The debut of the Lat Pau on 10 December 1881 marked the first Chinese daily newspaper in Singapore. It is of great significance that it appeared eight years after the establishment of the Shen Pao in Shanghai, and was thirteen years earlier than China’s best-selling newspaper of the early twentieth-century — Xin Wen Pao.

Moreover, Lat Pau (1881–1932) was the newspaper that existed the longest during pre-war Singapore, it existed for 52 years.

Scholars and academicians have focused on the historical development of Lat Pau, as well as the characteristics of Lat Pau under the editorship of Yeh Chi-yun. But none has touched on the news content of Lat Pau. It is precisely this that prompted the author to write this paper, because Lat Pau, having existed for 52 years, is closely knitted to the development of pre-war Singapore. There are some areas that interest the author. What type of news is emphasised in Lat Pau? Which countries’ news is most frequently reported? As a newspaper that circulated mainly in multi-racial Singapore, how’s the weightage of the news of the other races, besides the Chinese? What were the sources of the news published in Lat Pau? These are the areas that will be discussed in this paper.

This thesis will focus on the analysis of the news content of Lat Pau. Random samples are used in the process of data collection. Firstly, the years 1887 and 1932 are chosen respectively as the opening and ending years; this is because the earliest copy of Lat Pau that is available is on 19 August 1887. The year 1932 is chosen because Lat Pau stopped its circulation on 31 March that year; then the years 1890, 1895, 1900, 1905, 1910, 1915, 1920, 1925, 1930 are also chosen. Secondly, the sample months are chosen, August for 1887, March for 1932, September for 1890, October for 1895, November for 1900 and so on until the year 1930. Thirdly, the first two weeks of the sample months are chosen for analysis.

Quantitative analysis is used to analyse the number of news and the space taken up in the news hole in respect of selected subject matters, the countries that the news came from, the sources of the news, as well as the news about the different races in Singapore and Malaya.
Some of the main findings are as follows:

1. About 90% of the news of Lat Pau came from Asia and Europe; in fact 80% of the news came from Asia. Of the news that came from Asia, about 90% came from China and Malaya.
2. Social, political and military news were the most frequently reported subject matters in Lat Pau.
3. Besides reporting on the news of the Chinese in Malaya, news of other races like the Malays and Indians was also reported.
4. A lot of the news of Lat Pau was from unknown sources, but it was on the decline as the years passed. In earlier years, Lat Pau got a lot of news from other newspapers, while in the later years, Lat Pau got its news from wire service, mainly from Reuters and other wire services in China.