

Journalism Ethics, Attitude on New Media Journalism and the New Media Readers

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Abstract

Aims: This study looks at the social media behaviour of the new media journalism readers in Malaysia for *Siakap Keli* (SK) and Free Malaysia Today (FMT). The objectives are to (1) identify the level of knowledge on journalism ethics, attitude, and the social media behaviour; (2) investigate the relationship between social media behavior and the journalism ethics knowledge of readers; and (3) to investigate the relationship between social media behavior and the attitude of the Malaysian readers towards the local online news media.

Methodology: This study employs quantitative research design using the online survey technique. A total of 397 respondents (210 SK and 187 FMT) were collected from the likers/followers of SK and FMT Facebook accounts. **Result:** The study found that FMT readers have higher level of journalism ethics knowledge, better attitude towards new media journalism and better involvement in their social media behavior than the readers of SK. In addition, the relationship between knowledge on journalism ethics, attitude and social behavior are statistically significant for both websites. However, the result show that there are slight level differences between the two news websites. **Contributions:** Theoretically, the study contributes to the field of ethics on new media journalism based on the readers' perspective rather than the usual research done on the journalistic practitioners' perspective specifically in the Malaysian settings.

Keywords: Social Media Behaviour, Journalism Ethics, Attitude, New Media Journalism, Free Malaysia Today, Siakap Keli.

Introduction

Today, the new media journalism is moving forward from the traditional media, with unique technological features from the Internet. Hence, news readers are open to select their own news sources and to react in accordance with their own interest. Moreover, the new media journalism allows readers to access a wide range of online news as the traditional media are usually restricted to mainstream news sources and under the dominance or subjected interests. The features available in the new media journalism provide readers with the opportunity to involve in social media activity such as immediate sharing, commenting, and communicating on the news they read. These features are clearly distinct with the linear features of the traditional media.

Statement of the Problem

In Malaysia, the rise of new media journalism is taking its place as a watchdog for the society. This is proven when the three largest and most influential new media journalism websites such as Malaysiakini, The Malaysian Insider and Free Malaysia Today attracted millions of page views daily for the coverage of the Malaysian 13th general election campaign (Lumsden, 2013). Scholars have also agreed that the new media journalism and social media have a huge impact on the critical social voices in Malaysia (Abbot, 2004; Lizzsea, 2015; Jalli, 2016; Seneviratne, 2007; Smeltzer, 2008).

Although there are many advantages that can be gained through the new media journalism, the risk of errors are not excluded as its orientation causes it to be far from perfect. For example, the new media journalism may not have enough fact-checking as is usually done in the traditional media (Surin, 2013). Unlike the traditional media, the new media journalism is not strictly bound to government regulations and the reporting quality may be questioned as there is usually no publication editor involved. Hence, this may result in the new media journalism to have less reporting credibility value and thus, is also concerned with the issue of ethics.

As Malaysians become well-informed with the progressive emergence of the Internet and the social media, they are prone to share and retrieve information from new media journalism based on their news interest and preferences (Leong, Azhar, Hazri & Mukalala, 2012). However, in the social media behaviour, for example, the sharing of information may not involve the readers' critical evaluation on the validity, ethicality, credibility and quality of the news provided and its sources. With such advancement, the new media journalism also leads to other unethical issues such as the dissemination of false information, rapid cascading of rumours, misinformation and questionable news quality (Ess, 2009; Friend & Singer, 2007, Vis, 2014).

With this, the study posits several questions to understand the readers' social media behaviour on new media journalism and why they choose a certain new media journalism as their preferred source of news. This includes investigating the audience knowledge on journalism ethics and their attitude on new media journalism. For this study, two most followed Malaysian new media journalism websites, i.e, Siakapeli.my (SK) and Freemalaysiatoday.com (FMT) are selected to see how readers differ in knowledge on journalism ethics as well as to examine their attitude on new media journalism and their behaviour on social media.

Significance of the Study

Studies on journalism ethics based on professionals', journalists', and editors' perspectives are popular in the journalism field but very few are made from the perspective of readers (Faridah, Mohd Rajib, & Mohd Adnan, 2000; Reader, 2015). By getting the readers' perspective on journalism ethics, the study will be able to figure out the readers' level of knowledge on journalism ethics, and to understand how ethics are important to them when selecting news sources. Theoretically, the study hopes to contribute to studies on journalism ethics and credibility of new media journalism based on the readers' perspective in the Malaysian setting.

This study stresses on an understanding of journalism ethics by pointing out the risks of the new media journalism related to the news content and to the readers' news and information distribution errors. This is because new media journalism often has less fact-checking compared to the traditional media (Surin, 2013). Other than creating awareness for the news audience, this study provides more reasons for the setting-up of journalist associations in Malaysia which could help identify and emphasise the need for ethics and credibility formality to the social media users. In addition, the quality of new media journalism reporting can also be prioritised and emphasised.

With this, the authorities or related journalistic organizations can focus on the codes of journalistic conduct as formal expressions of norms and values that will guide reporting and journalistic activities for any new media journalism portal in Malaysia (Limor & Himelboim, 2006).

Literature Review

Knowledge in Journalism Ethics

Ethics is the journalists' moral authority and goodwill in influencing readers' thoughts and beliefs (Alkhirbash, 2016; Umeogu, 2012). For this study, the universal journalism code of ethics listed by Wurff and Schoenbach (2011) is referred to see whether news readers have knowledge of the proper ethical conduct that should be practised by journalists.

In a study by Wurf and Schoenbach (2011), the quality of traditional and online journalism is assessed for a focused set of journalistic core standards. This core of standards is known as the universal journalism code of ethics as it provides basic ethics guideline for anyone who works as a journalist. Hence, the core ethics constituents or standard codes referred in this study include objectivity, protection of privacy, timeliness, fairness and transparency.

A study by Mitchel et al. (2016) report that news audience are mostly attached to the social media activity when exposed to online news. Readers are able to share, react and discuss their interests right at their fingertips at any time. However, such activities do not prove whether the readers have any idea on the ethical values of the news they put their interest in. Yet, Johnson and Kaye (2002) mention that the news audience interactive activity on the other hand, indicates the influence of news reliability, credibility and trust judged by the readers.

Previous studies also find that the ethics of the journalist is crucial to persuade and influence their readers' thoughts, beliefs, and behaviours (Baudhin & Davis, 1972; McCroskey, 1958). In conclusion, other than the interactivity features that are available in new media journalism, news' ethical value is largely considered by readers too.

Attitude towards New Media Journalism

Studies on attitude are popular among scholars, especially in the field of psychology, sociology, political science and many others as it is found that attitude helps to discover people's interests, likes, and dislikes (Petty, Haugtved & Smith, 2014). For example, Eaton and Visser (2008) stress that attitude is theoretically and practically important as it has a huge impact on behaviour and it is influenced by 1) self-interest, 2) value relevance, 3) social identification, or any combination of the three.

Attitude is also generally defined as an individual's mental position, a feeling or way of thinking that affects their behaviour (Petty, Haugtved & Smith, 2014). On the other hand, Sommer (2011) finds the background factors affecting one's attitude are emotions, experience, and knowledge, all of which make up one's personality and leads to certain behaviour.

With the definition provided, it is hypothesised that there is a relationship between the readers' attitude and their social media behaviour. This is supported by Culbertson (1988) who defines attitude as a set of beliefs that helps in deciding if something is good or bad that causes people to behave in a certain manner.

The constituents for attitude include preferences or the 'liking' of the readers for the news source. This involves constituents such as how the readers like the way the news sources present their opinions and whether or not the news source provides useful information to the readers (Heise, Loosen, Reimer & Schmidt, 2014).

However, without a positive attitude towards new media journalism, readers' activities in relation to their social media behaviour on the news they read will be less seen. With the link connected between attitude and behaviour, the researcher sees that readers' attitude may influence their social media behaviour such as sharing, commenting, and discussing the news they read.

Social Media Behaviour

Social media behaviour in this study is the dependent variable counting the readers' behaviour on their Facebook accounts. The readers' social media behaviour is influenced by the added values of new media journalism and the Internet news sources such as interactivity, hypertextuality and multimediality (Chung, et. al, 2012; Walther, et. al, 2005). These added values allow readers to interact easily and are regarded as central in current online journalism study.

With the extra features available on the new and social media platforms, readers now are able and motivated to follow public affairs as well as to contribute and share information that is public-oriented in nature (Hermida, et. al, 2012; Oeldorf-Hirsch & Sundar, 2015). This is crucial as the readers' attitude towards new media journalism encourages them to have interest and participate more in public affairs, especially through their social media account.

Hypotheses Development

As discussed, readers' thoughts and beliefs can be easily persuaded and influenced if the news they consume are considered as ethical and interactivity features are integrated. This is because ethics is defined as the journalists' moral authority and goodwill upon influencing the readers; thoughts and beliefs (Alkhirbash, 2016; Umeogu, 2012). Thus, the readers' knowledge on journalism ethics can affect their social media behaviour. Therefore, hypothesis one is developed for the study where; (H1) there is a positive relationship between knowledge on new media journalism ethics and social media behaviour.

Sommer (2011) mentions that knowledge works as the background factor for one's attitude. He explains that having background knowledge on a particular subject in advance will

determine one's attitude towards the subject beforehand. In this study, the news readers' knowledge of journalism ethics is one of the independent variables to see its relationship with readers' attitude and social media behaviour too. Having the right knowledge would develop the right attitude for readers towards new media journalism. With this, the researcher sees that readers' knowledge has influence on their social media behavior too. Hence, hypothesis two is developed where; (H2) there is a positive relationship between knowledge on journalism ethics and attitude of the readers.

Sommer (2011) also mentions that attitude affects one's behaviour. This is supported by Culbertson's (1988) definition of attitude that causes people to behave in a certain manner. Hence, with the link connected between attitude and behaviour, hypothesis three is developed where; (H3) there is a positive relationship between the readers' attitude on new media journalism and their social media behaviour such as sharing, commenting, and discussing the news they read.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The study employs the online survey technique to collect samples. To get the samples, the list-based sampling frame is used. According to Frierker (2008), conducting the list-based sampling frame is similar to conducting a traditional survey but is a more straightforward approach where the researcher requires the respondents' contact information such as e-mail address. The list-based sampling is done by logging into the Facebook accounts and collects the followers' and likers' user names from each website to get connected for data collection purpose. The samples are approached through the Facebook instant messaging application which has the same function as emailing.

Population and respondent of the study

A total of 398 respondents participated in this study consisting of 210 SK and 187 FMT's Facebook account followers. As of December 2017, there are more than 4 million fans for SK's Facebook account and almost 600, 000 likers for the FMT's Facebook account. Thus, taking into account the large population, the online survey are distributed to a total of 500 respondents, 250 followers/subscribers for each website. The news website's free access Facebook account facilitated the sampling procedure. Hence, a total of 500 followers and likers' Facebook usernames are collected through the SK and FMT Facebook account. A total of 250 Facebook usernames are prepared for each website. With the help of seven research assistants, the total response received is only 398 respondents out of the prepared list.

Instrumentation

The instruments used in this survey consisted of established and self-developed questionnaire. Section A consists of 7-items self-developed demographic questions, followed by Section B with 17 established items on the journalistic core ethics and contextual norms adapted from Wurff and Schoenbach (2011). Section C consists of 22 items on attitude towards the new media journalism adapted from Heise, Loosen, Reimer and Schmidt (2014). Both Section B and C are using the five-point Likert scale ranges from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. Finally, Section D of the questionnaire provides statements on the respondents' social media behaviour on new media journalism such as sharing, searching,

posting, and commenting. Items of this section are adapted from Delzio (2015). This section is also measured on a five-point scale ranging from 1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=regularly, and 5=always.

Scale validation

The internal reliability analysis was tested using Cronbach's Alpha. All items are tested to be reliable exceeding the satisfactory value of .70. The overall alpha scale for knowledge is $\alpha = .763$, attitude $\alpha = .966$ and social media behaviour $\alpha = .910$. The result of the internal reliability test is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Alpha coefficient of reliability analysis

Website	Section	Constructs	N	No. of items	Alpha	
SK	FMT and (Overall)	B	Ethics knowledge	397	17	.763
		D		397	22	.966
		E		397	11	.910
FMT	FMT	B	Ethics knowledge	187	17	.794
		D		187	22	.971
		E		187	11	.915
SK	SK	B	Ethics knowledge	210	17	.763
		D		210	22	.960
		E		210	11	.896
		media behavior				

Data analysis

The data collected is analysed descriptively and inferentially using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24. The descriptive statistics which include frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation, minimum and maximum values to describe the demographic factors of SK and FMT followers/likers. The researcher also uses Pearson correlation to identify relationships between the selected variables.

Results

Profile of Respondents

The present study involves a total of 397 respondents. For the overall result, the study finds that the majority respondents are female readers and aged from 26 to 40 years old. Most readers are Malays with Bachelor degree and the majority of readers are students. After splitting the data coding of SK and FMT readers, several differences between both websites readers' demographic profile are found.

The main difference is seen among readers' race where majority of FMT readers are Malays (44%) and Chinese (31%) whilst for SK, more than half of the readers are Malays (68%) and only a small percentage are of other races. In terms of education, more of FMT readers are

highly educated compared to SK where majority of FMT readers (91%) have bachelor and master degree. On the other hand, SK readers' education range are much wider as it consists of those with STPM/STAM/Diploma and SPM or lower. In terms of profession, majority of SK readers are mainly students whilst more than half of FMT followers are working (69%).

Inferential Statistics

To test the hypotheses, one sample t-test were used on the respondents' level of ethics knowledge, attitude and social media behavior. Pearson's correlation was used to test the relationship between the respondents' ethics knowledge, attitude and social media behaviour.

One-sample t-test for Knowledge on Journalism Ethics

Table 2 displays the One-sample t-test for SK respondents' (N=210) knowledge on journalism ethics with a test value of 3. The results show the highest mean score (M=4.882, SD=.353, t=77.246, p=.000) is on item B.1 "A journalist must carefully check their facts." The results also show there are four items that are negatively evaluated which are B.7, B.2, B.4, and B.9. However, there are two items that are not significant which are B.7 "Reporting does not necessarily have to be comprehensible for the audience," with (M=2.943, SD=1.453, t= -.570, p=.569); and B.11 "Protection of privacy can be excluded sometimes to provide detail reporting," with (M=3.005, SD=1.364, t=.051, p=.960). However, the overall results show t value of 32.728 (M=3.912, SD=.404, p=.000) indicating that the overall variables are significant and positively evaluated.

For SK, the data analysis finds that almost all of the respondents agree that a journalist must carefully check his/her facts, not manipulate any images or statements, hear both sides for reporting, must not provide links to harmful or illegal material and have the news sorted in accordance to their importance and values. The percentage falls to 70 per cent where readers agree on statements that information must be separated from entertainment, news must be published quickly and a journalist must not only provide news with serious news values.

Other than that, only 60 per cent of the respondents agree that protection of privacy can be excluded sometimes for detailed reporting. Noticeable differences are seen when almost 50 per cent of the respondents agree that a journalist should not include his/her opinion and facts in their reporting and it is not necessary for commercial content to be separated from editorial and for a journalist to work under his/her name.

Table 2

Siakap Keli One-sample t-test for knowledge on journalism ethics

Items (N=210)	M	SD	%	t	p
B.1. A journalist must carefully check his/her facts.	4.88	.353	97.6	77.24	.00
B.5. A journalist must not	4.87	.376	97.4	72.15	.00

manipulate any images or statements.								
B.6. A	3	4.84	.402	96.8	66.39	0	.00	
journalist must hear both sides for reporting.	3			6	3	0		
B.3. A	1	4.68	.525	93.6	46.39	0	.00	
full disclosure of news sources must be provided.	1			2	1	0		
B.14. A	8	4.54	.807	90.9	27.80	0	.00	
journalist must not provide links to harmful or illegal material.	8			6	0	0		
B.12.	3	4.53	.500	90.6	44.43	0	.00	
News must be sorted in accordance to their importance and values.	3			6	3	0		
B.8. A	6	4.47	.796	89.5	26.87	0	.00	
journalist must be transparent, showing how news coverage is produced.	6			2	9	0		
B.10.	8	4.44	.841	88.9	24.93	0	.00	
Reporting must be objective.	8			6	5	0		
B.17. A	6	4.18	.891	83.7	19.29	0	.00	
journalist must respond to audience demands.	6			2	4	0		
B.13.	8	3.94	1.18	78.9	11.60	0	.00	
Information must be separated	8			3	6	9	0	

from entertainment .								
B.16. A journalist must publish news quickly.	3	3.94	1.03	78.8	13.15	0	.00	
B.15. A journalist must not only provide news with serious news value.	9	3.91	1.17	78.3	11.35	0	.00	
B.11. Protection of privacy can be excluded sometimes to provide detail reporting.	5	3.00	1.36	60.1	.051	0	.96	
B.7. Reporting does not necessarily have to be comprehensibl e for the audience.	3	2.94	1.45	58.8	-.570	9	.56	
B.2. Commercial content is not necessarily to be separated from editorial.	1	2.58	1.26	51.6	-	4.810	0	.00
B.4. A journalist does not necessarily work under their name	2	2.56	1.30	51.2	-	4.880	0	.00
B.9. A journalist can include his/her opinion and facts in their reporting.	9	2.12	1.19	42.5	-	10.584	0	.00
Overall knowledge on	2	3.91	.404	78.2	32.72	0	.00	

journalism ethics

*5-point scale 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=slightly agree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree.

**Test value is 3.

Table 3 displays the One-sample t-test for FMT respondents' (N=187) knowledge on journalism ethics. The results show that the highest mean score (M=4.802, SD=.399, t=61.694, p=.000) is on item B.5 "A journalist must not manipulate any images or statements." The lowest mean scores (M=1.583, SD=.767, t= -25.261, p=.000) is on item B.15 "A journalist must not only provide news with serious news value." The overall result shows t value of 50.352 (M=3.990, SD=.269, p=.000). The results indicate that all items are significant with p value of .000 and are positively evaluated except for item B.5.

Similar to SK, more than 90 percent of FMT reader respondents agree that a journalist must not manipulate any images or statements, must hear both sides for reporting, carefully check his/her facts, sort news in accordance to its importance and values, respond to audience demands, and not provide links to harmful or illegal material. Contrary to SK, 78 percent of the readers do not agree to the statements that a journalist must not only provide news with serious values. This indicates that less important news should be reported to the public too.

Table 3

Free Malaysia Today One-sample t-test for knowledge on journalism ethics

Items (N=187)	M	SD	%	t	p
B.5. A journalist must not manipulate any images or statements.	4.80	.399	96.0	61.69	.00
B.6. A journalist must hear both sides for reporting.	4.80	.399	96.0	61.69	.00
B.3. A full disclosure of news sources must be provided.	4.75	.432	95.0	55.54	.00
B.1. A journalist must carefully check his/her facts.	4.73	.640	94.7	37.14	.00
B.12. News must be sorted in accordance to	4.70	.459	94.0	50.63	.00

their

importance
and values.

B.17. A 4.64 .479 92.9 47.00 .00
journalist must 7 4 5 0
respond to
audience
demands.

B.16. A 4.60 .659 92.0 33.30 .00
journalist must 4 8 2 0
publish news
quickly.

B.14. A 4.54 .757 90.8 27.83 .00
journalist must 0 9 0
not provide
links to
harmful or
illegal
material.

B.8. A 4.49 .819 89.8 24.91 .00
journalist must 2 4 4 0
be
transparent,
showing how
news coverage
is produced.

B.10. 4.49 .947 89.8 21.54 .00
Reporting 2 4 9 0
must be
objective.

B.13. 4.29 .964 85.8 18.35 .00
Information 4 8 9 0
must be
separated
from
entertainment

B.4. A 3.94 1.03 78.8 12.40 .00
journalist does 1 8 2 1 0
not necessarily
work under
his/her name

B.7. 3.81 1.15 76.2 9.656 .00
Reporting does 3 1 6 0
not necessarily
have to be
comprehensibl

e for the audience.								
B.2. Commercial content is not necessarily to be separated from editorial.	1	3.78	4	1.32	2	75.6	8.064	.00
B.11. Protection of privacy can be excluded sometimes to provide detail reporting.	5	3.68		.899		73.7	10.41	.00
B.9. A journalist can include his/her opinion and facts in their reporting.	4	3.59	1	1.25	8	71.8	6.488	.00
B.15. A journalist must not only provide news with serious news value.	3	1.58		.767	6	31.6	-	.00
Overall knowledge on journalism ethics	0	3.99		.269		79.8	50.35	.00
					2		0	

*5-point scale 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=slightly agree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree.

**Test value is 3.

One-sample t-test on attitude toward new media journalism

Table 4 displays the One-sample t-test for SK respondents' (N=210) attitude towards their news website. The results show that the highest mean score (M=3.933, SD=1.028, t=13.51, p=.000) is on item D.20 "I like how the website provides entertainment," and on item D.22 "I like how the website highlights new trend," (M=3.933, SD=.995, t=13.588, p=.000). The lowest mean scores show a non-significant result (M=3.048, SD=1.114, t= -.619, p=.536) on item D.8 "I like how the website reporting controls politics" and item D.9 "I like how the website reporting controls business" (M=3.133, SD=1.170, t=1.651, p=.100). The overall result shows t value of 13.879 (M=3.674, SD=.704, p=.000). The results indicate that all items are positively evaluated but with two non-significant items which are items D.8 and D.9.

For SK, almost 80 percent of the respondents have a positive attitude towards how the website provides entertainment, highlights new trends, gives the audience topics to talk

about, allows readers to express opinion and builds/maintains relationship with audience. The average of SK respondents who have a positive attitude towards the website is 70 percent. The percentage falls to 60 percent when respondents have to rate whether they like how the website criticizes problems or grievances, and how the website reporting controls the society, business, and politics. Controlling the business and politics resulted in a non-significant value too.

Table 4
Siakap Keli One-sample t-test for readers' attitude on new media journalism

Items (N=210)	M	SD	%	t	p
D.20. I like how the website provides entertainment.	3.93	1.02	78.6	13.15	.00
	8	6	1	0	
D.22. I like how the website highlights new trends.	3.93	.995	78.6	13.58	.00
		6	8	0	
D.19. I like how the website gives the audience topics to talk about.	3.91	.865	78.2	15.31	.00
		8	3	0	
D.5. I like how the website gives the audience the opportunity to express opinion on topics of public interest.	3.90	.864	78.1	15.17	.00
			1	0	
D.12. I like how the website builds/maintains relationship with the audience	3.90	.833	78.0	15.66	.00
		0	4	0	
D.17. I like how the website provides the	3.88	.895	77.7	14.34	.00
		2	8	0	

audience with the opportunity to maintain ties among themselves.

D.4. I like how the website concentrates on news that is interesting to an audience as wide as possible.	1	3.87	.885	77.4	14.27	.00
				2	6	0

like how the website concentrates on news that is interesting to an audience as wide as possible.

D.13. I like how the website encourages relationship to the audience.	7	3.86	.944	77.3	13.30	.00
				4	4	0

like how the website encourages relationship to the audience.

D.14. I like how the website provides useful information for the audience.	5	3.80	.966	76.1	12.07	.00
					4	0

like how the website provides useful information for the audience.

D.6. I like how the website informs the audience as fast as possible.	1	3.77	.827	75.4	13.51	.00
				2	3	0

like how the website informs the audience as fast as possible.

D.16. I like how the website points to interesting topics.	1	3.77	.981	75.4	11.39	.00
				2	9	0

like how the website points to interesting topics.

D.3. I like how the website provides people with opportunity to publish their own content.	7	3.76	.787	75.3	14.11	.00
				4	1	0

like how the website provides people with opportunity to publish their own content.

D.11. I like how the website provides people with opportunity to publish their own content.	2	3.76	.875	75.2	12.61	.00
				4	5	0

like how the website provides people with opportunity to publish their own content.

website shares
positive ideas.

D.15. I	3	3.64	.939	72.8	9.923	.00
like how the			6		0	
website acts as						
advisor/guidan						
ce to the						
audience.						

D.1. I	3	3.63	.832	72.6	11.02	.00
like how the			6	8	0	
website						
presents its						
own opinion(s)						
to the						
audience.						

D.2. I	2	3.56	1.14	71.2	7.142	.00
like to get into		0	4		0	
conversation						
about current						
events through						
the website.						

D.21. I	2	3.56	1.00	71.2	8.091	.00
like how the		6	4		0	
website reports						
as objectively						
as possible.						

D.18. I	3	3.54	.983	70.8	8.000	.00
like how the			6		0	
website						
conveys						
complex issues.						

D.7. I	1	3.37	.915	67.4	5.882	.00
like how the			2		0	
website						
criticizes						
problems or						
grievances.						

D.10. I	8	3.24	1.22	64.9	2.922	.00
like how the		8	6		4	
website						
reporting						
controls the						
society.						

D.9. I	3	3.13	1.17	62.6	1.651	.10
like how the		0	6		0	
website						
reporting						

controls business.	D.8.	1	3.04	1.11	60.9	.619	.53
like how the website reporting controls politics.	8	4		6		6	
Overall			3.67	.704	73.4	13.87	.00
attitude on new media journalism	4	8		9		0	

*5-point scale 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=slightly agree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree.

**Test value is 3.

Table 5 displays the One-sample t-test for FMT respondents' (N=187) attitude toward the news website. The results show that the highest mean score (M=4.267, SD=.996, t=17.395, p=.000) is on item D.7 "I like how the website criticizes problems or grievances," Whilst the lowest mean scores show a negative and non-significant result (M=2.957, SD=1.121, t= -.522, p=.602) on item D.9 "I like how the website reporting controls business." The overall result shows t value of 19.359 (M=3.976, SD=.690, p=.000). The results indicate that all items are significant with p value of .000 and are positively evaluated except for item D.9.

Different from SK, 85 percent of FMT respondents like how the website criticizes problems or grievances, presents its own opinion to the audience, and conveys complex issues. The FMT readers lowest attitude is on the statement of "I like how the website entertainment" and how the website controls the society and business. These lowest two items on controlling the society and business are ranked the same by respondents from SK.

Table 5

Free Malaysia Today One-sample t-test for attitude toward new media journalism

Items (N=187)	M	SD	%	t	p
D.7. I like how the website criticizes problems or grievances.	4.26	.996	85.3	17.39	.00
			4	5	0
D.1. I like how the website presents its own opinion(s) to the audience.	4.26	.688	85.2	25.06	.00
			4	7	0

D.18. I like how the website conveys complex issues.	7	4.25	.835	85.1	20.58	0	.00
D.14. I like how the website provides useful information for the audience.	9	4.20	.683	84.1	24.18	0	.00
D.3. I like how the website provides people with opportunity to publish their own content.	0	4.16	.723	83.2	21.95	0	.00
D.17. I like how the website provides the audience with the opportunity to maintain ties among themselves.	0	4.16	.794	83.2	19.99	0	.00
D.21. I like how the website reports as objectively as possible.	0	4.16	.644	83.2	24.63	0	.00
D.4. I like how the website concentrates on news that is interesting to an audience as wide as possible.	5	4.15	.917	83.1	17.22	0	.00
D.5. I like how the website gives the audience the opportunity	5	4.15	1.07	83.1	14.64	0	.00

to express opinion on topics of public interest.

D.6. I like how the website informs the audience as fast as possible. 5 4.15 9 1.07 83.1 1 14.64 0 .00

D.16. I like how the website points to interesting topics. 7 4.10 4 .836 82.1 6 18.11 0 .00

D.2. I like to get into conversation about current events through the website. 9 4.05 8 .974 81.1 0 14.87 0 .00

D.19. I like how the website gives the audience topics to talk about. 4 4.05 8 .872 81.0 9 16.51 0 .00

D.11. I like how the website shares positive ideas. 1 4.01 2 .631 80.2 5 21.91 0 .00

D.22. I like how the website highlights new trends. 7 3.95 4 .747 79.1 4 17.53 0 .00

D.12. I like how the website builds/maintains relationship with the audience 2 3.95 4 .812 79.0 5 16.03 0 .00

D.13. I like how the website encourages 7 3.94 4 .937 78.9 7 13.80 0 .00

relationship to
the audience.

D.15. I 3.90 .701 78.1 17.72 .00
like how the 9 8 9 0

website acts as
advisor/guidan
ce to the
audience.

D.8. I 3.66 1.07 73.3 8.533 .00
like how the 8 1 6 0

website
reporting
controls
politics.

D.20. I 3.60 .924 72.0 8.945 .00
like how the 4 8 0

website
provides
entertainment.

D.10. I 3.31 .956 66.2 4.436 .00
like how the 0 0

website
reporting
controls the
society.

D.9. I 2.95 1.12 59.1 -.522 .60
like how the 7 1 4 2

website
reporting
controls
business.

Overall 3.97 .690 79.5 19.35 .00
attitude on 6 2 9 0

**new media
journalism**

*5-point scale 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=slightly agree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree.

**Test value is 3.

One-sample t-test on social media behaviour

Table 6 displays the One-sample T-test for *Siakap Keli* (SK) respondents' (N=210) social media behaviour. The results show that the highest mean score (M=4.133, SD=.746, t=22.020, p=.000) is on item E.1 "I read or watch news stories or headlines from the news website posted by other people." The lowest mean scores (M=2.638, SD=1.541, t= -3.403, p=.001) is on item E.11 "I participate in discussion or debate on the news posted on the news website in the comment section." Including E.11, the results show that there are another two items that are not at the significant value and negatively evaluated. The items include E.5 and E.4.

However, the overall result shows a positive and significant value with (M=3.541, SD=.826, t=9.490, p=.000).

For SK, 80 percent of the respondents read or watch news stories from the news website posted by other people and see what trending is posted on the news website. More than 70 percent of the respondents look for interesting articles from the website, get more information, 'like' the news, and post or share the news. The analysis shows only on the average of 50 percent of SK respondents gives comments and tracks the trending of the news posted. This shows that SK respondents would look out for news that is trending and catches their interest before deciding to get for more information, 'like', and post or share the news.

Table 6

Siakap Keli One-sample t-test for readers' social media behaviour

Items (N=210)	M	SD	%	t	p
E.1. I read or watch news stories or headlines from the news website posted by other people. 3	4.13	.746	82.6	22.02	.00
E.10. I see what's 'trending' posted from the news website. 5	4.00	1.04	80.1	13.97	.00
E.9. I look for interesting articles or links posted from the news website. 3	3.93	1.10	78.6	12.19	.00
E.7. I get more information from something heard on news. 9	3.91	1.00	78.3	13.29	.00
E.8. I see what friends are 5	3.89	.992	77.9	13.07	.00

talking about on the news.								
E.2. I	3.72	1.19	74.5	8.849	.00			
"Like" the news story, headline, or story link.	9	3	8	0				
E.3. I	3.60	1.22	72.1	7.171	.00			
post or share a news story, headline, or story link I have read/seen from the news website.	5	2		0				
E.6. I	3.30	1.32	66.0	3.285	.00			
tag others on the news story, headline, or story link.	0	4		1				
E.5. I	2.91	1.47	58.3	-.798	.42			
usually do not react on the news story of the website seen on my wall.	9	0	8	6				
E.4. I	2.87	1.45	57.5	-	.22			
give comment on a news story, headline, or story link.	6	9	2	1.230	0			
E.11. I	2.63	1.54	52.7	-	.00			
participate in discussion or debate on the news posted by the news website in the comment section.	8	1	6	3.403	1			
Overall	3.54	.826	70.8	9.490	.00			
social	1	2	0					

media behavior

*5-point scale 1=never 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=regularly, 5=always.

**Test value is 3.

Table 7 displays the One-sample t-test for Free Malaysia Today (FMT) respondents' (N=187) social media behaviour. The results show that the highest mean score (M=4.364, SD=.716, t=26.055, p=.000) is on item E.10 "I see what's 'trending' posted on the news website whilst the lowest mean scores show a negative and non-significant result (M=2.888, SD=1.094, t= -1.404, p=.162) on item E.5 "I usually do not react on the news story of the website seen on my wall." The overall result shows (M=3.994, SD=.716, t=18.978 p=.000). The results indicate that all items are significant with p value of .000 and are positively evaluated except for item E.5.

Similar to SK, respondents from FMT usually see what's 'trending' posted on the website. Moreover, more than 80 percent of FMT readers post or share news on their social media account, look for interesting articles, read news posted by other people, see what friends are talking about on the news and 'like' the news. Whilst 70 percent of the respondents give comment on the news, tag others, and participate in any discussion or debate on their social media. The website respondents also react negatively to the statement "I usually do not react on the news seen." This indicates that FMT respondents are active on their social media account.

Table 7

Free Malaysia Today One-sample t-test for readers' social media behaviour

Items (N=187)	M	SD	%	t	p
E.10. I see what's 'trending' posted from the news website.	4.36	.716	87.2	26.05	.00
E.3. I post or share a news story, headline, or story link I have read/seen from the news website.	4.32	.832	86.4	21.71	.00
E.7. I get more information from	4.31	.836	86.2	21.43	.00

something heard on news.

E.9. I look for interesting articles or links posted from the news website. 0 4.31 .776 86.2 23.08 .00 7 0

E.1. I read or watch news stories or headlines from the news website posted by other people. 7 4.25 .835 85.1 20.58 .00 4 1 0

E.8. I see what friends are talking about on the news. 1 4.25 .840 85.0 20.37 .00 2 5 0

E.2. I "Like" the news story, headline, or story link. 7 4.10 1.01 82.1 14.98 .00 0 4 3 0

E.4. I give comment on a news story, headline, or story link. 5 3.77 1.32 75.5 7.978 .00 9 0

E.6. I tag others on the news story, headline, or story link. 1 3.71 1.09 74.2 8.855 .00 8 2 0

E.11. I participate in discussion or debate on the news posted by the news 6 3.63 1.14 72.7 7.578 .00 8 2 0

website in the comment section.

E.5. I usually do not react on the news story of the website seen on my wall.	8	2.88	4	1.09	6	57.7	-	2	.16
Overall social media behavior	4	3.99		.716	8	79.8		18.97	.00

*5-point scale 1=never 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=regularly, 5=always.

**Test value is 3.

Hypothesis Testing

A bivariate correlation is conducted to test whether there are positive relationships between knowledge on journalism ethics, attitude on new media journalism, and social media behaviour. Table 8 displays a table on bivariate correlations test made on the selected variables of the overall respondents (N=397), SK (N=210) and FMT (N=187). For the overall bivariate correlation result of SK and FMT, the highest total mean score is M=4.044 on knowledge on journalism ethics, followed by attitude (M=3.826), and social media behaviour (M=3.754). The highest mean score for SK is on knowledge on journalism ethics (M=3.914) followed by attitude (M=3.674), and social media behaviour (M=3.541). For FMT, the highest mean score is on social media behaviour (M=3.993) followed by knowledge on journalism ethics (M=3.990), and attitude (M=3.976).

For SK, the relationship between knowledge on ethics and social media behaviour is moderate (r=.416, p=.000), attitude and social media behaviour is weak (r=.266, p=.000) but are all significant. However, the relationship between knowledge on journalism ethics and attitude are not significant (r=.093, p=.182). On the other hand, the relationship between all variables stated in the study hypothesis are significant for FMT where the relationship between knowledge on ethics and social media behaviour is significant but weak (r=.227, p=.002), knowledge on ethics and attitude is moderate (r=.587, p=.000), and attitude and social media behaviour is very strong (r=.705, p=.000).

Table 8
Bivariate correlations between knowledge on ethics, attitude on new media journalism, and social media behaviour

Variable	Mean	SD	Knowledge on ethics	Attitude
Overall (N=397)				
Knowledge on ethics	4.044	.427	1	

Attitude	3.816	.712	r=.316, p=.000	1
Social media behavior	3.754	.808	r=.550, p=.000	r=.485, p=.000
Siakap Keli (N=210)				
Knowledge on ethics	3.914	.404	1	
Attitude	3.674	.704	r=.093, p=.182	1
Social media behavior	3.541	.826	r=.416, p=.000	r=.266, p=.000
Free Malaysia Today (N=187)				
Knowledge on ethics	3.990	.269	1	
Attitude	3.976	.690	r=.587, p=.000	1
Social media behavior	3.993	.716	r=.227, p=.002	r=.705, p=.000

Hence, the bivariate correlations result for SK and FMT shows that FMT hypotheses' variables relationships are all significant but not for SK as the relationship between knowledge on journalism ethics and attitude is not significant. Moreover, FMT correlation results are mostly strongly correlated where $.60 < r > .79$ whilst only one of SK result relationship is strongly correlated and two are weakly correlated with $.20 < r > .39$ and one is moderately correlated with $.40 < r > .59$.

Discussion of Results

For hypothesis one of the study, it is hypothesized that there is a positive relationship between knowledge on journalism ethics and attitude. This hypothesis is statistically supported with a significant and positive but weak relationship between both variables ($r=.316, p=.000$).

This finding also supports Sommer's (2011) framework on attitude where knowledge is one of the background factors that shapes one's attitude. Therefore, the findings support his idea that a background knowledge on journalism ethics will also determine the readers' attitude towards the new media journalism. The study also finds that the new media journalism readers have a high background knowledge on journalism ethics. Hence, having the right knowledge develops the right attitude towards new media journalism too.

However, the results are different when the analysis is made separately for SK ($r=.093, p=.182$) and FMT ($r=.597, p=.000$). The result shows that FMT readers' have a significant relationship between knowledge on journalism ethics and attitude but insignificant result are seen for SK readers. This indicates that SK knowledge on journalism ethics does not influence their attitude towards the website.

The study also hypothesizes that there is a positive relationship between attitude on new media journalism and social media behaviour. The hypothesis is constructed based on the classical definition of attitude by Culbertson (1988) which then are referred by many current researchers such as Heise, Loosen, Reimer and Schmidt (2014) and Sommer (2011). Culbertson (1988) defines attitude as a set of beliefs that helps in deciding if it is something good or bad that causes people to behave in certain manner.

From the analysis, it is found that there is a significant and positive moderate relationship between both variables ($r=.485$, $p=.000$). Thus, the study also finds that if the level of readers' attitude is positive, their social media behaviour activity is also levelled up. Hence, the study concludes that readers' attitude is positively related to their social media behaviours.

When analysed separately, the findings also show there is a significant relationship of the mentioned variables for SK ($r=.266$, $p=.001$) and FMT ($r=.705$, $p=.000$). The result indicates that FMT readers have a very strong relationship between attitude and social media behaviour whilst SK readers' have a significant but weak relationship between their attitude and social media behaviour.

Limitations

There are three limitations found upon conducting the research. Firstly, is the challenge to persuade respondents to respond to the survey link as they fear to receive a spam link. Hence, the researcher must be friendly, informal and tactful to persuade respondents to answer the survey link. This process cost the researcher much time upon attempting to attend to a particular respondent.

Secondly, while respondents are given the advantage to answer the survey link in their own time, the researcher has a limited time allocation for data collection. To manage this issue, the researcher needs to keep on reminding the respondents and tracking whether the communicated respondent has responded to the survey link.

Thirdly, since the researcher used her personal Facebook account to reach the respondents, the researcher faced certain challenges in communicating with respondents who may have had other intentions such as establishing a virtual or Facebook friend rather than responding to the survey link.

Since the respondents are identified from Facebook accounts, direct messages had to be sent to respondents through the Facebook messaging feature. However, Facebook will issue a spam warning notification and block the researcher for 24 hours if the interview requests link is sent up to 20 Facebook users at one time. Hence, to manage this issue, the researcher recruited 7 assistants for data collection and had them send out the survey link to not more than 10 respondents per day. It was thus that the data collection was completed within a period of 2 months.

Conclusion

The major findings of the study are the Malaysian new media readers do have basic knowledge on journalism ethics, positive attitude towards the new media journalism and

active participation on their social media account. This indicates strong relationships on all variables.

From the discussion, it is found that FMT readers are slightly more equipped in journalism ethics knowledge than SK. This is because FMT readers are mostly educated in bachelor and masters level whilst SK readers education level are much wider starting from SPM or lower. The majority of readers have a basic knowledge on journalism ethics as they at least know what a journalist is supposed to do or not do.

On the readers' attitude on new media journalism, distinct results are found where SK readers focus on entertainment and interactivity whilst the FMT readers on how the website criticizes problems and conveys complex issue. However, both websites and the overall result conclude that readers have a positive attitude mostly on the interactivity features available in new media journalism as well as its news content that suits the public and readers' interest.

In regard to the social media behaviour, it is concluded that FMT readers are more active in the social media than SK readers. The readers of FMT are more open to comment and participate in public discussions on their social media as compared to SK. However, readers from each website show a similar pattern of behaviour by looking for news that interest them before tagging, liking, sharing, or commenting. It is also concluded that the readers' social media behaviour is influenced by their, knowledge on journalism ethics, and attitude on new media journalism. This is because readers need to have a good background knowledge on journalism ethics, positive attitude towards new media journalism to be active in their social media behaviour.

In a nutshell, the study has successfully fulfilled the research objectives and proven all the hypotheses constructed to be accepted and statistically supported. However, the study is lack in detailed information on demographical factor as well as the readers' new media dependency that would provide a richer data analysis and discussion.

Recommendation for Future Study

This section provides suggestions for future research referring to the outcome of this study. The recommendation is to add new media journalism dependency and usage frequency value on the research instrumentation. Since this study focuses on the level of knowledge on journalism ethics, perception on credibility, attitude, and social media behaviour; relationships between the mentioned variables, the study does not include usage frequency as part of its research objectives and instrumentation. Adding the usage frequency may help future researchers to analyse the effect of respondents' dependency or usage of new media journalism on credibility perception, attitude, and social media behaviour too. The study has analysed and discussed the overall view of new media journalism readers. However, the study has also identified the demographic factor and level of each variable from FMT and SK. Beside the overall analysis, the study has provided a separate analysis that gives a different picture from the overall result. Hence, this becomes the study's contribution.

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