yahoo news)?	225	65	74	106	42



**Are Sarawakian news  
viewers ready for  
potential changes to  
current format of news?**

### **E3. How open are you with changing the format in Malaysia's broadcast news?**

**69 not open, prefer old format**

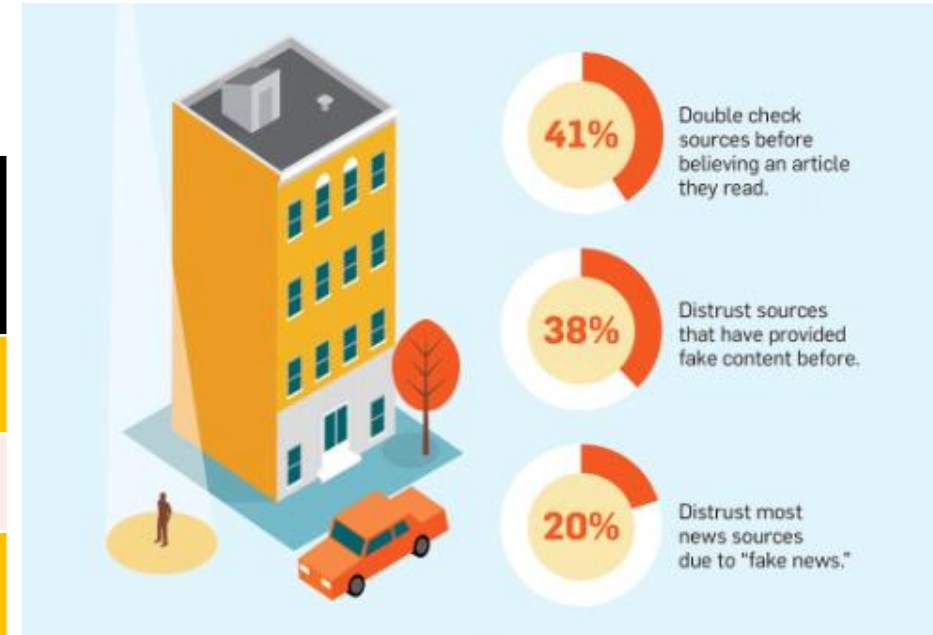
**237 moderately open**

**206 very open**



## E4. What kind(s) of alternative format would you think is most preferable for broadcasting news in the future?

Preferred alternative news format in the future	Frequency
Using more infographics/Illustration	373
Using more videos (on the ground)	325
News with audience input/participation (LIVE)	231
Customisable news stories/topics	216
News talk show	184
Citizen journalist contributions	160
TV magazine	72



## E5. What kinds of alternative platforms would you be open to receive news?

Alternative news platforms for future	Frequency
Online news portals	410
Facebook	347
Instagram	242
TikTok	193
YouTube	178
Twitter	138
Mobile news app	103
Augmented reality	27
LinkedIn	26



# Findings and Discussion

- The results presented here corroborate those of previous research in several ways: First, **online news and social media** were found to be sources of news for the respondents, and a similar pattern of consumption elsewhere in the world (Newman et al., 2022; Nain, 2022).
- Second, **smartphones** were found to be one of the main gadgets used by the respondents to access news, a similar usage pattern among news consumers globally (Newman et al., 2022; Nain, 2022).
- Third, **Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter** were found to be the frequently used/visited platforms to access news among the respondents, a similar trend that can be observed in other countries (Newman et al., 2022; Nain, 2022).

# Findings and Discussion

- The results, however, add additional perspectives on news consumption in the digital world.
- While news consumption trends have changed due to the explosion of social media, such trends may have **differential effects** in contexts where a large number of people continue to access news from TV and other traditional media outlets.
- The respondents who reported having no gadgets continued to access news from TV, radio and printed news.
- Other respondents reported accessing mainstream TV news channels for news at irregular times throughout the day (mostly in the evening and at night time).

# Findings and Discussion

- **One interesting finding** is how the role of the news in contributing to the formulation or strengthening of cultural cohesion and identity amongst Malaysian, particularly Sarawakians.
- Sarawakians are generally proud of their sense of identity (local-regional) for various reasons. Being Sarawakian first, Malaysian second in a study by Lee Hock Guan\* (2018) *The ISEAS Borneo Survey: Autonomy, Identity, Islam and Language/Education in Sarawak*
- **TV Sarawak or TVS** is Sarawak's television station that was established in 2018.
- It is a linear digital television channel providing state-focused/oriented news and programs that can be accessed statewide and nationwide via Astro and my Freeview platforms



Source: <https://tvstv.my/>

# Findings and Discussion

- Thanks to these platforms (Astro in particular), TVS not only managed to attract Sarawak's population of **2.8 million** but also audiences from West Malaysia and neighbouring countries such as Indonesia (Jee, 2022).
- One of the pull factors is that the news and programs are produced in **Sarawak Malay and Iban**, the languages that are spoken by many Sarawakians.
- These programs include those that promote inspiring local leaders, expressing oneself through local music, discovering Sarawak through people and food, as well as daily lifestyle and entertainment (TVS, n.d.).

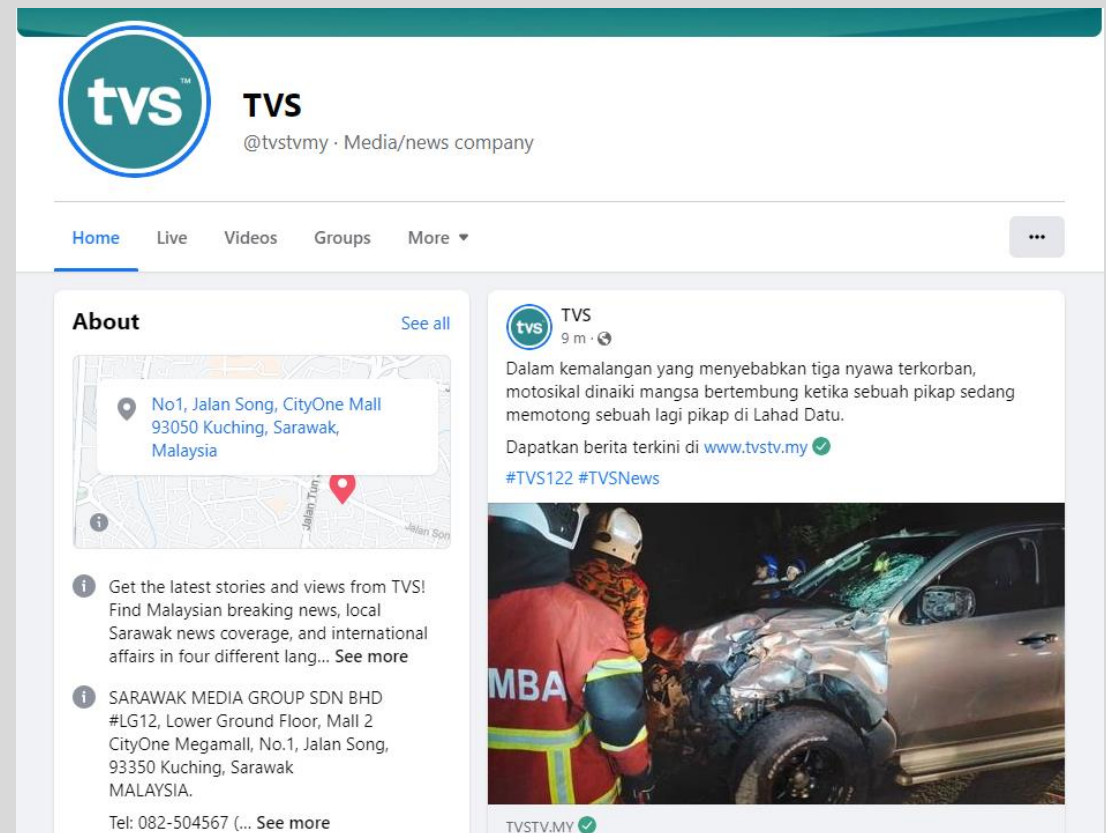


Source: <https://tvstv.my/>



# Findings and Discussion

- Another pull factor is other platforms through which TVS can be accessed by Sarawakians and those from West Malaysia and neighbouring countries.
- These platforms include TVS' official website and social media platforms.
- TVS' official Facebook page for example has **346,324 followers** and has garnered **231,537 likes** (TVS, n.d.).



The screenshot displays the Facebook profile of TVS, a media/news company. The profile includes the TVS logo, the name 'TVS', and the handle '@tvstvmy'. Below the profile information, there are navigation tabs for 'Home', 'Live', 'Videos', 'Groups', and 'More'. The 'About' section is visible, showing the address: 'No1, Jalan Song, CityOne Mall, 93050 Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia'. A post from TVS, dated 9 months ago, is shown. The post text reads: 'Dalam kemalangan yang menyebabkan tiga nyawa terkorban, motosikal dinaiki mangsa bertembung ketika sebuah pikap sedang memotong sebuah lagi pikap di Lahad Datu. Dapatkan berita terkini di [www.tvstvmy.com](http://www.tvstvmy.com) #TVS122 #TVSNews'. The post includes a photograph of a damaged silver car with emergency responders in red uniforms and helmets at the scene. The TVS logo and 'TVSTV.MY' are visible in the bottom right corner of the post.

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/tvstvmy/>

# Conclusion and Recommendations

- To conclude, this study investigated the trend of accessing news among Malaysians, particularly those living in and originating from Sarawak. The survey method was used to gather information about how Malaysians/Sarawakians accessed news in today's digital world and whether they were ready for potential changes to the current format of news.
- The results revealed that a majority of the respondents used mobile gadgets to access news. Most of this news was accessed from local/independent and mainstream online news outlets, as well as social media and search engines.
- The study also revealed that the respondents were generally ready for potential changes to the current format of news. This was evidenced in their preferred alternative news formats involving the use of more infographics/illustrations and the alternative platforms to access/receive news in the future such as online news portals and non-broadcasting social media.

# Conclusion and Recommendations

- The results have at least two implications.
- First, they suggest the Internet has the potential to be the main news medium for many Malaysians.
- This should be explored further by future researchers because the Internet, while it can be a great source of news, is also capable of spreading misleading content and information.
- Second, the results suggest that digital news has the potential to be the new news format that meets the needs of many Malaysians.
- Future research can delve into this further by exploring how digital news media (e.g., online journalism, digital photojournalism, and social media) should be used/consumed by Malaysians given the rise of online platforms and the growing spread of mis-and disinformation.

# Conclusion and Recommendations

- Finally, the followings are some of the recommendations for **implementing a liberalised delivery of news programming outside of “prime time” broadcasting slots:**
- (1) **Retain 8 p.m. prime time for TV news** but consider extending it to midnight because night time is the most popular time to access news.
- (2) **Continue to broadcast TV news on national and state channels** because viewers trust the reliability of these news sources (TV Sarawak, TV3 Media Prima, RTM TV1).
- (3) **Produce shorter news segments** because of the short attention span (5-10 minutes) among viewers,
- (4) **Enable TV news to be watched on mobile phones and computers** at other times after broadcast slots (most viewers often used gadgets for accessing news nowadays).
- (5) **Change format of news** by using more graphics, illustrations, videos (on the ground), and news with audience input/participation (LIVE), and customisable news stories or topics.
- (6) **Experiment with adding an online newspaper** to the national and state TV channels (e.g., Astro online news which has traction).

# References

- Andrade, C., Menon, V., & Ameen, S. & Praharaj, S. K. (2020). Designing and conducting knowledge, attitude, and practice surveys in psychiatry: Practical guidance. *Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine*, 42(5), 478-481. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0253717620946111>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). Thematic analysis. In H. Cooper (Ed.), *APA Handbook of research methods in psychology*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Cinelli, M., Quattrocioni, W., Galeazzi, A. et al. (2020). The COVID-19 social media infodemic. *Sci Rep* 10, 16598. DOI: 10.1038/s41598-020-73510-5
- Knowles, T. (2021, July 27). Print and broadcast media are more trusted than social. *The Times*. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/print-and-broadcast-media-more-trusted-than-social-2xp53mk05#:~:text=Newspaper%20readers%20are%20twice%20as,of%20opinions%2C%20the%20research%20found.>
- Launiala, A. (2019). How much can a KAP survey tell us about people's knowledge, attitudes, and practices? Some observations from medical anthropology research on Malaria in pregnancy in Malawi. *Anthropology Matters Journal*, 11(1), 1-13. [https://www.anthropologymatters.com/index.php/anth\\_matters/article/view/31/55](https://www.anthropologymatters.com/index.php/anth_matters/article/view/31/55)
- Sullivan, A., & Molay, A. (2020, March 24). U.S. TV viewing is increasing during Coronavirus pandemic. ComScore. <https://www.comscore.com/Insights/Blog/US-TV-Viewing-Is-Increasing-During-Coronavirus-Pandemic>

**Thank You and Have a  
Great Day!**

**Contact us at [jcollin@unimas.my](mailto:jcollin@unimas.my) for further questions.**