

## Enhancing Listeners' Social Well-Being through Radio Listening: A Qualitative Study Among Klang Valley Radio Listeners

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### ABSTRACT

Radio has been known as one of the oldest forms of mass communication. It has served its purpose of entertaining and informing people for decades. With the advancement of technology, audiences now have more ways to access an increasing amount of information. However, radio continues to play an important role in today's world. Radio is about more than just announcers, news, and music. Radio is about companionship and connecting emotionally with the listener. Previous research discovered that radio has a significant impact on people's lives. Thus, this research aims to comprehend people's preferences for listening to Astro radio stations in the current environment. Besides, it aims to explore the impact of streaming on listeners' listening experiences. This research employed a qualitative research method using focus group discussion. Thirty ASTRO radio listeners were recruited based on criteria including age, radio channel preference, and SYOK app usage. This research is expected to discover the radio listeners' motivations for listening to ASTRO Radio channels, understand the impact of the SYOK app in influencing their preference towards radio listening, and discover the role of radio content in enhancing the listeners' well-being. It is expected that the research findings obtained from the focus group discussion can provide some recommendations to improve the radio content and the SYOK app content.

**Keywords:** *Focus group discussion, radio listening, listeners, social well-being, segment.*

### INTRODUCTION

The history of radio in Malaya can be traced back to 1921, when A.L. Birch, an electrical engineer from the Johor Government, brought the country's first radio set. Two decades later, the Japanese invaded Malaya, which marked the end of British authority in Singapore in 1942. Following that, the Japanese took over and broadcast Japanese propaganda over existing radio stations in Penang, Malacca, Kuala Lumpur, Seremban, and Singapore. However, a year later, in 1943, the British restored power and recaptured the stations. Since then, broadcasting in Malaya has expanded its role, with several stations established throughout the country, including in Sabah and Sarawak (Radio Television Malaysia, 2021).

On December 28, 1963, television services were inaugurated, marking another milestone in broadcasting. On September 16, 1963, the first Radio Malaysia was broadcast to the public. The National Radio Channel, also known as Rangkaian National, commenced 24-hour services to accommodate night-shift employees such as industrial operators, wardens, hospital personnel, lorry and bus drivers, pick-up service operators, food court caterers, and security guards. Today, people can enjoy listening to public or government-owned radio stations as well as private radio stations owned by private companies.

To date, it is reported that 96% of people in Peninsular Malaysia listen to the radio weekly, with an average of 13 hours of listening time (Growth from Knowledge [GfK], 2022). In a separate report by Statista (2020), Penang has the highest listenership with 15 million, followed by Selangor with 5.2 million and Johor with 3.1 million. This percentage indicates

that the northern region leads the listenership statistics, followed by the central and southern regions.

On the other hand, these statistics could only provide us with demographic information on who listens, stressing the need for more study into people's motivations for listening to the radio as well as the purpose of radio listening in people's lives. Thus, this research is interested in exploring listeners' preferences for one of the eminent radio networks in Malaysia, which is Astro Radio. This radio network was chosen because it is Malaysia's number one radio network, with a sizable number of weekly listeners that reach 16.1 million listeners weekly. Besides, this is the only radio network that has its own audio streaming application, known as SYOK (Astro Radio, 2019). Three distinguished radio stations were chosen for this study: Radio ERA (103.3 FM), Radio SINAR (96.7 FM), and Radio HITZ (92.9 FM). These local stations were chosen as they are the number one radio stations in the Klang Valley that cater to all age groups.

Additionally, this research is interested in discovering the impact of unconventional radio platforms' audio streaming application on the users' listening experiences. The research employed a qualitative approach, focusing on focus group discussions to explore listeners' preferences and the impact of streaming on their listening experiences. Using user-focused data, the present study analyses whether radio's convergence with the internet and use of on-demand services enhance listener experiences.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Functions of Radio in Everyday Lives*

Radio has been an important medium of communication in Malaysia, besides television. Radio provides an ever-present and reliable means of communication in which it serves various functions through its programming, such as music, news, and information, and opportunities for social interaction through interviews and talk show programs. Besides, radio has the capability to inform, educate, and empower its listeners through the radio segments provided by the radio stations (Krause, 2020). Radio broadcasts give real-time information, and those that broadcast 24 hours a day may present listeners with the most recent updates. Radio has the potential to traverse boundaries and may be a vital source of information in areas where accurate news is limited (Pease & Dennis, 2018). At some points, radio can contribute to a sense of community by connecting people and assisting with social relationships (Vidal, 2019).

It is also vital to evaluate how listening affects people's well-being. Recognizing that music comprises a substantial portion of disseminated radio programming, it is important to rely on research on music listening to hypothesise on how radio listening could contribute to everyday life. Music listening is one of the most often reported leisure activities across age, race, gender, and cultural groups, and it is deeply ingrained in our daily lives (Koehler & Neubauer, 2020; Krause et al., 2015).

Based on the GfK Radio Audience Measurement Survey (RAM), the percentage of listenership reached nearly 96% of people in Peninsular Malaysia, or a high of 21.3 million weekly listeners. This represents a staggering 217,000 increase over the previous survey. Furthermore, younger Malaysians, particularly those aged 20 to 29, are listening to the radio. This year's weekly reach increased by 145,000 to 4.8 million. This is to say, young people actively choose the media they consume based on their personalities, socialisation needs, and personal identification needs (GfK, 2022).

### *Radio in Malaysia*

Similar to other countries around the world, Malaysia has two main types of radio stations: public and private. In contrast to private radio, which seeks to create profit, the primary mission of public radio is to educate the public and encourage public interest (Khan et al., 2017; Commercial Radio Malaysia, n.d.). There are 24 private and 44 government-owned radio stations in Malaysia, with stations owned by the government operating under Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM). RTM-operated stations are classified as national radio stations, state radio stations, and district radio stations. On the other hand, private radio stations exist in Malaysia to complement the government-owned radio stations. Astro Radio Sdn Bhd, formerly known as Airtime Management and Programming Sdn Bhd or AMP Radio Networks, governs the most prominent private radio stations. Astro Radio owns and manages 10 private radio stations, which are transmitted through the FM (frequency modulation) radio spectrum.

Astro Radio, the most prominent private radio station in Malaysia, has operated radio broadcasting services since 1996, with the first stations being Hitz FM, Mix FM, Light & Easy, Classic Rock, and TalkRadio. Until today, Astro Radio remained number one in all languages, with Hitz FM becoming the number one English brand, ERA becoming the number one Malay brand, MY becoming the number one Chinese brand, and RAAGA becoming the number one Tamil brand. Astro Radio had an English audience reach of 87.6%, a Malay audience reach of 71.9%, a Chinese audience reach of 71.1%, and a Tamil audience reach of 93.6% (GfK, 2022).

In this multimedia web-based world, major broadcasting services including the radio industry in Malaysia is being compelled to reinvent itself in order to remain relevant and pertinent. The listeners still prefer listening from FM Radio. However, the integration of technologies and media has made listeners expand their way of listening to digital radio. Astro Radio for example has expanded their reach and content to various social media platforms. Astro Radio is the first Malaysian radio station that has its own radio application service known as SYOK. SYOK is a multilingual entertainment app that provides listeners with access to 85 internet radio stations, a news channel, trending podcasts, and videos. This enables listeners to create interactions which encourage active participation. As a result, it enhances their listening experience.

### *Radio in New Media*

New media has a big impact on radio stations. First, new media expands the listening range of radio by removing the limits imposed by limiting frequency reception ranges (Ignatiew, 2017). In this sense, the Internet complements, if not totally replaces, FM radio (Laor, 2018). Three additional benefits are: (1) the opportunity to listen to programmes at any time, regardless of broadcast schedules; (2) the ability to listen from anywhere in most parts of the world; and (3) the flexibility to personalise content consumption. According to survey responses, listeners consider these traits as unique features of internet radio (Laor et al., 2017).

Online radio broadens a station's interactions with its listeners, who may now respond to broadcast material across several platforms and get listeners' answers within minutes of delivery. Web 2.0 interactivity offers an audience with an instant voice, which is one of radio's most important jobs (Silva et al., 2018; Sinton, 2018). Furthermore, internet radio adds a visual component to what was once a blind medium for listeners who could only hear the presenters. Digital innovations have transformed radio into a medium that is both heard and seen, with social media visuals offering viewers with a real-time glimpse into broadcast

operations and talent (Ferguson & Greer, 2018). This conventional media moved into a digital format and formed a convergence that can attract an audience's interests, especially young people (Hasrul & Bahiyah, 2011).

On-demand radio allows for personalisation. Content may be tailored to individual listeners' preferences in ways that traditional radio cannot. Despite the fact that users can engage via social media, streaming services discard any communal notions and instead focus on the desires and interests of each individual consumer (Glantz, 2016).

According to studies, on-demand and segmental listening has the further benefit of allowing individuals to pick certain bits of material based on their preferences. Customers are offered material segmentation as a time-saving strategy that allows listeners to focus on key content while filtering out irrelevant information. This is referred to as "time squeezing," because it enables the user to reduce material in time and space and tailor it to their preferences (Laor, 2022; Moshe, 2012). Because of overflow, the availability of segments and programmes on demand encourages listeners to ingest additional and fresh content (Moshe et al., 2017). Radio's range and location of operations are broadened by the diversity of access and platforms, allowing one to listen outside of its reception range and get radio content on demand. As a result, the internet may be seen as a replacement for FM transmissions, hence broadening the platform for station content distribution (del Pilar & Prata, 2017).

## METHODOLOGY

### *Research Design*

This research undertakes a qualitative approach, focusing on the focus group discussions. Focus group discussion has been chosen as this method provides a synergistic effect on participants from the group interaction (Jennings, 2005; Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014). The researchers can explore unanticipated issues within the group, get a deeper understanding of the subject at hand that would not have been learned through other methods of data collection, seek clarification from one another, and participants can subsequently change their opinions and stances as a result of interaction (Richard et al., 2021). As time is of the essence for data collection, focus groups are chosen over individual interviews as the participants can make use of the beliefs, ideas, and personal views that come to light during a moderator-led conversation that is set in an engaging environment (Richard et al., 2021). As a result, they are used to collect high-quality data in the social environment (Cyr, 2019).

### *Sample*

A sample of 30 frequent radio listeners from three distinguished radio stations, namely ERA FM, SINAR FM, and HITZ FM, participated in the focus group discussion. Based on Table 1, the participants were aged between 18 and 39 years old, with ERA FM and SINAR FM targeted for Malays and HITZ FM for Malays, Chinese, and Indians. The criteria for participants are tabulated in Table 1 below. The participants were selected using purposive sampling with the age category should be 18 years old age and above, listening to these channels - ERA FM, SINAR FM, and HITZ FM for at least 2 hours per day or 13 hours per week and must be a SYOK app user. Recruitment included the use of online tools such as WhatsApp blasts and social media postings. To ensure that all participants fulfilled the criteria mentioned above, the researchers have asked a few questions prior to conducting the focus group.

Table 1: Criteria for participant selection

Radio Station	Age Category	Target Market	Hours of listening
ERA FM	18-29 years old	Malay	2 hours per day or 13 hours
SINAR FM	25-39 years old	Malay	per week
HITZ FM	18-29 years old	Malay, Chinese, Indian	

### *Procedure*

The discussions were scheduled at a time and location suitable to the participants. Participants were provided with information about the study and consented to participate prior to the discussions commencing. Participants need to state their age and gender on the consent form in order to report on the demographic details of the sample. Key questions prompted their responses on listening practices, how listeners prefer to enjoy the radio channels, topics of listening include favourite segment, preference on talk show, favourite radio announcers and improvement they may suggest to the radio channels.

Meanwhile, the second part of the discussion involves the impact of the audio streaming application on the users' listening experiences. Several questions were asked to participants relating to the audio streaming application that was established by Astro Radio, namely SYOK. Among the key questions are channel preferences, attitudes towards SYOK, the benefits of streaming, and further recommendations to be made for SYOK.

### *Data Analysis*

The discussions were audio recorded with the permission of the participants. The discussion recording then was transcribed verbatim. A thematic analysis was employed as introduced by Braun and Clarke (2021), which refers to an analytic approach for discovering patterns of meaning in qualitative data sets. Thematic analysis is distinguished by its ability to be employed within a wide range of theoretical and epistemological frameworks and to be applied to a wide range of research objectives, designs, and sample sizes. Furthermore, when attempting to analyse a group of experiences, ideas, or behaviours across a data set, thematic analysis is a suitable and powerful tool to employ. While doing this thematic analysis, it is important to understand the definition of theme.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The objectives of study guided the development of the findings. The study's objectives are as follows: (i) to explore listener preferences when listening to Astro radio stations in the current environment, and (ii) to discover the audio streaming application impact on the users' listening experiences. Based on the data exploration, a total of seven themes were developed based on the responses obtained from the participants. The themes include channel preferences, listening routine, listening access, segment, motivation, streaming impact and recommendation. The themes are listed in the sub-section below and justified by the excerpt from participants.

### *Channel Preferences*

Participants have given their responses, indicating their preferences for the radio channel. When the moderator asked a question: "How do you listen to the channel?" Several numbers of the participants listen to the specified channel using conventional methods such as portable radios and in-car radios. According to Informant S23, "I like to listen using

conventional methods as I own a mini radio that I received as a gift. I like listening to the mini radio as it is portable". Another Informant N20 responded that she usually listens to the channel while driving in the car, "I normally listen to the channel in the morning while driving to my workplace". However, there are a number of participants who prefer to listen from the webpage and SYOK application. They listen to the channel using a webpage from the desktop as informed by Informant Q21, "I usually listen from my laptop while doing work at the office as I found it is more convenient to move around within the workspace". Further, Informant A21 added that, "I normally listen to the channel in the morning while completing my task". Informant H20 also informed, "I prefer to listen to the SYOK application as I need to move from one place to another in the office".

### *Listening Routine*

With regard to the listening routine which refers to the place and listening time, most of the participants listen to the channel in the morning, at night, and over the weekend. They listen to the channel while commuting to work, in the room, and while doing housework. Informant S23 mentioned that "I turn on the channel as I get into the car". "The channel has kept me company during my journey". Informant H20 said that "I listen to the channel in the car on the way to my workplace, especially when I catch traffic congestion". Informant M20 explained, "I listen to the radio at night before sleeping just to get in the mood". Informant N20 added that "I also listen to the radio before I doze off as I sometimes have a difficult time sleeping". However, there are participants who listen to the channel over the weekend. According to informant N19, "I prefer to listen to the channel on Saturday from my room as I am laying on the bed". Another Informant A20, "I don't want my room to be so quiet, so I turn on the radio and do my house chores".

### *Listening Access*

For listening access, participants responded that they listen from a portable radio, smartphone, desktop, and even satellite television. The majority of them stated that the device is convenient for them, which is why they prefer to listen to it. "I usually listen from my laptop... because I find it more convenient to move around within the workspace," informant Q21 says. Another informant, H20, agreed to say, "I prefer to listen to the SYOK application as I need to move from one place to another in the office, therefore this app is convenient for me". The informant S23 argues that "I choose portable radio since I can save my Internet data as I am a student". An informant, Y20, listens to the channel using the Astro television channel. The informant said, "I am working at the restaurant; hence the owner turns on the radio using the television channel".

### *Segment*

In addition to that, the moderator has asked the participants which segment they prefer. It is expected that the participants will name music or a song as their preferred segment. Informant N19: "I drive from Sentul to Kepong, so I will sing along with the singer during my driving". Informant Q21 further added, "I choose the K-pop segment at midnight as it suits my mood". Similarly, others mentioned music: informants A20 and M20 said they chose '*Carta ERA 40*' because I can listen to trendy songs". Besides naming music as the preferred segment, there are also participants who name the morning segment '*3 Pagi ERA*' as the preferred segment. Informant S23 said, "I like this segment, *3 Pagi ERA*, as it is fun. The

deejays normally do the highlights of the programme broadcast the day before, like 'Gegar Vaganza'. So, I can get updates".

Aside from music, the participants commented that they liked hearing frequent talk shows. This is because they are able to understand and comprehend the issues discussed, ranging from economics to health to education to local issues, in an informal way. Informant N19 commented, "I like the talk shows, especially when they discuss economics as it relates to us and I can learn new things aside from songs". Informant Q21 added that "I like talk shows on health as I want to learn something from the professionals in a relaxed way". According to informant M20, "discussing a recent issue on a talk show is good because I can learn something on the day". Informant H20 further agreed that, "If the radio station invites someone who is professional and prominent, then I will turn on to the talk show".

### *Motivation*

This subject discusses why individuals listen to the radio and (motivations), as well as the potential effects and advantages of listening to the radio. These were divided into a variety of sub-themes: stress release, gain information, create an atmosphere, avoid boredom, get updates with social media content and family influence.

#### *a) Stress Release*

Radio listening can become a platform to release stress. Informant N19 commented, "When I get caught in a traffic jam, I will sing along... I feel relieved and stress-free". Informant Q21 added, "I enjoy listening to music as it is enjoyable, and I don't think about my problem". Likewise, informant S23 stated that "...radio listening has relieved my stress. Sometimes, I feel so stressed while completing my assignment. When I feel stressed, I quickly turn on the song on the radio". While every participant enjoys the music on the radio, a participant known as Informant M20 stated, "Sometimes, I feel that music can make me stressful; however, after I listen to the radio announcer's voice, suddenly my stress is relieved".

#### *b) Information Seeking*

The participants agree that they are motivated to listen to the radio because they are seeking information. They stated that with their busy schedules throughout the day, sometimes they do not have time to catch up on news. Hence, they turn to the radio to seek information, especially local news. Informant N19 stated, "I am busy with my classes during the day, so I do not have time to read the news. Hence why I turn the radio on to seek information, especially related to local issues". Informant N20 supported Informant N19 stated that, "I am also busy with classes and discussions on weekdays, so if I want to know about local issues, I turn on the radio and get the news from the radio". Informant M20 noted that "I learn many useful facts from the morning segment conducted by the radio announcers as the issues they discuss are usually relatable to me".

Informant L20 commented that "I learnt many useful things from the sharing of other listeners; that is why I turn on the radio in the morning". Further, informant V20 shared that "I listen to the radio because I love to listen to talk shows on various topics. I love the information shared by the professionals and experts on the radio". Informant S23 also commented that "I like to get an update on my favourite television program, such as *Gegar Vaganza* and *All Together Now Malaysia*, hence I hook up with the channel to get the updates and highlights".

Informant P21 also stated that she listens to the radio for interesting public service announcements and news: "I listen to the radio while driving... Sometimes songs do not feel right, and you do not have a choice, so to change the songs, switch to another app... Sometimes engaging, sometimes interacting, sometimes public service announcements, sometimes news". Another informant, K22, loves the morning segment, and that is the reason for tuning to the radio: "I listen in the morning... love to hear what they are chit-chatting about, the announcements...". Another informant, V22, said, "Being informed, making a public service announcement, breaking out news, let oneself be informed by the situation". Additionally, many participants mentioned, "I was informed, and through the radio station, it was quite easy to get information" (Informant R22). "I like to get information because I travel a lot and listen to the radio to keep up with traffic" (Informant L21). Informant S23 commented, "I love the morning crew; I love to hear chit-chatting and silly jokes. Aside from that, keep up with the latest news and traffic reports to determine which roads are congested until you arrive at your destination".

#### *c) Creating An Atmosphere*

Besides stress release and information seeking, participants agree that they are motivated to listen to radio to create an atmosphere. Informant Q21 said, "I do not want my office environment to be so quiet, so I turn on the radio to enjoy the songs and listen to the radio announcers' commentary; I end up listening to the radio for three hours". Informant M21 further added that "I am starting a cookie business with my family, so I do not want the environment to be quiet". "So, I turn on the radio from my smartphone to enjoy a cheerful environment". Informant S23 enjoys listening to the radio while eating lunch, stating, "I usually listen to the radio during lunch time as I'm eating alone at the office. I do not want to be seen as a weirdo, so radio is my saviour".

Several informants, including Informant N19, Informant A21, and Informant H21, stated that they needed the radio to help them study. "While doing my assignment, I turn on the radio". One of the participants does not want to feel alone at home. Informant R39 added, "I used to listen to my kid's voice. However, when they are not at home, I tend to turn on the radio." Informant H22 further commented, "I do not have to focus on the songs; I just want to hear voices on the radio". Informant A22: "I turn on the radio in the morning on my way to work. I need voices to accompany me while driving; if not, I feel stressed". Informant F29 said, "I need to hear voices and noise to accompany my driving".

#### *d) Avoid Boredom*

Radio listening is important to avoid boredom while driving. Informant N19 informed, "There are misbehaving drivers, so when that happens, I usually sing along to avoid boredom". According to a female informant, "when there is a sharing session, I will relate my problem with the caller's problem... sometimes, this can motivate me as well".

#### *e) Family Influence*

Informant N20 informed, "I have listened to the channel since I was a child... My mom also listens to ERA FM, and I like romantic songs." Similarly, the informant M20 told us, "My mom loves to listen to ERA FM, and she switches on the channel from early morning until night time". Another informant also said that the parents have a big influence because they always turn on the TV. "I would say it is influenced by my parents". However, another informant,



A20, said that she listens to the channel because the radio announcer looks like her brother. So, that is why she is turning on the channel.

*f) Content*

Most of the informants commented that they listen to the channel as they see many social media ads promoting it. "I found that many Astro Radio channels are in vibrant colours, unlike the other radio channels, which are not so vibrant and not interesting". For Informant V21, "the other radio channel aired cliché songs; the technicality is not as good as the Astro Radio channels, like the public service announcements on Astro Radio are usually presented by celebrities". "Moreover, the simplicity of the contents categorised songs neatly...", "niche songs...", "what I like about Astro Radio is that the channel usually covers exclusive news or programming from the Astro TV program, like award shows and talk shows... additionally, verified content...", "...on occasion, I discovered that other radio channels do not update the news...". Informant L22 stated, "Astro Radio channels are relevant and suitable for different age categories. They are unique and have their own style".

*Streaming Impact*

Aside from the conventional method of radio listening, participants enjoy streaming as part of their radio listening practice. Most of the participants enjoyed the audio streaming application introduced by Astro Radio, namely the SYOK app. However, they also listen to other streaming apps like iTunes, YouTube, Spotify, and Juke. Hence, they make a feasible comparison between the SYOK app and other streaming apps. According to informant S23, "I have to download iTunes multiple times, but for the SYOK app, I only have to download it once, and then I can play the songs and other content". So, I decided to stop my iTunes monthly subscription. Informant N19 added, "Other streaming apps like YouTube have too many ads". I prefer the SYOK app because it does not have advertisements, has podcasts, heart-to-heart sessions, horror stories, etc. "I can listen from anywhere I like". In addition, listeners may build a streaming community as a result of joining the streaming app. Informant Q21 informed me that "I enjoy streaming apps as they help me with live streaming from television on YouTube". I am able to build a community... "You may find friends who share the same interest with you". More importantly, the streaming app enables listeners to personalise their content. Informant V22 explained, "We can choose what we want to hear from SYOK, Spotify, YouTube, and other apps". "Unlike conventional radio, where you can only listen to songs that are being played", "I can select the songs and skip songs whenever I want... like JUKE can get a free premium, make playlists, and play according to vibe", said another informant. "Juke's features are easier to use than Spotify."

### Improvement for SYOK Application

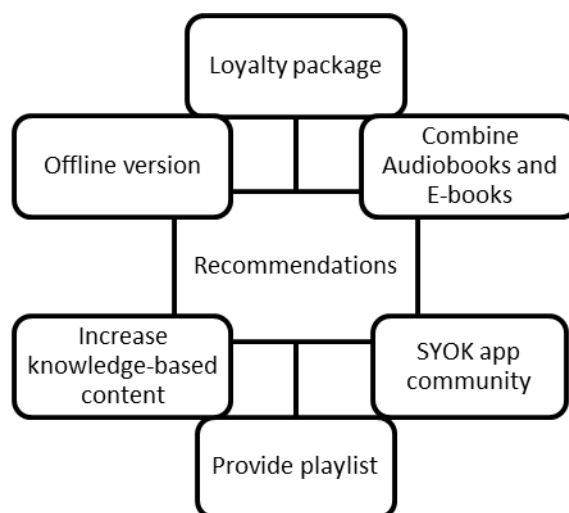


Figure 1: Improvement for SYOK application

The participants have suggested a few improvements to be made for the SYOK app. These improvements are proposed based on their experiences using several streaming apps previously. Based on Figure 1, the participants have suggested six recommendations; loyalty package, combining audiobooks and ebooks, establishing a SYOK app community, providing playlists, increasing knowledge-based content and providing offline version. Under the loyalty package, informant L21 informed, "In the future, SYOK can give coins... The coins can be used to redeem rewards". Aside from that, SYOK can create family packages similar to those offered by Spotify. "SYOK needs to add value to its usage". Other than that, informant M21 mentioned the combination of audiobooks and ebooks. "This is because most of the listeners want to read a book, but they are sometimes very busy". "Hence, this feature is good for the listener". SYOK relies on the support of its fans and community to thrive and remain relevant. Informant P23 suggested using the "SYOK" app to establish a virtual community or fan-based page. This will encourage more participation from family and friends. Similar to Spotify, it has a playlist for users to personalise their songs. According to informant K23, SYOK can also imitate Spotify by providing playlists for the listeners. However, there is also an opinion suggesting that SYOK increases knowledge-based content, whether it be on economics, politics, local issues, or even educational content. It can serve as a one-stop centre for youth to learn anything. In a separate note, it is also suggested by the informant that "SYOK can provide an offline version to the listeners". "This is the concern of people who live in rural and low-internet coverage areas".

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

To sum up, this study has outlined two research objectives, which are to explore people's preferences for listening to Astro radio stations in the current environment and to discover the audio streaming application's impact on the users' listening experiences. Referring to the first research objective, listeners prefer Astro Radio channels over other available radio channels. Although there are numerous radio channels from public and private radio stations that serve the community and are available in Malay and English, listeners prefer Astro Radio channels for a variety of reasons such as stress relief, information seeking, creating an

atmosphere, avoiding boredom, family influence, and the content. Listeners prefer to listen to ERA FM, for example, as this channel is considered one of the Top Five private radio stations in Malaysia compared to public and other private radio stations in Malaysia (Muhammad et al., 2020). Besides, the transition in media policy from protectionism to privatisation has provided a diverse choice of channels and programme genres for viewers (Pawanteh et al., 2009), and this may also reflect the listeners' wide range of choices.

Additionally, the listeners use the conventional method, whether it's portable radio, in-car radio, smartphone, or desktop, as they find it convenient. The portability of radio has been exploited to enhance listeners' listening experiences. Such practices have provided several new experiences that are relevant to today's media environment, such that they enabled listeners to create a personalised, portable, and inexpensive form of entertainment (Denevan, 2014) that they could take with them wherever they went. Furthermore, the portability of radio has redefined the radio listening context by allowing users to bring their preferred forms of entertainment with them when travelling to unfamiliar places, which has enabled more continuous media consumption habits among listeners (Cohen, 2016; Krause, 2020).

Furthermore, segmentation among listeners occurs, especially when they listen to certain segments to satisfy their needs. This refers to hit or trendy songs that have been played frequently on the radio. There are various reasons why segmentation occurs among individuals, and this reflects individual factors such as musical expertise and the qualities of the song itself (Phillips et al., 2020). Besides the songs, talk shows have become the most popular segment among listeners. The listeners rated the morning breakfast show as their preferred segment, and this is supported by the study by Cloud Radio (2022), which shows that AM shows are the most popular among full-time workers. Morning ad slots pay off significantly for many stations because of this. Because breakfast is one of the most popular times of day, stations are even ranked based on their early breakfast programming.

In terms of audio streaming impact, the SYOK application offers numerous benefits to its listeners because it is a practical app that contains 60 new online radio stations from various categories and segments (Raihan, 2021). That is why listeners mentioned that this SYOK app is convenient and user-friendly to use. Additionally, the listeners have suggested a few recommendations to improve the SYOK app service. They recommend a loyalty package, combination of audio and ebook, creating a SYOK app community, adding song playlist, increase knowledge-based content and if possible, to provide an offline version for this streaming app. With this information, Astro Radio can further enhance the listeners' listening experiences and review these recommendations as few studies reported that radio can be a successful, cost-effective and impactful platform in disseminating positive messages, whether it on education or entertainment to the listeners (Cocksedge et al., 2019; GfK, 2018; Tobin & Guadagno, 2022). As a result, radio listening as a leisure media activity can enhance listeners' social well-being.

#### BIODATA

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