

Article

Uses and Gratifications of Trilingual Newspapers in Sabah

Elizabeth Joanny Openg¹, Siti Ezaleila Mustafa¹ & Mohammad Rashidi Pakri^{2*}

¹Department of Media and Communication Studies, University of Malaya, 50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

²School of Humanities, University Science Malaysia, 11800 Penang, Malaysia

*Corresponding Author: rashidi@usm.my

Abstract: There are at least 33 periodicals have been established in Sabah since 1883. These include various monolingual, bilingual, and trilingual newspapers published between 1883 and 2022 in various formats including the trilingual newspaper's format. The focus of this study is to investigate the roles of local trilingual newspapers in Sabah and, at the same time, to distinguish between the gratification sought (gs) and the rewards received (gratifications obtained) by readers of the selected local trilingual newspapers in Sabah namely *The New Sabah Times*, *Daily Express*, and *Borneo Post*. The mixed-method research method was implemented to meet the research objectives. 159 respondents were randomly selected to participate in the online and offline questionnaires, and 10 of them were randomly selected to answer the interview. The findings of this study show that readers chose trilingual newspapers to satisfy their cognitive, social-integrative, escapist, and affective needs. Therefore, this study wishes to provide evidence to the local newspaper press to continue the Kadazandusun column in a way that can satisfy the needs of their readers.

Keywords: Newspapers, ethnic media, uses and gratifications, Borneo Press, Malaysia

Introduction

The primary role of every newspaper is to inform the public about local events as well as national and international news on a day-to-day basis. Mostly a private entity, the importance of their informative function is duly recognized and at the same time restricted, mainly to protect public morals against pornography (indecent pictures and writings); outlaw sedition (rebellion or revolt against authority) and above all maintaining the peace, stability, and security of the country (Sabah State Archives, 1994, p.3). Next, the researcher will provide a brief background on the three leading local newspapers in Sabah that utilized English, Bahasa Malaysia, and Kadazandusun in a single newspaper.

Literature Review

1. The Newspaper: Bridging Information to the Community

The title of this sub-column was inspired by a publication of the same title, *The Newspaper: The Public Mind Opener-An Introduction to Newspapers at the Sabah State Archives*. As the title suggested, the primary role of every newspaper is to inform the public about local events as well as national and international news on a day-to-day basis. Mostly a private entity, the importance of their informative function is duly recognized and at the same time restricted, mainly to protect public morals against pornography (indecent pictures and writings); outlaw sedition (rebellion or revolt against authority) and above all maintaining the peace, stability, and security of the country (Sabah State Archives, 1994, p.3). Next, the researcher will provide a brief background on the three leading local newspapers in Sabah that utilized English, Bahasa Malaysia, and Kadazandusun in a single newspaper.

2. The Sabah Times / North Borneo News and Sabah Times/ The Sabah Times/ Kinabalu Sabah Times/The New Sabah Times (TST)

1949 was the starting point for *New Sabah Times* led by the former chief minister, Donald Stephens (the late Tun Fuad Stephens): "He saw a need for a good newspaper and subsequently established Sabah Times." Donald Stephens used to be the editor in charge of this newspaper. The evolution of this paper started in 1948 with the *North Borneo News* as a fortnightly before it becomes a weekly paper, and it was a daily paper in 1954 (Roff, 1969).

However, this trilingual newspaper experienced some dark chapters. First, when it was forced to cease operating in 1995. Three years after its 'silence period,' *Sabah Times* was given a new lease of life on 8 March 1998 and marked the birth of the *New Sabah Times*. This newspaper recorded 167, 047 readerships until 2012; it has 16,084 circulations as in 2015. This newspaper is distributed not only in urban cities such as Kota Kinabalu, Sandakan, and Tawau, but it is also distributed to emerging cities such as Lahad Datu, Keningau and Kudat. *New Sabah Times* has at least five main distribution channels including its 264 vendors, 170 copies MAS flight readings, free copy to 54 schools sponsored by NGOs, 24 major hotels in KK as well as through online Epaper via Ebrowse. It remains as an English only newspaper until 28 April 1955 with the introduction of the Kadazan corner (as part of the Malay column) in *The Sabah Times* newspaper.

The earliest content of *The New Sabah Times newspaper* comprised short stories about travel, food, and social activities. For instance, *Ohunok Hindung Doid Papar*" (Papar's Eels are Delicious) or "*Notipu O Toigi do Hazag*" (Sailboat Mast was Broken). Some are letters to the editors. Apparently, the first Kadazan dialect used was Kadazan Papar. The Kadazan Penampang dialect started only on the 14 June 1955, meanwhile the Dusun language started on 6 August 1955. Some news in Lotud dialect was also observed during this period. On 15 May 1956, the first Kadazan supplement was printed which was published once in two weeks. This is a full-page news in the Kadazan language. It was later printed daily until today (Totu, 2014, p.73).

3. Daily Express (DE)

The Daily Express, which was first published on 1 March 1963, and was founded by the late Tun Sri Yeh Pao Tao Tzu, is the sister newspaper of the *Overseas Chinese Daily News (OCDN)*. Similar to *The New Sabah Times*, it was published in English, Bahasa Malaysia, and Kadazan (in a single newspaper).³ According to its website, the paper covers a wide range of topics including international, national and local news, financial and business pages, sports (in colour), entertainment and leisure, women page (in colour), doctor column, student page, Hotline (a public service), and others.

Daily Express was Sabah's first local English daily and together with her sister newspaper *OCDN*, they incorporated colour into their newspapers in 1992. Initially, *Daily Express* was published in a 6-day publication of about 16 pages paper, and in the mid-1980s, it became a 7-day publication of an average of 28 rising to 32 pages. *The Daily Express* started its Kadazan column in 1975, which was called *Pangaan Kadazan* or Kadazan Column. Apart from publishing political, socio-economic news, it also published poems. The later local newspapers such as the *Borneo Mail* and *Borneo Post* also have their own Kadazandusun columns that were published daily (Totu, 2014, p.73). Unfortunately, *Daily Express'* Kadazandusun column terminated its run-on 30 May 2020. It was a sad day for the writers and the editors of the *Daily Express'* Kadazandusun column. Quoting a response from the interview between *The Star* newspaper reporter with one of the Kadazandusun writers, Mr Joseph Bingkasan (2020):

"The natives, especially the Kadazan people, they buy local newspapers just to read the Kadazan column. Today, when we go to coffee shops, we still see this practice. I guess all this will be a memory for most of us...Let's hope there are more efforts to promote Kadazandusun and other ethnic languages in Sabah, as it is a part of culture and heritage that must not be forgotten"

(Lee, 2020)

Another senior writer of the Kadazan column, Marcellus Puvok stated his frustration over the latest decision. According to him, the termination of the Kadazan column in the *Daily Express* paper is more than just him losing his job but most importantly it is a manifestation of "impending death of a language". In short, the Kadazandusun language is on the brink of extinction. The news of its termination also received a critical response from Sabah Assistant Minister of Law and Native Affairs Jennie Lasimbang. According to Jennie as quoted in *The Star* "If it is becoming hard for the paper to maintain the column in its written form, it should at least consider an online version" (Lee, 2020). Hence, it is safe to conclude that the termination of the Kadazan column is unwelcome and uncalled for among the people in the industry.

4. *Borneo Post (BP)*

There used to be two companies using *Borneo Post (BP)* as the name of their newspapers. The first one was a Chinese newspaper published on 1 January 1961 by the late Mr. Lee Yen Siew. However, this is not the newspaper that will be discussed in this study. For this study, the researcher will look at *Utusan Borneo* that was first published on 27 April 1994 since it uses Kadazan Dusun ever since its first publication. *Borneo Post* is a subsidiary of See Hua Reality (Sabah). Both *Borneo Post* and *Utusan Borneo (UB)* complement each other to ensure news coverage gratifies the needs of everyone in Sabah. The press has ceased producing articles in Kadazan Dusun since 2018. However, it maintains the use of Bahasa Iban in its newspaper.

In short, these newspapers- *The New Sabah Times*, *Daily Express*, as well as *Borneo Post* adhere to the idea that newspaper is a regularly printed document which includes large sheets of paper that are folded together, containing news reports, articles, photographs, and advertisements through which it becomes the medium of conveying information and at the same can persuade and entertain (Arnold, 1956). Based on the information, printed media in any form including newspaper helps to establish an avenue to deliver information regarding politics, culture, economy, social, as well as religion. Local newspapers such as *The New Sabah Times* and *Daily Express* have been and continue to be an important source of information for many Sabahans.

5. Uses and Gratifications

The emphasised- on media-audience relationship category occurred right after the study of 'campaign' that proved that media had limited effects on most individuals and how interpersonal influence is much more powerful than the media when it comes to shaping one's opinions, attitudes as well as actions (Katz, 1959) (see also, McQuail, 1994; Clapper, 1949). The findings coincide with many academicians who fixate their studies on the idea of "what do people do with media?"

"When people associate book-reading, for example, with a desire to know oneself, as well as newspapers with the need to feel connected to the larger society, it is difficult to disentangle perceptions of the media from their intrinsic qualities. Is there anything about the book as a medium that breeds intimacy? Is there something about newspapers that explain their centrality in socio-political integration? Or is this "something" simply an accepted image of the medium as well as its characteristic content?"

(Katz, 1973, p.516)

The more current research conducted on Uses and Gratifications Theory and media serves as crucial evidence to prove that there is an evolution of research in this an. However, the uses and gratifications theory have its own weaknesses. The critics started in the 40s where uses and gratifications theory and media related studies were condemned for their inability to provide thorough analyses as they failed to build a connection between reader's characteristics (such as race, age, and education) and link them with gratification achieved from media of their choices. It is because they seem to ignore the characteristics as well as the personality traits of the although these characteristics are among the essential criteria in most current studies (McLeod et al., 1965, p. 583; Newhagen & Rafaeli, 1996). Hence, considering the changes within the area of research itself, this study will consider the demographic information such as race, age, gender, and locality during the data collection phase.

Moreover, uses and gratifications theory received criticism due to its lack of evidence other than self-report alone. In short, uses and gratifications theory is criticised for being too individualistic because it focuses more on individual consumption (Elliot, 1974) and as a result, it is difficult to determine "beyond the people studied or in order to consider societal implications of media used" (Ruggiero, 2000, p.12). Consequently, Jensen and Jankowski (1991) suggested a method to solve the deficiency of uses and gratifications theory. They believe it is important to combine two methods, such as questionnaire and interview, in a single study, qualitatively, and holistically. Although the data gather in uses and gratifications theory maintains its individual element, the analysis of the data has moved to macroanalysis level. Ruggiero in his paper also emphasised the shift from micro data collection to macroanalysis.

Methodology

In general, this study is a descriptive mixed-method study to identify and study empirically and systematically related to the mastery of uses and gratifications of the trilingual newspapers and the effects of Kadazandusun language standardizations among the readers in Sabah. This study used a mixed-method design using quantitative and qualitative data collected through questionnaires and interviews. The data obtained from this random sample was then analysed and presented with descriptive statistics and significant tests. The results of the subsequent statistical tests will provide answers to the researched questions.

Data are gathered from readers of the trilingual newspapers in Sabah. These readers are selected using a simple random sampling technique. These readers are selected using a simple random sampling technique. The reader consists of Kadazandusun readers and non-Kadazandusun readers. These readers are those who are keen readers of the trilingual local newspapers in Sabah. All respondents, regardless of race, were invited to conduct a survey pertaining to local newspapers in Sabah and their views on the use of the Kadazandusun language as one of the main languages in local newspapers in Sabah. However, to answer the open survey related to the standardisation of the Kadazandusun language in the local newspaper, only 10 readers who belong to the Kadazandusun ethnic community were involved. All the information pertaining to the respondent's demographics is collected in the survey that has been distributed. Based on a report by DMDC a media representative for five Borneo newspapers, including *New Sabah Times* and *Daily Express* stated that *Daily Express* as the largest circulation daily newspaper in Sabah reached approximately

21560 circulations as in January 2019. However, circulation is not the same as readership. Circulation is the average number of copies of a newspaper distributed. Nonetheless, this figure includes paid circulation as well as free-circulation newspapers. On the other hand, readership tells how many readers of the newspaper. It is natural for the household to subscribe to a copy of the magazine, but this copy is then read by all members of the household. Hence, it is difficult to detect the actual number of readers for each newspaper. Therefore, the researcher has no specific recommended sample size as long as the confidence level is at least 90%. As a result, the researcher manage to gather 159 samples. There are approximately 100 respondents for the online questionnaire and another 59 samples gathered from the offline questionnaire. Hence, this sample produces an 8% margin of error at a 95% confidence level. Hence, four professional informants and 159 readers were the total of subjects who met the sampling criteria, and they will take part in this study during the period of data collection.

The Findings

This section is divided into two sections. Firstly, the findings for the questionnaires and secondly the section for findings related to the interview.

1. Findings from the questionnaires

This column discusses the gratification sought and obtained by readers of Sabah's trilingual newspapers. In light of the findings from the previous EFA, the researcher identified the following motivational items in Table 1 below:

Table 1. List of items based on specific gratification and need

Needs	Gratifications	Items: Reading trilingual newspaper is ...	Sources of the items
Cognitive needs	Surveillance-information seeking	Carry personal ads. Contains stimulating information. A source of trustworthy information Helps consumer to decide on what to buy Helps consumer to decide on where to buy a product Trilingual newspapers are a way to learn about other people's opinions	Steinberg (1995) Shoemaker (1996) Blumler, Katz, & Gurevitch, (2013) DeFleur & DeFleur (2016)
Social-integrative needs	Identity	A way to learn about my identity and places far away A source of current information related to my community. A way to learn about my ethnic culture.	Katz E (1959) Goffman, Stigma (1963) Tajfel (1974) Harwood & Vincze (2015)
Escapists needs	Diversion-relaxation	A way to unwind	Katz E. B (1973) Curran (2002) McQuail D (2010)
			Hardwood & Vincze (2015) Ramasubramanian, Doshi et al. (2017)
Affective needs	Entertainment	Enjoyable Help pass the time. Liven up the news. An effective use of time	Heath and Bryant (1992) Steinberg S (1995)

The findings on the use of trilingual newspapers and reader satisfaction with trilingual style newspapers were examined by identifying the low, average, and high levels of satisfaction for each topic discussed. The table below depicts a classification of the factor's degree based on a mean analysis. The scope measured in this column relates to the views of the respondents on the use of trilingual newspapers and the satisfaction achieved through trilingual newspapers.

The questionnaire's findings are summarised in Table 2 below. Prior to performing further analysis on the data collected, it was carefully keyed in to ensure that it did not affect the study's findings. This is because, most times, the results of a study become less accurate because of the researcher's data entry error. The absence of a value shows that the respondent did not complete the study questionnaire; however, if there are few unanswered items, the missing values can be ignored. According to Hair et al. (2010), if the percentage of missing data is less than 10%, it can be ignored, and the researcher should proceed with the analysis.

Table 2. Summary of the respondents' responses

Variable	Total Count	N		CumN	Percent	CumPct	Mean
		Valid	Missing				
Reading trilingual newspaper is a way to learn about my community and places far away	159	159	0	159	100	100	4.862
Reading trilingual newspaper is enjoyable	159	159	0	159	100	100	4.7484
Trilingual newspapers are a way to learn about other people's opinions	159	158	1	158	99.371	99.371	4.6646
Trilingual newspapers contain stimulating information	159	159	0	159	100	100	4.6604
Trilingual newspaper helps me to learn about my ethnic culture	159	158	1	158	99.371	99.371	4.557
Reading trilingual newspaper is an effective use of time	159	159	0	159	100	100	4.5443
Trilingual newspaper writers liven up the news	159	158	1	158	99.371	99.371	4.519
Trilingual newspaper is a source of current information related to my community	159	159	0	159	100	100	4.4969
Trilingual newspaper is a source of trustworthy information	159	159	0	159	100	100	4.4654
Reading trilingual newspapers help pass the time	159	159	0	159	100	100	4.434
Trilingual newspapers carry personal ads	159	159	0	159	100	100	4.1384
Information in trilingual newspaper helps consumer to decide about where to buy a product	159	158	1	158	99.371	99.371	3.8544
Information on trilingual newspaper helps the consumer to decide about what to buy	159	158	1	158	99.371	99.371	3.8481
Information in a trilingual newspaper helps the consumer to decide about what to buy	159	158	1	158	99.371	99.371	3.739

According to Jamil Ahmad (2002), a low mean score is between 1.00 and 2.33. Meanwhile, the average mean score ranges from 2.34 to 3.66, while the maximum mean score ranges from 3.67 to 5.00. According to Table 2, there is no item with a low or an average mean score. Most items have a high mean score. This indicates that respondents responded positively to all items presented. Three out of fourteen items received feedback indicating that respondents either agree or slightly agree with the items.

Furthermore, based on the respondent responses, Table 2 above shows the main needs that readers seek from trilingual newspapers, with a 95 percent confidence interval of 5 or higher (Agree and strongly agree). It demonstrates that over 90% of respondents chose slightly agree or higher, and it is based on a 95 percent confidence interval of a mean of 4.5 or higher (slightly agree and above). Figures 1, 2, and 3 represent the three items that received the most positive feedbacks from the respondents:

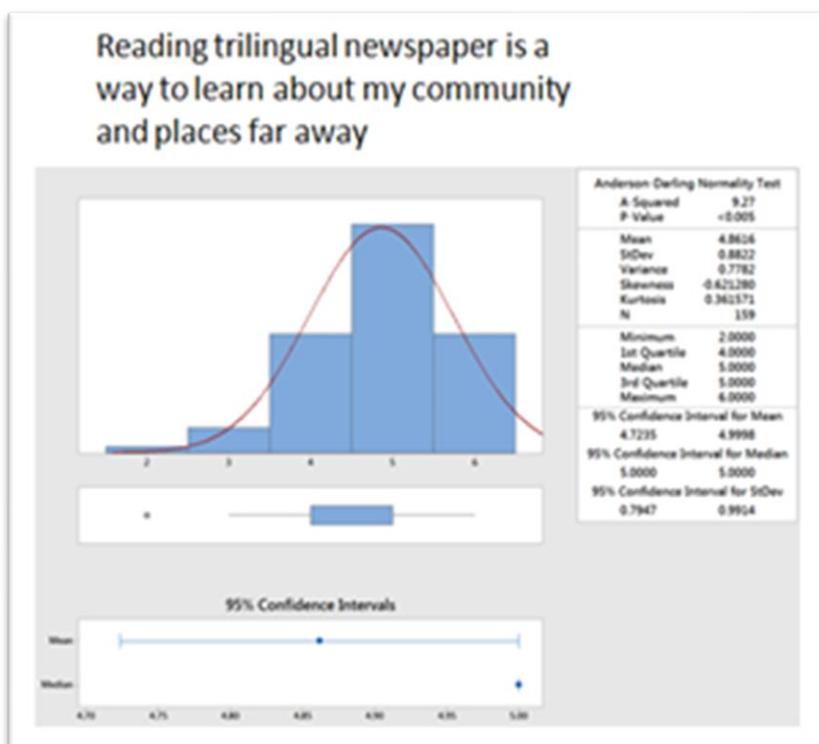


Figure 1. Statistical graph results of the main needs that readers gratify from Trilingual newspaper

Based on Figure 1 above, reading trilingual newspapers is a way to learn regarding my community and places far away. The statistics show a 95% CI mean (4.7 ~ 5.0), 95% CI median (5). The high mean score depicts that reader found trilingual newspapers to be informative.

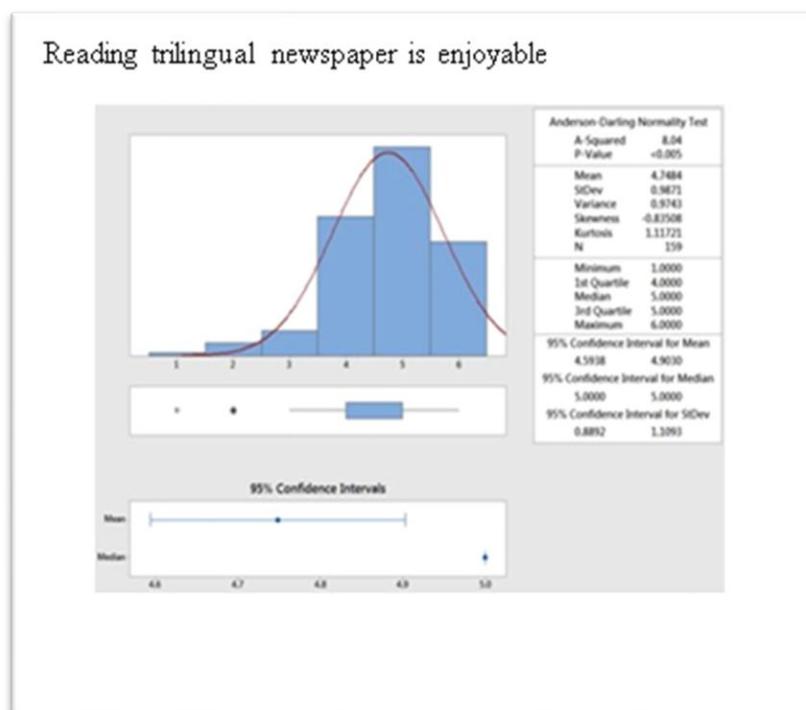


Figure 2. Statistical graph for item: Reading trilingual newspaper is enjoyable

Figure 2 above proves that most of the readers consider trilingual newspaper as enjoyable. It is proven by the 95% CI mean (4.59 ~ 4.9), 95% CI median (5). The mean score depicts that reader find trilingual newspaper is enjoyable to read.

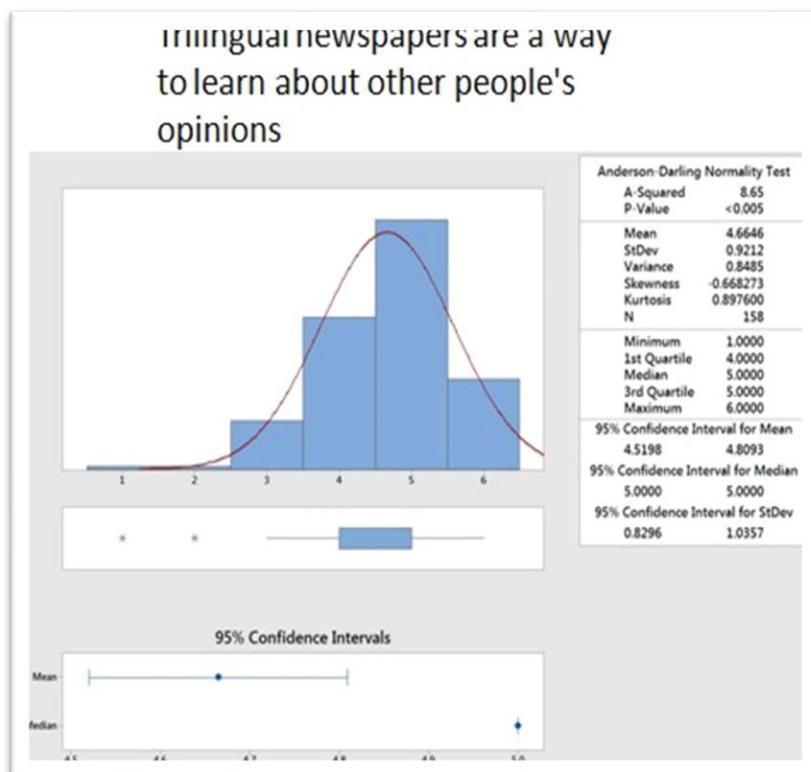


Figure 3. Statistical graph for item: Trilingual newspapers are a way to learn about other people's opinion

Trilingual newspapers are a way to learn regarding other people's opinions. According to Figure 3 above, this item has a 95% CI mean (4.52 ~ 4.8), 95% CI median (5). This item has the third highest mean score hence, it depicts the idea of trilingual newspapers being informative when it comes to help readers to understand other people's opinion. Additionally, the researcher conducted analyses to determine the effect of responses from readers of varying genders and ages on the outcome of these three items.

Table 3. The main needs based on respondents' gender.

Variable	Gender	Total	Valid	Missi	cumN	Pe rcent	CumPct	Mean	StDev	Min	Med	Max	Mode	N for Mode
enjoyable	Female	100	100		100	62.2931	62.893	4.89	9523					39
	Male	58	58		158	36.478	99.371	4.5	1.013					0.26
				0	159	0.6289	100							
learn about other opinions	Female	100	100		100	62.8931	62.893	4.71	0.9244					4.2
	Male	58	57		157	35.8491	98.742	4.579	0.925					29
					158	0.6289	99.371							
learn about my community and places far	Female	100	100		100	62.8931	62.893	4.98	0.8526					45
	Male	58	58		158	36.478	99.371	4.655	0.909					0.27
					159	0.6289	100							

Table 4 The main need based on the respondent age

Variable	Total	CumN	Percent	CumPct	Mean	StDev	Min	Med	Max	Mode	N mode	
enjoyable	1824	97	97	0	97	61.0063	61.006	4.742	1.073		36	
	25-34	48	48		145	30.1887	91.195	4.792	824		23	
	44-45			0	1 so	3.1447	94.34	so	0.837	5.6		
	54-55			0	15.4	2.5157	96.855	4,5				
	64			0	159	3.4447	100	4.2	0.837	4	4.5	
Other people's opinions	1824	w	96		96	60.3774	60.377	4.7292	0.9		39	
	25-34	48	48	0	144	30.1887	90.566	4.542	101		25	
	44			0	149	3.4447	93.711		707	4		
	45-55				153	2.5157	96.226		0		4	
	64	s			158	3.1447	99.371	4	0.707	4	4	
community and places far	18-24	97	97	0	97	61.0063	61.006	4.8041	0.8855	2	s	41
	25-34	48	48	0	145	30.1887	91.195		0.825			25
	44			0	150	3.1447	94.34	5.2	837	4	5.6	
	54			0	154	2.5157	96.855	5.25	0.5			
	55"			0	159	3.1447	100	4	1.225	4		2

There are no obvious distinctions between female and male responses based on respondent gender. This is demonstrated by the fact that the mean, median, and mode values are nearly identical in Table 3. This also corresponds to the respondent age range depicted in Table 4.



Figure 4. Statistical data on how the information in the trilingual newspaper can help to enhance consumer's quality of life

Figure 4 illustrates how the trilingual newspaper's information might benefit the reader's daily life as a consumer. According to the statistics, the confidence interval for the median is 4 (somewhat agree), indicating that the information in the trilingual newspaper aids readers in deciding what to buy, where to buy it, and how to spend their evening or weekend. This could be because other mechanisms, such as the internet, television, or radio, are exerting a greater influence on the response. These three items on consumerism received less favourable responses from respondents.

However, their mean scores are still above 3.5. This indicates that respondents are hesitant to believe that the Sabah trilingual newspaper can be used as a reliable source of information for purchasing products or planning their day. The questionnaire then discusses the role of local newspapers in Sabah to educate their readers regarding their culture. The result is shown in Figure 5.

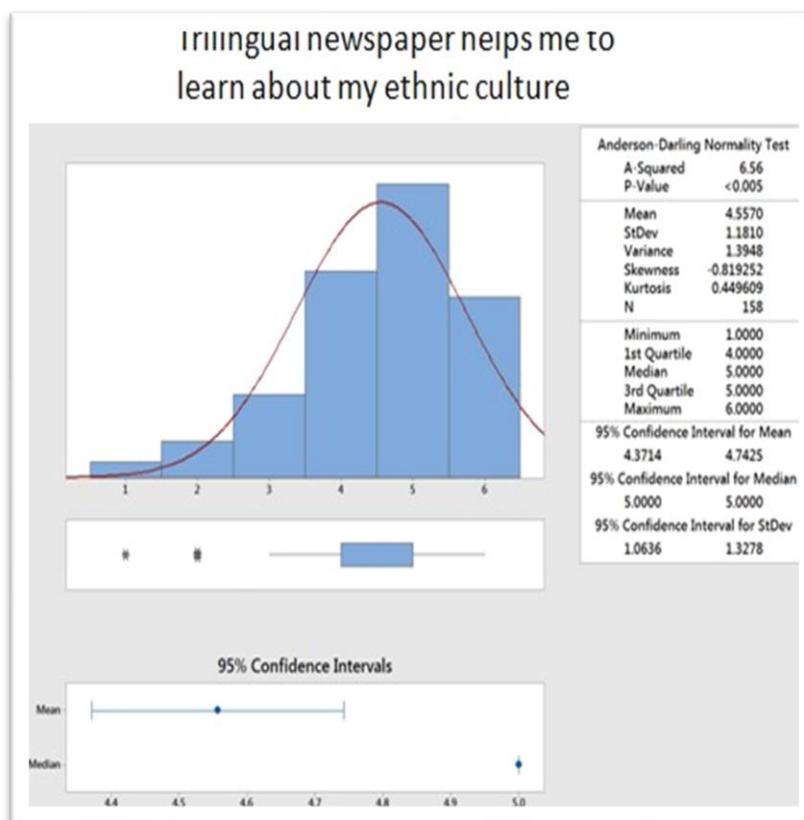


Figure 5. Statistical graph results on whether the trilingual newspaper is helping the respondents to learn about their culture

In terms of ethnic/cultural awareness, 83 per cent of respondents agree trilingual newspapers assist them in learning about their ethnic culture. The 95 percent confidence interval for the median value of 5 demonstrates this (Agree). Meanwhile, when a larger population is considered, the 95 percent confidence interval for the mean is between 4.3 and 4.7.

2. Findings from The Interview

The researcher has conducted ten short online interviews with random readers to see the impact of trilingual newspapers in Sabah towards the intra-ethnic relationship in the Kadazandusun community. Hence, Table 3 shows the summary of responses from the ten respondents.

Table 5. Summary of responses from readers

Question	Keywords	Gratification	Need
	Language learning for study and career	Knowledge	Cognitive
Motivation to read trilingual newspapers	Information / news Help pass the time	Surveillance	Cognitive
		Entertainment	Affective
The used of Kadazandusun language creates gap among the Kadazandusun intraethnic community in Sabah.	Disagree		
As someone who read trilingual newspaper, I felt a gap between other ethnic and I	Disagree. Everyone knows Kadazandusun is the majority ethnic in Sabah.		
	Agree. Youngsters don't understand the language		
	To introduce the Kadazandusun language to everyone in Sabah	Identity	Social-integrative
What is the main role of trilingual newspapers in Sabah	Information Sense of unity		
	Same news, different language		Cognitive
		Surveillance	Social-integrative
		Identity	
		Surveillance	Cognitive

Based on the response given by ten readers of trilingual newspapers in Sabah, the satisfaction and needs that the trilingual newspapers provide are still in line with those listed in the literature review such as knowledge, surveillance, entertainment, as well as identity. Understanding someone or something is defined as being acquainted with them, being aware of them, or understanding them. Knowledge may be gained via experience or education by observing, discovering, or learning in regard to them. Knowledge of a topic may relate to either a theoretical or a practical knowledge of it. According to the respondents, they literally gained knowledge from local trilingual newspapers.

“I was able to pick up new words and learn new languages. For example, in a mother tongue newspaper, the majority of the language used has a very deep meaning and is rarely used in everyday conversation/conversation. Furthermore, as readers, we will learn more in regard to current events in our country and around the world”.

“I can learn a new word or sentence by reading a local newspaper in three languages. Aside from that, I was able to improve my comprehension in all three languages”.

Essentially, environmental surveillance is a more sophisticated way of stating that one function of mass media is to inform you of what is going on in the world and to transmit that information to you. When we discuss issues related to surveillance, we are considering the covering of a broad variety of vital issues that influence society. This is among the data collected from the interview with random respondents,

“Sabah trilingual newspapers can deliver messages or news in multiple languages that have the same meaning”.

Based on the finding, the local trilingual newspapers fulfilled its vital role towards its reader which is to fulfil reader’s surveillance gratification. It is one of the fundamental characteristics of any media source, such as the newspaper, that it may assist its audience or readers in connecting with or disconnecting from reality in order to decrease social tension. Entertainment is essential since it brings people together and serves as a wonderful method for the whole family to get closer. It serves to distract people's attention away from their stressful daily lives and to keep them entertained during their spare time. Entertainment brings happiness, and happiness is a basic and strong medication that promotes health and well-being. The good thing is local trilingual newspapers also serve as a good avenue for entertainment. However, the literature column in the local trilingual newspapers has been abolished due to lack of financial resources. So, it is not surprising if many readers requested for the column to be re-created. According to the respondents, the wish that there will be more short stories or stories published in multiple languages in the trilingual newspapers.

Identity may be broken down into two major components, which are personal identity and social identity. Personal identity is the identity that one has as an individual. Personal identity refers to the fact that every individual has a unique set of traits, such as race, ethnicity, and gender. Various groups of individuals distinguish their views and reactions to the world based on their own unique experiences and perspectives. According to our respondents, most of them disagree that local trilingual newspapers are promoting the gap among the diverse community in Sabah. As a matter of fact, they believe that local trilingual newspapers help to highlight the Kadazandusun identity, as the local trilingual newspaper promotes localised news and articles.

Discussion

Based on the data gathered from the Descriptive Analysis, readers use trilingual newspapers, mostly to meet their cognitive needs, social-integrative needs, escapist needs as well as the affective needs. The same response was given by every single person who was interviewed for this study.

This social-integrative need is concerned with re-establishing contact with family, friends, and the wider world, or, in other words, with one's identity. Among the social- integrative needs of Sabah's trilingual newspaper readers are the desire to learn about their community and distant locations, as well as the desire to learn about other people's perspectives. Escapist needs refer to desires for escape, tension relief, and

diversion. Respondents believe that reading trilingual newspapers are pleasurable, based on the data collected. Information, knowledge, and understanding of our environment, as well as the desire to satisfy our curiosity, are all examples of cognitive needs. Meanwhile, affective needs refer to needs that are related to the pursuit of pleasure and entertainment, as well as the fulfilment of our emotional needs. However, there is also a sense of the existence of how the trilingual local newspapers can satisfy the personal-integrated needs among the respondents. Personal-integrative needs refer to needs associated with an individual's desire for self-esteem and self-actualization are categorized as follows: This is because the majority of the respondents admitted that they are not fluent or never an avid speaker of the Kadazandusun language, they also agree to maintain the trilingual format with the Kadazandusun language as one of the official language because of the fact that the language reflects the identity and the superiority of the Kadazandusun ethnic. Hence, the findings of this study are parallel to a study by Heath and Bryant (1992) as quoted in a book by Steinberg (1995, p.137).

Respondents use local trilingual newspapers as a medium for surveillance-information seeking in order to satisfy their cognitive needs. For the respondents the local trilingual newspapers provide them with trustworthy information regarding consumerism. Moreover, the respondents also believe that newspapers create an avenue to learn about other people's opinions especially ideas and opinion from the local leaders because they are the state's policy makers that can directly affect the Sabahans community. Hence, this finding adheres to the statement made by Simpson (1994), in which he stated that media including newspapers serve as a managing tool (in terms of the political affairs) of a state.

Respondents also use trilingual local newspapers to main and protect their identity. For them these newspapers can fulfil their social-integrative needs. The respondents agree that trilingual newspapers are an excellent medium for them to learn about their identity and places far away. They also agree that the newspapers serve as an informative source of current information, especially those that are related to their community. Thus, in a way respondents also agree that trilingual newspapers assist them to learn about their ethnic culture. Therefore, these findings are consistent with those obtained from the study conducted by (Tiung et al., 2013). This is because the newspapers provide news that highlights the local state's related issues apart from the fact that these newspapers are promoting the almost extinct Kadazandusun language in these newspapers. Moreover, this finding also concurs with Gordon & Mitchell-Kernan (1982) that ethnic media is an effective method for a collective identification in diverse ethnic groups. In addition, the respondents of this study are of those who have a very strong attachment to their ethnic group. Hence, the idea of maintaining their ethnic identity through trilingual newspapers is a crucial matter for them.

Last but not least, respondents agree that trilingual newspapers are very useful for their emotions as it provides the respondents with relaxing activities that allow them to unwind and keep them entertained during their free time. Hence, for the respondents these newspapers help them to fulfil their escapist and affective needs. This is because, during the heyday of Sabah's trilingual newspapers, most of them had entertainment elements such as short story segments in either Bahasa Malaysia or Kadazandusun, as well as articles in regard to local Sabah artists that would not appear in the national press. Aside from that, Kadazandusun language insert comics are included in Sabah trilingual newspapers.

Conclusion

This study should have opened the eyes of local trilingual newspaper publishing companies, and they should not have stopped publishing their newspapers and keep the Kadazandusun column as part of their main features. This is the majority of the data obtained from this study revealed that the respondents involved strongly support the continuation of this type of newspaper publication. It is clear from the findings of this study that the publication of trilingual newspapers should continue, as local trilingual newspapers play numerous important roles in the socio-political and educational aspects of the lives of the people of Sabah, and that they should be supported. Furthermore, based on the findings of the study, each reader has a specific reason for selecting a trilingual local newspaper. Additionally, local trilingual newspapers serve as informational conduits for the inter- and intra-ethnic plural societies that exist in Sabah, as well as for the public.

The Uses and Gratifications Theory (U&G) have come under fire from a variety of parties who question whether this theory adequately explains why a person chooses a particular medium. However, this theory is still applicable to the study of why people choose trilingual newspapers in Sabah and how the standardisation of the Kadazandusun language affects relationships among the diverse community. This is due to the fact that Uses and Gratifications Theory is criticized for being overly individualistic since it places a greater emphasis on individual consumption (Elliot, 1974). A technique to correct the Uses and Gratifications Theory related issue was proposed by Jensen and Jankowski (Jensen & Jankowski, 1991). They think that it is critical to combine two approaches such as a questionnaire and an interview in single research in order to obtain a more qualitative and comprehensive result. Hence, the researcher implemented mixed methods to triangulate the data for this study.

This Uses and Gratifications Theory- based study was successful in achieving the study's research objectives. Especially in terms of identifying a reader's motivation for preferring local trilingual newspapers in Sabah, despite the fact that a number of national newspapers have penetrated the local market and Uses and Gratifications Theory also helps to explain the reader's satisfaction with local trilingual newspapers.

The findings indicate that both researcher and respondents are capable of identifying certain media uses and roles that will meet specific demands, and that their media selections are goal oriented. Just along the lines of any other media, there are at least five main uses and gratifications that readers receive through the local trilingual newspapers.

Acknowledgement: This research/publication was funded by Minister of Higher Education, grant number FRGS/1/2017/SSIO6/USM/02/2

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

- Arnold, E. C. (1956). *Functional newspaper design*. Harper & Brothers.
- Curran, J. (2002). Media and the making of British society, C .1700-2000. *Media History*, 8(2), 135-154. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1368880022000047137>
- DeFleur, M. L., & DeFleur, M. H. (2016). *Mass communication theories: Explaining origins, processes, and effects*. Routledge.
- Elliot, P. (1974). Uses and gratifications research: a critique and a sociological alternative. In J. G. Blumler, & E. Katz, *The uses of mass communications: Current perspectives on gratifications research* (pp. 249-268). Sage.
- Goffman, E. (1963). *Stigma: Notes on the management of spoiled identity*. Penguin Books, (UK).
- Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2010). *Multivariate Data Analysis*. Pearson College Division.
- Harwood, J., & Vincze, L. (2015). Ethnolinguistic identification, vitality, and gratifications for television use in a bilingual media environment. *Journal of Social Issues*, 71(1), 73-89. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12097>
- Katz, E. (1959). Mass communications research and the study of popular culture: An editorial note on a possible future for this journal. *Studies in Public Communication*, 2, 1-6.
- Katz, E., Blumler, J. G., & Gurevitch, M. (1973). Uses and gratifications research. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 37(4), 509. <https://doi.org/10.1086/268109>
- Lee, S. (2020, June 1). 'Daily express' ends Kadazan section. *The Star*. <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2020/06/01/daily-express-ends-kadazan-section>
- McLeod, J., Ward, S., & Tancill, K. (1965). Alienation and uses of the mass media. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 29(4), 583-594. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2747035>
- McQuail, D. (1994). *McQuail's mass communication theory*. SAGE.
- McQuail, D. (2010). *McQuail's mass communication theory* (6th ed.). SAGE.

- Newhagen, J. E., & Rafaeli, S. (1996). Why communication researchers should study the internet: A dialogue. *Journal of Communication*, 46(1), 4-13. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1996.tb01458.x>
- Ramasubramanian, S., Doshi, M. J., & Saleem, M. (2017). Mainstream versus ethnic media: How they shape ethnic pride and self-esteem among ethnic minority audiences. *International Journal of Communication*, 11, 1879–1899. <https://experts.syr.edu/en/publications/mainstream-versus-ethnic-media-how-they-shape-ethnic-pride-and-se>
- Roff, M. (1969). The rise and demise of Kadazan nationalism. *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, 10(2), 326-343. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0217781100004439>
- Ruggiero, T. E. (2000). Uses and gratifications theory in the 21st century. *Mass Communication and Society*, 3(1), 3-37. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327825mcs0301_02
- Sabah State Archives. (1994). *The Newspaper: The public mind opener-An introduction to newspapers at the Sabah State Archives*. Sabah State Archives.
- Shoemaker, P. J. (1996). Hardwired for news: Using biological and cultural evolution to explain the surveillance function. *Journal of Communication*, 46(3), 32-47. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1996.tb01487.x>
- Simpson, C. (1994). *Science of coercion: Communication research and psychological warfare, 1945-1960*. Oxford University Press.
- Steinberg, S. (1995). *Introduction to communication course book 1: The basics*. Juta and Company.
- Tajfel, H. (1974). Social identity and intergroup behaviour. *Social Science Information*, 13(2), 65-93. <https://doi.org/10.1177/053901847401300204>
- Tiung, L. K., Othman, S. S., Nayan, L. M., & Jaymess, G. (2013). Berita bahasa Kadazandusun dalam akhbar tempatan Sabah: Komitmen *Daily Express, New Sabah*. *The International Journal of Arts, Culture & Heritage* 2, 21-44.
- Totu, A., & Mohd Yakin, H. (2014). The reception of Kadazandusun University students towards the Kadazandusun columns in Sabah's local newspapers. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 19(7), 72-80. <https://doi.org/10.9790/0837-19757280>