News Consumption among Young Libyan Adults: Are New Satellite TV News Services Displacing Local TV News?

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between Libyan university students' consumption of Libyan and international Arab satellite TV news services and their perceptions of gratifications received from these news services. A self-completion questionnaire survey was administered to a sample of 400 university students that asked about the news consumption habits, reasons for watching specific TV news services, and personal details. The findings revealed that time spent with local TV news was negatively related to reported use of international TV channels. Students said that they got less news than they desired from local TV, especially the long-established *Al-Jamahiriya* TV channel. The data indicated that the new satellite broadcast international news service, *Al Jazeera*, played an important role in serving these young Libyans with the types of information they need. The findings are discussed in relation to the growing impact of international satellite broadcast news services and the need for local TV news services to find ways of making themselves distinctive in a way that provides an alternative but still relevant and valued news source.

Introduction

Television has long been seen as one of the most important sources of news for media consumers around the world.[i] One reason for this is that televised news is trusted more than most other news sources.[ii] The importance of televised news, however, can vary with the type of news being considered. In the United Kingdom, for example, annual surveys of public opinion have consistently confirmed the prominence of television as a primary source of international news. At the same time, it has emerged rarely as the dominant source to which people say they turn for news about local and regional community matters.[iii]

The importance of news, whether obtained via television or from other media, has also been found to vary among different age groups. Even televised news fails to attract the interest of young people who often claim to follow the news only when something of particular relevance to them is happening.[iv] In fact, a majority of young adult viewers aged 16 to 24 years (64 percent) in the UK have been found to say that televised news has no relevance for them.[v]

Given wider concerns that television is losing its way as a major news service[vi], it is apparent that if this medium is to capture and cultivate young people as news consumers it must cater to their tastes and priorities and do this both in terms of the types of news being presented and also in the way that news is presented. One other factor underpinning this observation is that with the emergence of the Internet, which is highly popular among young people not only as an entertainment source but also as a news source[vii], the conclusion that young people simply do not like news is ill-founded. Instead, the challenge for television is to find a way of making news more interesting and relevant.

This paper examines the link between university students' consumption of news media and their perceptions of different news sources in Libya. In this country, the news landscape has undergone significant changes in the past few years. Most notably, these changes have been manifest in the shape of new international news services transmitted via satellite television. These services originate both from outside and within the Arab world. Perhaps the most prominent among them is the Qatar-based and Qatari-financed *Al Jazeera,* which has been instrumental in creating an authoritative news source that can compete on equal terms with major non-Arab international services such as those provided by the BBC and CNN.[viii] According to some writers, these new Arab news channels have cultivated a fresh

sense of community across disparate local and national Arab news audiences.[ix]

 In Libya, new international Arab TV news services have been introduced that have captured the attention and interest of young news consumers. One important question that arises from these developments is whether these new televised news services have pulled viewers away from the longer-established local TV news services. To investigate this question, the study reported here was constructed to examine the news consumption behaviors of young Libyans at university and the reasons that underpinned their attraction to specific news services.

TV News in Libya

Libyan TV services began in 1968, using human and technical resources co-opted from radio broadcast services.[x] Tripoli and Benghazi were the only two areas initially covered by television broadcast transmissions. After the political system changed in September 1969, the Libyan media, like other social institutions, went through a period of change. As a result all media and their employees had to follow official government policies. Local media were accorded special importance because they were seen as useful tools to develop society and to inform the public about new political targets.[xi]

From 1990, satellite TV was introduced and offered Libyan viewers a more diverse range of programs, which they readily adopted. The Libyan government permitted the spread of satellite TV reception equipment. These new channels quickly attracted local audiences and supplanted local TV services in public affection. The widespread popularity of satellite TV channels also meant that Libyan people generally obtained more of their news from these channels than from local TV services. Even when local services were available on the same satellite technology platform as international services, the latter commanded far greater audience shares.[xii] The Libyan news services which faced the brunt of this challenge from abroad were those provided by the two Al-Jamahiriya channels and by Al-Shbabiya TV. The current study will focus in particular on the reported patterns for consumption of these televised news services and the relationships between reported consumption of international and local TV news services.

Understanding Key Drivers of News Consumption

It is not enough to demonstrate that one news service can command bigger audiences than a rival service. We also need to try to understand the reasons. One possible approach is to investigate the reasons people give for their news media preferences. There has been a longstanding interest among

media scholars in examining how people choose between different news media sources.[xiii] Research on this topic has revealed that media consumers utilize different news media platforms for different purposes and they have different rationales for choosing news from different media sources. The uses and gratifications model has been prominent over many decades in allowing media researchers to conceptualize and investigate audiences' media consumption motives.[xiv] Audiences' motives have not only been measured to try to predict broad media cosumption choices but more usefully perhaps in relation to understanding why people may turn to one source over another for news on specialist subjects such as politics[xv] or sport.[xvi]

The current study will focus on news consumption habits among Libyan students. Although it did not yield a representative sample of the Libyan news viewing public, this approach is consistent with a number of other studies of audience motives that have also used student samples. Henke investigated patterns of news media consumption and examined the role of CNN in the news media choices of college students.[xvii] Parker and Plank studied the media habits of college students by emphasizing the three areas of information search, media habits and motivations.[xviii] Respondents were asked where they obtained most of their information and where they could check multiple information sources. Predictably, it was found that students were abandoning established media in favor of the Internet as an important source. They drew attention to the rising importance of the Internet as a source of information and as a job-seeking tool. Research in Kuwait found that young people made complex judgments about media content sources and chose news media services in relation to the specific gratifications they expected to obtain in each case.[xix]

Prior research has indicated that student samples can be useful in the context of understanding the political and current affairs socialization of young people.[xx] Although, as we noted above, young people often outwardly display little interest in mainstream news, this does not mean they possess no interest at all. The relevance of news to their lives and possibly also whether the news is presented in a way that attracts their interest can be critical factors.[xxi] Marghalani, Palmgreen and Boyd indicated that a sample of Saudis demonstrated that 'religious beliefs', 'western commercialization', and counter-culture content are main factors keeping people away from some satellite TV channels.[xxii]

News consumption in Libya

News can be obtained in Libya via newspapers, radio and television. Newspaper readership in Libya is lower than in many other Arab countries. Newspaper production is limited and press journalism does

not carry much professional status, below that of broadcast journalism. Radio broadcasting has increased in amount and reach over time, largely driven by technological developments.[xxiii] Even so, radio does not have the popularity of television and tends to be used as a source of information about local events. Young people are attracted to it by its coverage of local sports events.

Television is the most popular medium in Libya. The growth of satellite TV has consolidated the medium's position as the premier source of news. Satellite TV news is especially popular among young people and they have been attracted most of all by the pan-Arab world channels such as *Al Jazeera* and *Al Arabiya*.[xxiv] Libyan people have also displayed a high level of trust in what they see on television news, especially in news programs broadcast by *Al Jazeera*. These sources provide important talking points. In contrast, local TV news services are rated as poorer in terms of news quality than the pan-Arab world channels.[xxv] The satellite TV channels are also favored for receiving credible information about the wider Arab world.[xxvi]

This paper investigates the consumption of news across traditional and new televised news services. It also aims to examine the link between young adults' consumption of televised news services and their perceptions of different news sources in Libya in terms of what kinds of gratifications they expect in each case. The research is underpinned by a number of specific research questions:

RQ1: How often do young Libyan adults watch international and local TV news services?

RQ2: Is greater viewing of pan-Arab world TV news channels associated with lower use of local TV news services?

RQ3: What are the qualities that define international and local TV news services in Libya?

RQ4: Do young Libyans associate different gratifications with international and local TV news services?

RQ5: How important are motivational profiles of TV news services in determining how much they are watched?

RQ6: Which news services – from the four chosen – offer Libyan students information that can best gratify their needs for news?

Methodology

The research reported in this paper comprised a self-completion questionnaire survey of 400 university students at Al-Fateh University, the largest university in Libya. The fieldwork was conducted during December 2009 and January 2010. Respondents were asked to be as honest as possible in giving their

answers and were assured that the questionnaires would remain anonymous.

The survey sample was selected to represent demographically, in terms of gender, age, subject being studied, and family status, the known characteristics of the university population. Within that population, a stratified (by gender and faculty) random sampling approach was adopted.

The questionnaire was structured into a number of distinct sections that asked questions about personal details, importance attached to news topics, news consumption habits, and respondents' perceptions of a number of international and local TV news services. This paper will present findings only for reported news consumption habits linked to satellite news TV channels, claimed use of other news sources, general motivations for consuming news, motivational gratifications associated with four TV news services, and personal demographic details. Four variables were identified as the core dependent variables to be explained: reported frequency of viewing *Al-Jamahiriya TV*, *Al-Jamahiriya2 TV*, *Al Jazeera TV*, and *Al Arabiya TV*.

Respondents indicated their agreement with 13 general motivational items associated with consumption of news on a four-point ('very important' to 'not at all important') scale: 'for information about daily life, e.g., travel, health, education', 'for personal interest', 'as a duty of responsibility to keep up-to-date', 'to get a different perspective from other countries', 'to know what's going on across the country', 'to know what's going on in the world', 'to be able to form my own opinions about issues', 'for entertainment', 'through habit', 'knowing what is happening in the world makes me feel safer', 'to acquire knowledge relevant to my studies or business', 'for other reasons' and 'to join in conversations with friends, family or colleagues'.

Respondents were required to state how often they used different sources for news and how much they consumed different news media from a list of news platforms. The list contained (a) news on the main Libyan TV channels including *Al-Jamahiriya TV*, *Al-Jamahiriya2 TV*, terrestrial TV and *Al-Shbabiya TV* (b) news on channels from Arabic countries consist of *Al Jazeera TV*, *Al Arabiya TV*, *ANN News TV* and *MBC TV* (c) news on channels broadcast from non-Arabic-channels including *Al-Hurra TV*, *BBC (Arabic) TV*, *France24 (Arabic) TV*, *Russia Today (Arabic) TV*, and *Alalam TV News* (d) news in newspapers including *Al-Jamahiriya*, *Al-Shams*, *Al-Fajr Al-Jadeed*, *Oea*, *Quryna* and *Al-Shat*, (e) news on local radio including *Allibiya FM*, *Tripoli FM* and *Voice of Africa*. Reported frequency of use responses were recorded originally on a seven-point scale from 'daily' (1) to 'don't use' (7). After

initial frequency distributions were computed, this scale was collapsed to a four-point scale (with scoring reversed), by combining 'daily', 'most days' to become 'daily' (4) and combining 'a few times a week' and 'once a week' to become 'often' (3) and 'a few times a month' and 'less than once a month' to become 'less often' (2) while keeping the 'do not use' (1) point intact.

Further questions were asked about motivations for watching four satellite TV channels, (*Al-Jamahiriya*, *Al-Jamahiriya2*, *Al Jazeera*, and *Al Arabiya*. The first two are Libyan TV services and the latter two are pan-Arab services. Respondents were asked to indicate their reasons for watching specific news programs on these TV channels and to endorse a number of possible gratifications derived from each program. There were 14 gratification items used, to which responses were obtained on five-point agree-disagree scales: 'it is a credible source of news', 'it gives me interesting things to talk about', 'it supports my own viewpoints to other people', 'it gives a summary of what's happening around the world', 'I can trust the information they give me', 'it keeps up with current affairs and events', 'to watch news presented from different perspectives', 'the newscasters give a human quality to the news', 'I can compare my own ideas to what the commentators say', 'I can pass the information on to other people', 'I learn how to do things I haven't done before', 'it helps me make up my mind about the important issues of the day', 'the news presenters are better on this channel' and 'it is uncensored'.

Respondents were finally invited to provide details about their gender, age, subject of study, year of study, faculty, family members, and family monthly incomes. More than half the final sample was female (58 percent) and under half was male (42 percent). The average age of the sample was 21. Respondents represented undergraduate levels of 14 faculties of Al-Fateh University. More than one in two respondents (57 percent) reportedly lived in a large family of from four to eight persons, while 30.5 percent lived in families of more than eight people. Around three in four respondents (74 percent) lived in families earning less than 500 pounds sterling (about $800) a month and one in eight (12 percent) lived in middle-income families earning from 501 to 1,000 pounds sterling (about $801 to $1,600) a month. The majority of respondents reported that they regularly consumed news from different sources.

Principal components analysis with varimax rotation was applied to the 13 general motivational items to derive a smaller number of item clusters for subsequent multivariate data analyses. In doing so, the factoring criteria were: a factor eigenvalue < 1; a minimum primary loading < .40 on factor; each item

has a loading < .40. Further statistics were applied, for example, the reliability of the measurement was tested by using a common reliability test of Cronbach's alpha (.63) and by Bartlett's test of sphericity [(428.490) (P < .000)], followed by the KMO value was .704 (at P < .000), which means the data were suitable for factor analysis.

This analysis yielded a four-factor solution that explained 50.1 percent of the total variance. Factor 1, called Information and Interest comprised four items (Eigenvalue = 2.43; percentage variance = 20.2 percent). Factor 2, called Surveillance needs was defined by three items (Eigenvalue = 1.5; percentage variance = 12.3 percent). Factor 3, called Entertainment and Conversational currency also comprised three items (Eigenvalue = 1.09; percentage variance 9.1 percent). Factor 4, called others, included just one item 'for other reasons' (.793) (Eigenvalue = 1; percentage variance = 8.5 percent). The fourth factor was excluded for failing to add significantly to the factor solution. The three significant factors are shown in Table 1. These were subsequently used as predictor variables in later analyses.

Table: 1 News Motivation Factors

Items	Factors			
	M	1	2	3
Factor 1: Information and Interest	**3.05**			
- For information about daily life e.g. travel, health, education	3.46	.731		
- For personal interest	3.20	.659		
- As a duty of responsibility to keep up-to-date	2.08	.595		
- To get a different perspective from another countries	2.73	.486		
Factor 2: Surveillance needs	**3.40**			
- To know what's going on across the country	3.61		.669	
- To know what's going on in the world	3.41		.662	
- To be able to form my own opinions about issues	3.17		.556	
Factor 3: Entertainment and Conversational Currency	**2.43**			
- For entertainment	2.12			.748
- Through habit	1.97			.664
- To join in conversations with friends, family, or colleagues	3.21			.467
Eigenvalue		2.43	1.47	1.09

% variance explained		20.22	12.25	9.14
Cronbach's alpha (reliability Score %)		.56	.44	.42
Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization (eigenvalue >1). M = Mean scores for items on 4-point scale (1= not at all important and 4= very important)				

Results

Frequencies of Consumption of News Sources

Pan-Arabic TV channels emerged as the news sources reportedly most likely to be used on a daily basis (see Table 2). It is interesting to note that the Internet and radio finished almost in equal second place on this measure and ahead of other TV services and newspapers, which included those broadcast or published within Libya. These findings underline the emergence of the new pan-Arab world TV news services such as *Al Jazeera* and *Al Arabiya* TV. While the indigenous Libyan TV news services still command regular viewership from a significant minority of young Libyans, the popularity of these news broadcasts has been superseded by the newer satellite-transmitted pan-Arab TV news channels.

Table 2: Frequencies of Claimed Consumption of Different News Sources

News on:	Daily %	A few times a week %	A few times a month %	Don't use %
Pan-Arab TV channels	61.3	23.5	9.5	5.8
The Internet	51.0	18.8	10.5	19.8
Local radio	50.8	16.5	11.8	21.0
Libyan TV channels	43.3	31.5	13.8	11.5
Local newspaper	28.3	17.0	21.0	33.8
Local news magazines	25.3	18.0	23.8	33.0
Non-Arabic-channels	22.8	22.8	17.0	37.5

There were a number of significant gender differences regarding the reported frequencies with which different news sources were used. Such differences emerged for three news sources: pan-Arab TV news channels, non-Arabic TV news channels and the Internet. Male students (67.9 percent) were more likely to report watching news on pan-Arabic TV news channels than were female students (56.5 percent). This difference was significant using a Mann-Whitney U test (U (400) = 17124.0; exact p < . 01, two-tailed). Male students (25.6 percent) were significantly more likely than females (20.7 percent) to access some news through non-Arabic TV news channels (U (400) = 17144.0; exact p < .05, 2-tailed). Males (56.5 percent) were also significantly more likely than females (49.1 percent) to access news on the Internet (U (400) = 17124.0; exact P < .01, 2-tailed).

There was a significant age group difference in using the Internet for news, with those aged 21 to 24 years (44.1 percent) and 17 to 20 years (55.6 percent) being less likely to report using the Internet for news than those aged 25 and over (65.6 percent) (Kruskal-Wallis H test: X2 (2, N = 400) = 7.94, P < . 05). There were no significant age-group differences in reported use of news on any TV new service. There was one significant family size difference. Those who lived by themselves (71.4 percent) were most likely to watch news on Libyan TV channels on a daily basis, followed by those who lived with more than eight people (52.5 percent), those who lived with one to four people (51.2 percent), with those who lived with four to eight others being least likely to do this (36 percent) (X2 (3, N = 400) = 8.28, P < .05).

Viewing of Major TV News Services

As shown in Table 3, *Al Jazeera* TV and *Al Arabiya* TV emerged as the TV news channels reportedly most likely to be consumed daily. *Al-Jamahiriya2* TV finished third place with *Al-Jamahiriya* in last place. These data indicate that the new satellite pan-Arab TV news services are viewed everyday more widely than the local Libyan TV satellite news services. It is important to note that the local TV news services have not been totally rejected by young Libyans, but they are not watched as often.

Table 3: Frequencies of Claimed Consumption of Specific News Programs

News channel	Daily %	Occasionally %	Never %
Al Jazeera	59.5	28.3	12.3

Al Arabiya	50.3	34.5	15.3
Al-Jamahiriya	41.0	44.5	14.5
Al-Jamahiriya2	34.0	52.0	14

There was a significant gender difference in reported use of *Al Jazeera* TV, with more males (68.5 percent) than females (53 percent) claiming to watch it daily. (U(398) - 16396.50; exact P < .01, 2-tailed). This finding was consistent with the findings of Auter and his colleagues: young people engaged with *Al Jazeera* at a higher parasocial level than did older adults.[xxvii] The latter finding perhaps indicates that young people identified more strongly with the news presenters on this channel than did older members of the audience. There was also a significant age difference in watching *Al Jazeera* TV. Those aged 25 years and over were more likely to watch news on this channel than were those aged 17-20 years or 21-24 years X^2 (2, $N = 400$) = 13.79, $P < .01$).

Gratifications Sought from Satellite TV News Services

Respondents who indicated that they watched news daily or quite often were asked to clarify their reasons for watching specific news programs on specific TV channels and to indicate the gratifications derived from them. Four main TV newscasts were included in this analysis: News 21:30 on *Al-Jamahiriya* TV, News 22:00 on *Al-Jamahiriya2* TV, News 18:00 on *Al Jazeera* TV, and *Al Arabiya* TV.

Table: 4 Gratifications Associated with Each News Program

Items	1*	2	3	4
- It gives a summary of what's happening around the world	86.8	81	68.1	63.4
- It keeps up with current affairs and events	86.0	81.5	67.9	68.0
- I learn how to do things I haven't done before	84.0	81.5	68.1	73.3
- It is a credible source of news	83.5	82.8	64.9	64.4
- It helps me make up my mind about the important issues of the day	83.5	76.7	74.2	77.6
- It supports my own viewpoints to other people	82.3	78.9	73.4	67.5
- It gives me interesting things to talk about	81.9	82.3	68.1	68.4
- I can trust the information they give me	80.7	75.9	64.4	64.8
- I can pass the information on to other people	73.7	66.8	61.2	55.9
- To watch news presented from different perspectives	73.3	74.1	58.8	55.7

- The newscasters give a human quality to the news	75.7	75.9	56.4	46.2
- The news presenters are better on this channel	70.7	65.1	51.3	40.8
- I can compare my own ideas to what the commentators say	64.2	63.8	60.1	55.1
- It is uncensored	40.1	32.3	27.7	28.0

[*]1-*Al Jazeera* TV (N=245), 2-*Al Arabiya* TV (N=230), 3-*Al-Jamahiriya2* TV (N=188), 4-*Al-Jamahiriya* TV (N=247). Percentages indicate those who agreed strongly or agreed with each item

For the News 22:00 on *Al-Jamahiriya2* TV (new local channel), the respondents tended to agree extensively with most items. Most extensive agreement occurred for: 'it helps me make up my mind about the important issues of the day', 'it supports my own viewpoints to other people', 'it gives me interesting things to talk about', 'it gives a summary of what's happening' and 'I learn how to do things I haven't done before'. Lowest agreement was with the only item related to censorship: 'it is uncensored'.

For the News 21:30 on *Al-Jamahiriya* TV (old local channel), the respondents indicated similar reasons as they did for Al-Jamahiriya2 TV. They agreed extensively with the following items for this program: 'it helps me make up my mind about the important issues of the day', 'I learn how to do things I haven't done before', 'it gives me interesting things to talk about', 'it keeps up with current affairs and events', 'it supports my own viewpoints to other people', 'I can trust the information they give me' and 'it is a credible source of news'. Only a minority agreed that 'it is uncensored.'

Respondents shared similar opinions about consuming news from pan-Arab TV news services. For News 18:00 on *Al Jazeera* TV the majority (more than 80 percent of respondents said they watched news on this service for these reasons: summarizing what is going on in the world, keeping up with current affairs and events, learning how to do things, its credibility, considering important issues, supporting their own viewpoints, giving interesting things to talk about, and trusting information they give.

For News 18:00 on *Al Arabiya* TV, the respondents reacted positively to all the reasons provided. Most of them (more than 75 percent) reported that they viewed News 18:00 because of its credibility, providing interesting things to talk about, learning how to do things, keeping up with current affairs and events, summarizing what is going on in the world, supporting their own viewpoints, considering important issues, and the human quality provided by newscasters.

Table 5: Differences between TV News Services in Motivational Profile

Gratification items	1	2	3	4	F-value
- The newscasters give a human quality to the news	3.35^a	3.56^b	4.10^{ab}	4.00^{ab}	26.25***
- The news presenters are better on this channel	3.18^a	3.45^b	4.05^{ab}	3.81^{ab}	24.43***
- It keeps up with current affairs and events	3.77^a	3.82^b	4.32^{ab}	4.14^{ab}	17.61***
- It gives a summary of what's happening around the world	3.77^a	3.77^b	4.32^{ab}	4.14^{ab}	17.14***
- It is a credible source of news	3.80^a	3.82^b	4.29^{ab}	4.19^{ab}	15.89***
- I can trust the information they give me	3.77^a	3.76^b	4.24^{ab}	4.02^{ab}	13.24***
- It gives me interesting things to talk about	3.70^a	3.72^b	4.13^{ab}	4.07^{ab}	12.41***
- To watch news presented from different perspectives	3.60^a	3.62^b	3.98^{ab}	3.93^{ab}	9.26***
- I learn how to do things I haven't done before	3.94^a	3.78^b	4.24^{ab}	4.12^b	8.27***
- It is uncensored	2.96^a	3.03^b	3.41^{ab}	3.15	6.85***
- It supports my own viewpoints to other people	3.77^a	3.85^b	4.09^{ab}	4.04^{abc}	6.54***
- I can pass the information on to other people	3.49^a	3.57^b	3.85^{ab}	3.75	5.45**
- I can compare my own ideas to what the commentators say	3.49^a	3.56	3.77^a	3.76^a	4.44**
- It helps me make up my mind about the important issues of the day	4.02^a	3.98^b	4.24^{abc}	4.02^c	3.18*
Note: Means with common superscripts differ significantly at the .05 level. Scores ranged from 1 to 5. * = $P < 0.05$, ** = $P < 0.01$ and *** = $P < 0.001$. 1= *Al-Jamahiriya* TV (n=247), 2= *Al-Jamahiriya2* TV (n=188), 3=*Al- Al Jazeera* TV (n=245), 4= *Al Arabiya* TV (n=230).					

Further analyses were computed to examine whether there were significant differences between these news services in the way they were rated on specific gratification measures. As shown in Table 5 (above), analyses of variance revealed a number of significant differences in evaluations. Ponferroni tests on these means indicated four sets of motivational profiles differences, between *Al-Jamahiriya* TV and *Al Jazeera* TV, *Al-Jamahiriya* TV and *Al Arabiya* TV, *Al-Jamahiriya2* TV and *Al Jazeera* TV, *Al-Jamahiriya2* TV and *Al Arabiya* TV. Notice that no significant differences were indicated between the two local TV channels or between the two international TV channels among all the reasons.

Significant differences in the gratifications profiles of these four news services emerged on 13 out of the 14 measures used here. The findings showed that perceptions of gratifications obtained for the two local TV news services, *Al-Jamahiriya* TV and *Al-Jamahiriya2* TV, did not differ significantly at all. In

other words, the two local TV news services were observed to deliver similarly on the range of gratifications.

The two international Arab satellite TV news services, *Al Jazeera* TV and *Al Arabiya* TV, were found to have differing gratifications profiles motivating viewing of these services. There were just three gratifications measures on which these two news services did not differ significantly: 'it is uncensored', 'it supports my viewpoints to other people', and 'I can pass information on to other people'. On all the other gratifications measures, *Al Jazeera* TV received higher scores. The profiles of these two pan-Arab world TV news services indicated that for these young adult Libyan viewers, *Al Jazeera* TV was rated as providing a better quality news service all-round compared with *Al Arabiya* TV.

Comparisons between the two local TV news services in Libya, *Al-Jamahiriya* TV and *Al-Jamahiriya2* TV, on the one hand and *Al Jazeera* TV, showed that the latter was universally rated much higher. In comparisons between the two local TV news services and *Al Arabiya* TV, the latter was generally rated higher (on 11 out of the 14 measures in comparison with each local TV news station). *Al Arabiya* TV did not differ significantly from *Al-Jamahiriya* TV on four measures: 'I learn how to do things that I haven't done before', 'it is uncensored', 'I can pass information on to other people' and 'it helps me make up my mind about important issues of the day'. *Al Arabiya* TV did not differ in its ratings from *Al-Jamahiriya2* TV on four measures: 'it is uncensored', 'I can pass information on to other people', 'it helps me make up my mind about important issues of the day' and 'I can compare my own ideas with what the commentators say'.

Motivations as Predictors of TV News Viewing

A further stage in this analysis was to establish whether specific variables predicted reported frequency of viewing of these four TV news services. Stepwise multiple regression analyses were used here. One advantage of this technique is that it corrects for the correlations among the predictor variables.[xxviii] The same procedure was followed throughout the four analyses that were computed. Blocks of predictor variables were identified and were entered one at a time, with the statistical package (SPSS) determining the order of entry of predictor variables. At each step, the analysis indicated whether any of the variables in each block was independently and significantly linked to reported frequency of viewing of each TV news service and calculated the total amount of variance in the dependent variable explained by that block. Then further blocks of variables were added in the same way. Table 6 shows

the predictor variables that survived the stepwise analysis with their significance as predictors of each dependent variable still intact.

For *Al-Jamahiriya* TV, the procedure adapted was as follows: on the first block all the 14 reasons for watching news on this channel were entered; on the second step claimed frequencies of viewing *Al-Jamahiriya2* TV, *Al Jazeera* TV, and *Al Arabiya* TV were entered; on a third step claimed frequencies of viewing other news sources were entered; on a fourth step demographic variables: gender, age, family size, and family income were entered. A significant model emerged (F7,222 = 21.71, P< .001) and explained 41 percent of the variance (adjusted R2 value = .43).

Table 6: Final Squares Models (Beta Scores) Predicting Reported Watching of Specific Television Channels

Model	Jamahiriya	Jamahiriya2	Jazeera	Arabiya
- It is a credible source of news	-.18**			
- I can compare my own ideas to what the commentators say	-.11*			
- To watch news from different perspectives	-.16**			
- I can pass the information on to other people	.12*			
- Watching *Al-Jamahiriya2* TV	.38***			
- News from Libyan TV channels	-.19***	-.17**		
- News from local magazines	-.12*			
- Makes up mind about the important issues of the day		-.22**		
- Watching *Al-Jamahiriya* TV		.45***		
- Watching *Al Jazeera* TV		.12*		.54***
- I can trust the info they give me			-.19***	
- The anchors are better on this channel			.09*	
- Watching *Al Arabiya* TV			.46***	
- News from Arabic TV channels			-.27***	-.18**
- Gender			.12*	
Variance explained (adjusted R²)	.41	.42	.49	.41
R²	.43	.43	.51	.42
- Stepwise regression, beta scores *P < .05, **P < .01, ***P < .001. *Note*: Scores for news question were collapsed and reversed to 4= daily and 1= don't use. - The positive scores in the table indicated more consumption/use of these channels, while negative scores indicated less frequent use of these channels.				

The strongest predictor of watching *Al-Jamahiriya* TV was viewing more news on *Al-Jamahiriya2* TV, followed by watching less news from other local (non-satellite) Libyan TV channels, being a credible source of news and choosing to watch news from different perspectives. Reported viewing of *Al-Jamahiriya* TV was also positively predicted by the items 'I can pass the information on to other people' and 'I can compare my own ideas to what the commentators say', and by less reported reading of local news magazines.

For *Al-Jamahiriya2* TV, the stepwise multiple regression entered the 14 reasons for watching the channel as the first block; on the second step claimed frequencies of viewing *Al-Jamahiriya* TV, *Al Jazeera* TV, and *Al Arabiya* TV were entered; on a third step claimed frequencies of viewing other news sources were entered; and on the fourth step demographic variables: gender, age, family size, and family income were entered. A significant model emerged ($F_{4,167} = 31.93$, $P < .001$) that explained 43 percentof the variance (adjusted $R^2 = .42$).

Reported watching of *Al-Jamahiriya2* TV was predicted by greater claimed viewing of *Al-Jamahiriya* and of *Al Jazeera* TV. Further significant predictors were less watching of other local TV news channels and disagreement with the item 'it makes up my mind about the important issues of the day'.

With *Al Jazeera* TV, in the same stepwise analysis the 14 reasons for watching news via *Al Jazeera* TV were entered as the first block; on the second step claimed frequencies of viewing *Al-Jamahiriya* TV, *Al-Jamahiriya2* TV, and *Al Arabiya* TV were entered; on a third step claimed frequencies of viewing other news sources were entered; and on a fourth step demographic variables: gender, age, family size, and family income were entered. A significant model emerged ($F_{6,215} = 37.24$, $P < .001$) that explained 49 percent of the total variance (adjusted R^2 value = .51).

The strongest predictor of watching *Al Jazeera* TV was viewing more news on *Al Arabiya* TV, followed by watching less news from other Arabic TV channels. One possible explanation is that *Al Jazeera* and *Al Arabiya TV* are seen as providing similar gratifications/satisfactions which are different from other Arabic TV channels. Other significant predictors were trust in *Al Jazeera* as a news source, gender (being male) and an opinion that its news anchors were better. The gender result is consistent with prior

research that showed that females were less likely than males to watch news on *Al Jazeera* TV.[xxix] The ratings of news anchors is consistent with earlier research by Auter and his colleagues that reported viewing of *Al Jazeera* was associated with parasocial motives.[xxx]

Finally, with reported watching *Al Arabiya* TV, variable blocks were entered as for the other three stepwise multiple regressions, with the 14 reasons for watching news on *Al Arabiya* TV entered first; followed by claimed frequencies of viewing *Al-Jamahiriya* TV, *Al-Jamahiriya2* TV, and *Al Jazeera* TV; then claimed frequencies of viewing other news sources were entered; and lastly gender, age, family size, and family income were entered. A significant model emerged ($F_{2,207} = 74.90$, $P< .001$), that accounted for 42 percent of the variance (adjusted R^2 value = .41). Reported viewing of *Al Arabiya* TV was predicted by more frequent reported watching of *Al Jazeera* TV and less frequent reported viewing of news from other Arabic TV channels.

Discussion

This paper explored the nature of news consumption patterns in a sample of 400 undergraduate students at Al-Fateh University in December 2009. This research has indicated that most young Libyans at university do follow news on television on a regular basis. New pan-Arab TV news services broadcast via satellite, however, have overtaken local Libyan TV news services, including those also broadcast on the satellite platform. Although local Libyan TV news services have not been completely abandoned, they are more likely to be watched occasionally rather than daily compared with new international Arab news channels such as *Al Jazeera* and *Al Arabiya*.

Young people surveyed here identified a number of gratifications that defined their reasons for watching news on TV. News was important for information and surveillance purposes and could also form a source of entertainment. Respondents were also able to identify the specific features that defined individual news services and could differentiate between local and international satellite TV news channels and programs on that basis. In that respect this research adds to the findings of earlier research with Arab news consumers.[xxxi]

This research revealed clear differences in the gratifications profiles of pan-Arab TV news services and those originated within Libya. The international news services – *Al Jazeera* and *Al Arabiya* – were generally more highly regarded than even the new local satellite TV news operations in terms of the quality and usefulness of the news they provided as well as in the quality and professionalism of their

news programs. The findings are consistent with those of Al Asfar who concluded that Libyan viewers found a refuge in the Arab satellite TV channels.[xxxii]

Interestingly, the Internet and local radio came second in terms of claimed consumption, ahead of non-satellite local TV news services and Libyan newspapers. There were gender differences in patterns of news consumption. Male students were more likely than females to report watching news on pan-Arabic satellite TV news channels, non-Arabic TV services and the Internet. In particular, males were more likely than females to watch *Al Jazeera* TV news.

The differing gratifications profiles of local versus international TV news services confirmed earlier research that news consumers utilize different media to access news for different reasons and purposes. [xxxiii] In the current research, the main reasons for watching *Al-Jamahiriya* and *Al-Jamahiriya2* TV were: they helped them to make up minds about the important issues and they gave them interesting things to talk about. For *Al Jazeera* and *Al Arabiya* TV, these two services provided respondents with summaries of what was going on in the world, keeping them up to date with current affairs and events, being credible source of news and providing interesting things to talk about.

The news consumption pattern observed in this study did much to illuminate important factors behind the rapid adoption of new news programs on the satellite platform. Respondents reportedly watched news on satellite TV news services (e.g. *Al-Jamahiriya* TV, *Al-Jamahiriya2* TV, *Al Jazeera* TV, and *Al Arabiya* TV) because they gave them the information they desired. Gratifications data revealed that the international TV services were rated as more attractive news sources than local TV news services for a wide range of reasons. The two local TV news services, however, were seen as being similar in terms of what they could offer. The two international TV services, while both more highly regarded than local news, were not equally well received. *Al Jazeera* was rated as the better service of the two in terms of the quality of its content, attractiveness of program format and performance of its news presenters. The current findings reveal that among young, well-educated Libyans, a wider view of the world as represented by news providers is being sought and is appreciated. There remains a place for local televised news, but international news services that provide a pan-Arab perspective on current events and issues have quickly emerged as servicing important news needs for this audience. The role of Libyan news media has changed since *Al Jazeera* TV and *Al Arabiya* appeared.[xxxiv] The role of Libyan news media has changed since *Al Jazeera TV* and *Al Arabiya* appeared.[xxxv] *Al Jazeera TV* is meeting the needs of those who wish to be informed about important world events and who seek reliable news

reports to pass on to friends.[xxxvi]

Old media have not been completely rejected, but could increasingly come to be seen as having less primary relevance for young news consumers in Libya. Given that the lower ratings of local TV news services were pinned to program delivery formats as well as choice of news stories to report, it will be important for those services to adopt the latest professional practices. In content terms there may be room in the evolving news landscape for these services to occupy a niche market that still has value for the Libyan public. To retain this market, however, quality of delivery will also be crucial.

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This study investigates the relationship between Libyan university students' consumption of Libyan and international Arab satellite TV news services and their perceptions of gratifications received from these news services. A self-completion questionnaire survey was administered to a sample of 400 university students that asked about the news consumptio...