

Media biased, says one in two

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ABOUT half of Singaporeans polled last year by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) were of the view that 'there is too much government control of newspapers and television'.

Younger respondents aged 21 to 39 years old agreed with the statement in larger numbers - over six in 10 - as compared to five in 10 of those aged over 60.

About 49 per cent of those aged below 60 agreed with the statement that 'newspapers and television are biased when they report on Singapore politics, political parties and elections', slightly higher than the 42 per cent among those aged 60 and above.

Despite these reservations, respondents still revealed above-average trust in newspapers, TV and radio.

Asked to measure the trustworthiness of media channels as outlets for political news from a scale of 1 (untrustworthy) to 5 (very trustworthy), newspapers received 3.58 on average, the highest.

TV received a 3.55 score, while the Internet received 2.82 on average.

Younger respondents were slightly more inclined to see the Internet as trustworthy. Mr Wong Liangyuan, 25, an undergraduate, describes himself as 'equally cynical and wary' of both mainstream and online media.

The mainstream media may display a bias towards the incumbent People's Action Party, but online sources display one towards opposition parties, he said. Hence, when consuming news online, he focuses on the facts and figures.

The IPS survey also showed that despite its perceived influence among the younger generation of Singaporeans, the penetration of online political content through the electorate as a whole is not overwhelming.

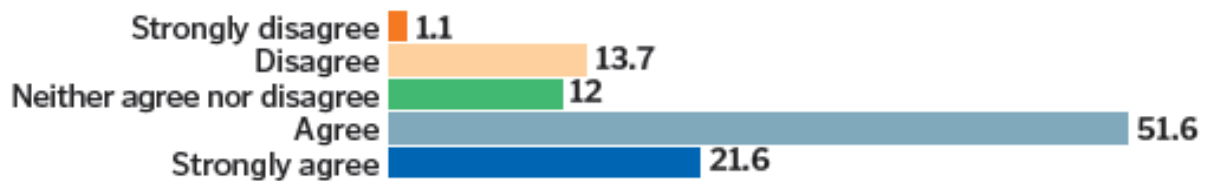
When asked if they have seen two specific instances of 'viral media', only about one in five said they had.

The two examples were popular blogger Mr Brown's 'bak chor mee' podcast mocking the PAP's handling of opposition candidate James Gomez in the 2006 General Election, and a Stomp video of beauty queen Ris Low discussing her fashion preferences.

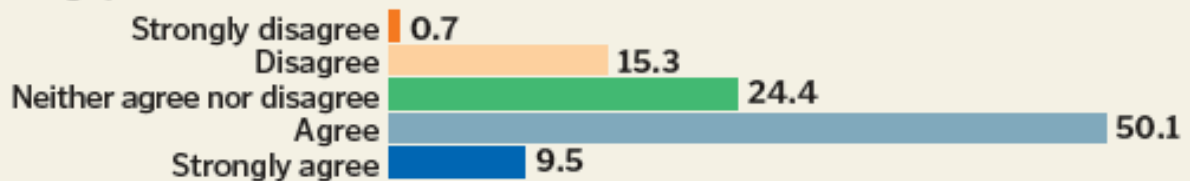
Some 20 per cent had come across Mr Brown's podcast, while 25.6 per cent had seen the video of Ms Low.

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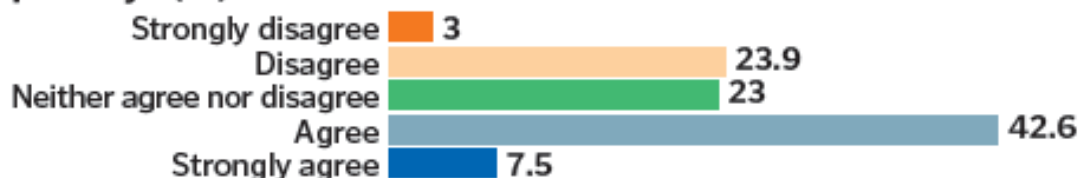
“Singapore should have a powerful leader who can run the Government as he thinks fit” (%)



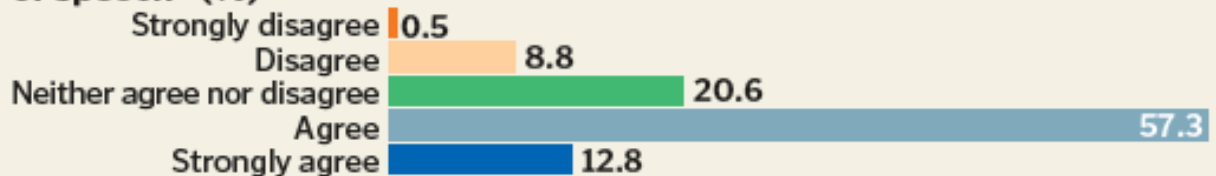
“There are too many rules against participating in political activities in Singapore” (%)



“Everyone should be given the freedom to criticise the Government publicly” (%)



“It is more important to have good economic growth than freedom of speech” (%)



“Newspapers and television are biased when they report on Singapore politics, political parties and elections” (%)

	Ages 21-39	Ages 40-59	Ages 60 and above
Strongly disagree and disagree	19.7	27.1	28.4
Neither agree nor disagree	32	23.4	29.9
Agree and strongly agree	48.3	49.5	41.7

Source: IPS

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