



ANALYSES

The Global Media Landscape and the Consumption of English-Language International News: 2019-2022



* Moussa Nuseibeh, Ferial Kahail, Heba Nor

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Consumers use laptops and smartphones to access news sites, primarily during workdays and during their commutes. [Al Jazeera]

Introduction

As technological advancements evolve at a rapid pace, so do the interconnections forming between diverse peoples and cultures across the globe. With increasing avenues for communication, there is thus a growing desire to develop empathetic and open-minded discourse. International news is an important medium used to inform and facilitate these conversations. International news consumption, especially through the lens of the English language as a lingua franca of our modern world, plays an essential role in the global information exchange. From informing the general public of major events as they unfold, and ensuring accountability from institutions and officials, to fostering cultural exchanges and combating misinformation, the important role of international news in a truly global society cannot be undermined.

International news refers to the dissemination of information through media platforms such as live broadcast, online articles, social media, newspapers, radio, etc., about a foreign country and/or global events. Of the approximately two billion people that are 18 and over within the surveyed markets, nearly half consume international news in the English language. Regions with a higher number of English speakers tend to have a greater concentration of consumers of international news in English. However, over time, English has also become the global standard for business and diplomacy. As a result, multilingual regions such as Europe, Africa and Asia engage with a broad range of English-language

news sources, underscoring the important role English-language networks play in shaping global narratives.

Across the markets, consistent global cultural themes emerged and shaped the results of the study. A trickle-down effect can be observed as global events affect society at national, local and personal levels. This can be attributed to the globalisation that the world is experiencing as technology becomes more intelligent, faster and more accessible. Amid this rapid globalisation emerged two key tensions. Here, we define tensions as the perceptions and reactions people have to the world around them. These perceptions then form and lead to what they desire from news content.

The first of these tensions is fear: fear of extreme bias in reporting, leaving the truth lost in the shadow of propaganda and censored messages; fear of the surge in fake news and deliberate misinformation; fear of the constant barrage of negative news coverage; and fear of missing valuable and/or essential information. These fears lead to consumers wanting more freedom. Consumers want to be granted the freedom to choose how, when and where they access international news in English in order to gain the breadth of perspective and reassurance as to the integrity of the content that they seek, especially when it comes to international news. The factual knowledge they gain will allow them to be able to form well-rounded opinions and thus combat the fears that have arisen.

This is largely driven by the need for reliable information, especially given rising concerns over bias, fake news and misinformation. Popular networks include established brands such as BBC World and CNN that have built a rapport amongst consumers over their reputable years in the industry. However, newer channels such as Al Jazeera English (AJE) have made a name for themselves amongst consumers for their high-quality journalism and are continuously building extremely loyal audiences. Loyalty and brand perception are built on factors such as top-of-mind awareness, high frequency, content quality, and the time consumers spend on various platforms.

Consequently, consumers make far less distinction between different news platforms; rather, it is about the relative depth a consumer wishes to gain on any specific topic than being wedded to specific platforms. This makes standing out amongst other brands and building a loyal audience base more difficult. Thus, a news network needs to remain diligent in delivering in-depth coverage, maintaining consistent accessibility, and building trust with their audience. This report will first break down the global themes emerging in international news in English consumption before delving into consumption habits by region. It will highlight the cultural contexts of the various respective markets; the similarities and differences between their platform and content consumption; their needs from news providers; and how consumers map the international news in English market based on their perception of various brands.

Methodology

This study was conducted between 2019 and 2022 jointly by Al Jazeera Media Network's Research and Insights section and Nielsen, with a sample size of over 92000 people. Utilising quantitative and qualitative research methods in five continents (Asia, Africa, Europe, North America, and Oceania) and 28 markets (Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Ghana, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Kenya, Malaysia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Singapore, South Africa, Sweden, Taiwan, Tanzania, Uganda, the United States of America and the United Kingdom), the surveys and focus groups were carried out over the course of three phases. The qualitative focus groups served as a discovery phase, the group interviews highlighting consumer opinions on English-language international news brands, their consumption patterns, and what drives them to consume.

The quantitative surveys were split into two phases due to scope and size. The market sizing phase outputs included but was not limited to demographics, news content access and preferences, brand awareness funnels and consumption, English language proficiency and preferences, and preferred presenter and studio attributes. The final phase rounded out the study with the creation of audience segmentations using psychographic statements, hour-by-hour and day-by-day viewership on television, and an evaluation of different brand elements.

Global cultural backdrop

This study was conducted prior to recent global political and social events, including the ongoing Israeli aggression against Gaza, the mounting climate crisis, and the re-election of Donald Trump as the 47th President of the United States. Additionally, over the course of the study, the world experienced an unprecedented global health crisis with the rapid spread of COVID-19 and the ensuing pandemic lockdown. News cycle topics such as Brexit (a common issue mentioned in several markets) may as a result seem outdated. However, many of the cultural and societal phenomena highlighted are not merely isolated incidents but concerns that developed over an extended period of time, and which only continue to grow as populations rise, technology constantly advances (e.g. as artificial intelligence), and far-right politics progressively gain more traction. This section explores the role news plays within society, and how cultural events can mark shifts in the way consumers engage with English-language international news.

Government and corruption

The rise of political, specifically right-wing and authoritarian extremism has spread rapidly due to influential markets such as the United States of America. Notably, in Asian and African markets such as Uganda and Hong Kong, there is a sense that government leaders are working for their own agendas, with a notable lack of transparency and accountability. This sentiment echoes in nations like the United States and the United Kingdom. In the case of the United States, Trump represents the rise of populism

and is a major driver in pushing for more extreme political agendas, especially through the perceived control of conservative networks such as Fox News.

Media cynicism

Many markets have come to distrust news channels outright, leading to cynical outlooks where consumers are continuously scrutinising news networks, their reporting and their sources. Western news (i.e. news originating from prominent and influential markets in regions such as Western Europe, Northern America and Australasia) is perceived to dominate the news cycle and create unfair and irritating bias. This is especially communicated from consumers in African and Asian markets but also highlighted in Europe as an issue hindering global news coverage. Consumers in African markets, however, have consistently mentioned that brands such as AJE report African affairs in a more objective, positive light and provide better coverage.

Additionally, fake news and manipulation has eroded trust in mainstream news media. It has created an overwhelming sense of powerlessness, leaving viewers to struggle to decode and decipher the truth from bias and misinformation. But mainstream news is not the only culprit. Social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are cited as being main drivers of the spread of fake news as well.

At the same time, consumers are also wary of overly controlled news environments. In markets with strong state control — particularly in parts of Africa and Asia as well as in places like Hong Kong and Poland — people often express concerns about government censorship and propaganda. As a result, there is a clear desire across many regions for more transparent, unbiased and independent news coverage.

Dominance of negativity

Across markets, there is a general sense that global news is dominated by politics, often at the expense of more relevant local events happening simultaneously. This fuels a desire for more diverse local and national stories to redress the balance. In that vein, consumers across the markets state that positivity and optimism are not reflected in the news. In markets such as Nigeria, Canada, Kenya and South Africa, consumers tend to find that the news focuses on negative events that might cast a negative light on a certain region. Soundbites and an ‘always on’ culture exacerbate the sense that audiences are being barraged by a constant stream of negativity, leading them to desire and seek lighter content such as but not limited to inspiring humanitarian stories, sports, celebrity news or educational documentaries.

Global climate disasters

Climate change and environmental activism are emerging as key issues of interest. International news in English consumers in Europe, the United States and Australasia have mentioned the ‘Greta’ (as in Swedish environmental activist Greta Thunberg) phenomenon in raising awareness and concern over

the issue. Many are thus keen on ensuring they receive the full facts and a well-rounded perspective to make informed decisions on personal actions. There is more overt interest in European markets, but also a global sense that there is a need to see all sides of the argument (on climate change) and what actions need to be taken for personal accountability. This is especially true in the case of sustainability (i.e. recycling, reducing plastic usage, ethical shopping, etc.). In the case of natural disasters, highly mobile or migratory international populations need up-to-the-minute news on what is happening back home, especially in Asia, Australia and New Zealand.

Economic stability

Brexit is another burgeoning issue consistently brought up during focus group conversations, most notably in European markets but also in Asian and African markets. The United Kingdom's exit from the European Union launched a chain reaction that has implications on trade agreements and economic opportunities elsewhere. However, markets such as South Africa and Hong Kong mention that news on Brexit has become boring with the constant stream on the subject in news cycles.

India, Hong Kong and some African markets such as Tanzania, South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria show greater interest in future trading partners and the financial markets. This is a direct result of foreign trade being fundamental to their economy and fuels their desire to be updated on the latest information on a local and national level. Nevertheless, African markets are especially concerned about their status on the world stage and are keen to know how others see them. In terms of international news in English content, they feel that channels focus mainly on political insecurity in the region, the spread of diseases such as Ebola and HIV, famine, and poor infrastructure and delivery of services.

Terrorism, religious extremism and xenophobia

Xenophobic attacks have heightened concerns around personal safety. This is a broad theme across markets but is heightened in countries such as South Africa and Bangladesh where it has become a dominant issue (at the time of the study). Consistent reporting of "terrorist" attacks throughout the world by English-language international news channels is driving fear and suspicion towards Muslim communities. While this is an international issue, it is felt more strongly where there have been plenty of and/or recent terrorist attacks. Consumers in countries like Kenya, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, France and the United States all seek to be informed on approaches to self-protection.

The cultural contexts shaping the current societal landscape impacts people's perceptions of and needs from international news, including that in the English language. One can think of the two tensions as a consistent cycle. As consumers develop fears, whether from lack of objectivity due to bias or simply of missing essential information, they will seek ways to free themselves through reliable access to credible news sources.

News consumption behaviours

The study shows that access to news across multiple platforms being available anywhere and at any time is not just a desire but an essential need nowadays. However, news means a multitude of different things to different consumers. Primarily, news is thought of as breaking news headlines, in-depth articles and current affairs programmes. News can also include traffic and weather, sports, investigative journalism, documentaries on newsworthy topics, fashion, culture and travel, or celebrity gossip and entertainment. The study reveals that news should be seen as access to layers of information, rather than silos to be consumed separately.

Top level information such as news headlines can be consumed, on average, in under 5 minutes, which means consumers desire short, brief formats meant for quick glances and soundbites. Mid-duration formats last largely between 5 and 20 minutes and can include more in-depth articles and short videos on topics. Nevertheless, in-depth content is saved for English-language international news content made for longer formats that are longer than 20 minutes. This can include current affairs programmes, documentaries, political debates, etc.

Simultaneously, how English-language international news audiences consume is driven by other factors. The first of which is time, both the time they actually have as well as the time they want to dedicate to that item of news or programme. Another driver towards English-language international news consumption is the availability of stable internet access. For example, in Ghana, a densely populated city such as Accra will see higher news app usage due to better internet and mobile data services versus a more rural city such as Kumasi that sees heavier television consumption at specific times due to the use of subscriptions and/or free-to-access channels. This can also be observed in the Philippines, where Metro Manila sees heavier subscriptions to mobile data plans whereas consumers in Angeles City lead a more slow-paced lifestyle.

English proficiency also plays a key role in how consumers engage with international news in English. Native speakers are less likely to struggle understanding difficult terminology or accents, whereas non-native English speakers might prefer the use of subtitles and simple language. Some consumers may have a personal stake in following English-language international news because they are immigrants, for example, who want to stay informed about events in their home countries. In this way, international news in English is a way to stay connected with loved ones and friends abroad.

Additional factors influencing news consumption include age and gender. The study found that in African and Asian markets, men tend to engage more with 'hard news' - i.e. coverage focused on serious topics like economics, politics, war and their societal impacts - while women showed greater interest in 'softer' news, often described as lighter or 'info-tainment'. However, Pakistan emerged as an outlier: women there reported using knowledge of international news as social currency, motivating them to stay informed about current affairs.

There are key differences to note between older (35+) and younger audiences (18–24) in their consumption of English-language international news. Within younger demographics, smartphones and social media (mainly Twitter, YouTube and Facebook) play a significant role in their daily consumption habits. For consumers between the ages of 18 and 24, social platforms are their top avenues for accessing international news in English, followed by websites and video streaming sites such as YouTube. For consumers between the ages of 25 and 34, social platforms and websites are also their top platforms for accessing English-language international news, but video sites fall behind as television comes in as the third top platform. This can be attributed to younger generations growing up in an ‘always on’ era, in which not being up to date on the latest at anytime, anywhere can lead to feelings of missing out. Younger audiences also tend to be more critical and scrutinise the content they do consume as they have viewed more extensive sources.

Older audiences are still likely to consume international news in English through traditional means (e.g. television as well as newspapers and radio), but social media does play a large role in their lives as well. For those of the ages 35–44, television dominates as the top platform they use to access English-language international news, followed by websites and social platforms. For the oldest of this demographic (45–55+), television and websites are consistently the more popular ways to access international news in English; and print news such as newspapers is more preferred than social platforms (especially for those 55+). If older demographics are using social platforms, Facebook is the social media platform this group of consumers engages the most with. Older consumers are also likely to be more structured in their consumption and have awareness of programme schedules, particularly in African markets. They are also more impacted by gaps in English language proficiency, which affects what they choose to watch.

However, it is important to note that consumers do not consciously differentiate between linear and traditional consumption through a television screen or digital platforms such as through social media. The only concern consumers have is getting the content they wish to see anytime they wish to see it, because content is what media outlets produce—not platforms, which are utilised for the purpose of distribution. English-language international news plays a significant role in meeting consumer needs throughout the day. It is thus essential for a channel to tailor and customise content to meet consumer lifestyle and behaviour habits, allowing them to find whatever they need whenever they wish to see it and no matter the platform.

For example, in the morning, the television might be on in the background while a consumer prepares to leave for work or school. They might check smartphone alerts or have a quick scroll through social media, but content must be bite sized—an overview to get up to speed and that can be consumed with minimal, conscious effort. Consumption of English-language news during commutes can be more varied depending on the market. The United Kingdom and other markets with extensive public transport

systems will likely have more consumption happening via handheld devices such as smartphones and tablets.

Markets such as the United States, New Zealand and Nigeria suffer from extreme traffic in congested cities. So, consumers in these countries might be more inclined to turn on the radio or connect their phone through Bluetooth to listen to a podcast. Podcasts are especially popular in Sweden, Ireland, Canada, Australia and Hong Kong. Consumption during commutes is more active, but consumers are still looking for short, mid-duration formats with the ability to click through longer information if they have time to dive deeper. This is dependent on commute time.

Throughout the day, while a consumer is at work, push notifications can alert a consumer to the latest headlines and international news stories. When on break, they can peruse websites on their laptops for more information to educate themselves about the details. Workplace television screens often play news channels as well. During this portion of the day, consumers are open to and are looking for more detail, including differing perspectives to begin forming their own opinions on a particular news topic.

Television plays a bigger role in the evening as consumers have more time to actively watch and engage with news. Consumers watch their preferred news channels first before looking for other perspectives or unique programmes. However, in markets such as Malaysia and Taiwan, English proficiency often affects family viewing and limits appeal of longer formats since older demographics may not be as proficient in the language. At the same time, non-native English speakers tune in to international news in English as a means of practicing their skills now that they have the time to concentrate. Evenings are for seeking more extensive coverage and discussions on key issues due to the time available.

Television consumption

Television consumption still plays a role for many consumers globally. For more prolonged viewing, especially of in-depth programmes, on-the-ground coverage and documentaries lasting longer than twenty minutes, televisions are still the go-to platform as they provide a more relaxed viewing experience. Consumers will turn to flipping through English-language news channels whenever there is a major breaking news to keep up with the latest information, or to hear different perspectives. Televisions do not rely on Wi-Fi or data installations, which is important for some African and Asian consumers. Well-known brands that have a longstanding heritage in these markets continue to primarily be consumed through television screens. Newer brands such as AJE see extreme loyalty within their consumers, particularly in African and Asian markets, who highlight that AJE's content and coverage of their affairs has been more objective and engaging.

However, barriers to television consumption of news include either limited or no access due to having to share one screen with multiple people in a household according to some consumers. Television channels, being linear in nature, are restricted to a set schedule and cannot delve further into topics of

interest at will, which makes curation difficult. Also, frequent power outages in some markets mean television consumption of news can be limited. Moreover, the lack of supportive text such as subtitles can create difficulty in understanding for non-Native English speakers. Nevertheless, television remains a popular platform for consumption.

Digital consumption: Smartphones, news apps, YouTube and websites

Providing English-language international news content through digital platforms has become a necessity in this day and age. For many, smartphones essentially serve as another limb; and it is difficult in most markets to find a consumer who is not using their phone throughout the day. Headlines, short reads, videos and podcasts tend to be most consumed via smartphones. However, in some markets like Nigeria where data costs are high, consumption preferences lean towards reading text through apps or a website. Social media plays a key role globally, where headlines and bite sized information can be consumed both passively and actively via Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Facebook.

News apps tend to have higher appeal in markets such as Singapore, Malaysia, India, Nigeria, Ghana and Canada, for example. They are less popular among younger European audiences and in markets like Indonesia, Pakistan, Philippines, Uganda and Tanzania. For most, the major barrier to using news apps is concern stemming from storage space on phones, which consumers value highly. Consequently, consumers are likely to only download English-language news apps of brands they are loyal to, if they download any at all.

YouTube has become a major player for English-language news consumption over the past decade. It is used for live streaming all over the world, but especially in Asia and Africa, and can be viewed on-the-go. It provides both short (less than 10 minutes) and long-form content (30 minutes and above), so consumers can choose between watching quick snippets for updates on a topic or longer documentaries of their interest at their leisure. YouTube, using its 'recommended for you' algorithm, provides the latest content of interest to consumers. As a result, there are no restrictions to how or when a consumer watches the news. YouTube is completely accessible and free to use when on Wi-Fi and can be more engaging than text-based platforms because it has visuals to aid comprehension.

Laptops and PCs play the biggest role in a work or study environment and are primarily used to keep on top of English-language international news throughout the working day. Students are likely to use laptops for news websites when conducting in-depth assignments. For example, a history or international relations student may use articles breaking down historical events and/or policies as sources in their papers. An economics or business student will turn to Bloomberg or CNBC for financial news to inform their work. Laptops are also used to watch longer-form content such as documentaries instead of televisions; and the portable nature of laptops means consumers can watch content from wherever they are comfortable.

The core benefit of websites is that they allow individuals to control what they consume and when. Additionally, English-language international news websites are often seen as credible sources that not only provide the latest headlines, but also educational breakdowns of topics and major events. For example, the topic of Brexit can be seen as confusing or complicated. Articles can break down the political and economic jargon utilised, as well as give readers a background. Consumers use laptops and smartphones to access websites, primarily during workdays and during their commutes if time allows. The use of websites is often prompted by push notifications or when scrolling through social media. Credibility plays a large role in website engagement, as brands consumers see as credible or established will be used as a reference compared to other news sources.

Other means of consumption

The consumption of English-language international news through platforms such as radio and newspapers has declined with accelerated technological advancements. Radio is seen as outdated in a climate where visual content is much preferred. Audio alone means that consumers with limited English proficiency will have a harder time comprehending what is being said without visual cues or subtitles. Radio is primarily used for local content such as news bulletins as well as traffic and weather updates to be listened to on commutes or as background noise, though it remains popular amongst older demographics and in markets such as Poland. Podcasts are an emerging platform for English-language news consumption, and are seeing increased popularity in most European markets, the United States and Canada, as well as some Asian and African markets such as Singapore, Indonesia and South Africa.

Newspapers and print media play a minimal role in English-language international news consumption. Despite that, they still play a role among older audiences usually for local content and in markets such as Sweden, India, Ghana and, to a lesser extent, Singapore. In Sweden and Ghana, for example, newspapers are still delivered to some homes that are more comfortable with traditional forms of media. In India, newspapers still are a popular source of local news, especially since there is a general sentiment that newspaper brands tend to be less biased than the television channels.

A global society will always have an equally varied and fluid perception and consumption of international news in English, displayed by the diverse methods of consumption. Technological advancements spotlight the ever-growing importance of digital sources and having a presence online, but that does not mean linear means of consumption such as television should be neglected. Consumers desire accessible content. If they catch a news bulletin on the television before heading to work, they want to be able to go on social media or on their preferred news website and find additional information about that topic. If they cannot find what they are looking for, they will seek it elsewhere; and a news channel's credibility can be lost if it is inconsistent.

Engagement with English-language international news

Fundamentally, consumers of English-language international news seek out brands that are accessible, unbiased, trustworthy and empowering all to overcome their anxieties and fulfil their desire for freedom. To that end, five consistent themes emerge across markets in terms of what people seek from English-language news brands: accessibility, impartiality, relevance, inspiration and a positive balance in news cycles.

First, English-language news brands must be easy to find across all platforms. It must not discriminate or be difficult to engage with for people of all levels of education and English proficiency. This is crucial to building both credibility and awareness. Moreover, it is vital to offer long and short form reading and viewing formats to best deliver to different consumer needs across a multitude of devices and platforms throughout the day.

Second, reporting and content must be objective and free from political bias, sensationalism or the over-sanitisation of reality. At the same time, content should feel distinct to the consumer, with a unique personality that sets it apart from other competitive brands. Trust can only be built through consistently unbiased and impartial content. This includes being first on the scene and in the thick of events—something brands like AJE are praised for in several markets, as it shows audiences that these reporters are unafraid to uncover the truth, even in hazardous situations.

Third, for a news channel to gain loyal consumers who engage with English-language news content on a frequent basis, the content must be locally relevant but with a global reach to build a genuine sense of connection with them. Put simply, consumers prefer content that provides a lens on the world but also offers perspective on how this will impact them on a local level. To call back to an earlier example with Brexit, though the subject matter is focused on the United Kingdom, the ripple effects can be felt globally in local and national trade, economy and immigration. Striking a balance between being truly global yet still relevant is especially important for markets underrepresented in Western news sources such as Africa and Latin America.

Fourth, many consumers seek inspiration and education through their consumption of news, viewing it as a way to broaden their knowledge with fresh topics and perspectives. Knowledgeable, trustworthy and charismatic presenters create a strong hook, encouraging people to engage more frequently with an English-language international news brand. The voices of ‘ordinary people’ and human-interest stories highlight the impact of events on all levels of society, and consumers are eager to hear what these voices have to say, especially when they are overlooked by other well-known channels.

Finally, consumers want international news brands in English to also champion good news and positive stories. Too often, news channels are filled with a constant stream of negative news cycles, which can be off-putting and depressing. Balancing this with light-hearted content that highlights hopeful events and the positive impacts of humanity during serious situations can uplift viewers. Across markets, human-interest stories and the voices of ordinary people are subjects consumers actively seek. By

improving the viewer experience – accentuated with creative animation and infographics – news brands can foster a sense of fulfilment and optimism. As a result, consumers are more likely to engage with the brand more frequently if these needs are met.

Brand elements

When identifying key metrics to gauge how well an English-language international news brand compares to its competitors, this study utilised three key elements: Brand Attributes (objectivity, altruism, analysis and news rigour, and storytelling), Journalistic Attributes (impartiality, accuracy, independence and accountability) and Brand Pillars (courage, humanity, depth and diversity). Each element is defined by its sub-elements, which are created using a set of statements used to identify whether or not consumers feel English-language international news brands are meeting expectations.

Among the Brand Attributes, objectivity and the level of analysis and news rigour stood out as the most highly rated sub-elements, on average, across top international English-language news brands. Objectivity is defined by whether consumers perceive a news brand as unbiased and as helping them understand multiple sides of an issue. Analysis and news rigour are reflected in whether the brand offers in-depth analysis of facts and information, as well as investigative, ‘hard’ news. For an international English-language news brand to be positively perceived in terms of Brand Attributes, it must be seen as both objective and deeply analytical in its coverage of global events.

Turning to Journalistic Attributes, accuracy and impartiality emerge as key indicators of excellence among international English-language news brands. Impartiality refers to providing a well-rounded view of events and representing all sides of a story fairly. Accuracy is defined by whether facts are thoroughly checked and verified before publication. These attributes align closely with the highest standards seen in Brand Attributes and highlight the critical role of trust and credibility in an era of widespread concern about misinformation.

Within the Brand Pillars, humanity and depth are, on average, the most valued sub-elements for English-language international news brands to meet. Humanity involves highlighting the perspectives of people directly affected by events and helping audiences understand the challenges others face. Depth refers to providing background information and expert insights that place current events in the proper context. Together, these elements underscore the importance of content that not only informs but also empowers – content that inspires, educates and makes a meaningful impact on audiences. International news brands that prioritise in-depth human stories are therefore more likely to score higher in their Brand Pillar perceptions.

Consumer segmentations

The third and final phase of this study focuses on the creation of distinct consumer segmentations (or personas). From a list, participants in the study selected the psychographic statements – statements

that give thorough insights into their lifestyles, behaviours, core values and consumption habits – that they felt most represented who they are. Examples include but are not limited to:

1. I don't trust media that is controlled by governments.
2. Following my religious values is very important to me and how I live my life.
3. I have the courage to act when I see racial discrimination.
4. I need to follow international news every day.
5. Freedom of speech facilitates too much harmful fake news.
6. My opinions help others understand what is going on in the world.

These psychographic statements, developed with input from psychologists and sociologists, became the defining features of the segments, moving beyond traditional distinctions such as age or gender. Consumers were instead grouped by shared characteristics, such as being progressive or conservative, influencers or followers, or news sceptics versus news “junkies”. Each segment is further defined by top markets where they are found, the average time they spend consuming English-language international news, their preferred brands and content types, their level of English proficiency, and their motivations for accessing English-language news. These segments are not only diverse and nuanced, but also offer practical value for strategic, data-driven decision-making whether for brand marketing or editorial content production.

English-language international news: A window to the world

Journalism and international news have long been vital in informing the public about global affairs and their impact on the world, and vice versa. In today's fast-paced, on-the-go lifestyle, content customisation across platforms is essential for sustained engagement, encouraging consumers to spend more time on these platforms without missing critical updates. However, this can only be achieved if brands expand their reach and visibility in an increasingly competitive market. To foster greater loyalty and positive brand perceptions, news content must be balanced, accessible and impactful in consumers' daily lives. Brands must combat misinformation with facts and objectivity, remaining impartial in an increasingly polarised world. Consumers will pledge loyalty to brands that exhibit courage in their coverage, speak truth even when it is difficult, and empower individuals to become well-informed and educate others.

***Moussa Nuseibeh**, Team Leader and Research Designer at Al Jazeera Media Network's Research & Insights, Global Brand & Communications Division.

***Ferial Kahail**, Senior Researcher at Al Jazeera Media Network's Research & Insights, Global Brand & Communications Division.

***Heba Nor**, Researcher and Writer at Al Jazeera Media Network's Research & Insights, Global Brand & Communications Division.