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# Airlines in Asia

MEDIA ANALYSIS BY CARMA

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OCT 2023 – MAR 2024



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## ABOUT THE REPORT

This report provides an analysis of how airlines were represented in the news and on social media between October 2023 to March 2024.

Ten airlines from Southeast Asia and Hong Kong were selected for this study, based on their volume of coverage in online outlets (*Tier-1 mainstream news and trade publications*), and on social platforms (*Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, Facebook*).

The analysis includes content from all relevant languages in the corresponding countries, covering both online and social media discourse, ensuring a diverse and comprehensive understanding of the topic.



### The report aims to:

Identify the key players in the industry and their overall positioning according to media and customer perspectives.

Highlight any significant trends and topics driving the discussion

Evaluate how specific events, developments, or incidents have impacted the reputation of these entities.

## AIRLINES UNDER STUDY





# Most discussed airlines and narrative drivers



Singapore Airlines was the most mentioned airline on social media and second-most mentioned in mainstream media.

The airline ranked first for coverage with positive sentiment.

Singapore Airlines earned coverage for its financial performance, including record-breaking half-year profits. Additionally, customer reviews consistently highlighted positive experiences, praising the airline's exceptional service and luxurious in-flight amenities.

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Cathay Pacific was the most mentioned airlines in mainstream media.

The airline amassed significant news coverage related to workforce shortages and flight disruptions.

However, the airline earned positive mentions on social media, with customers expressing satisfaction with their flight experiences.

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AirAsia was the second-most mentioned airline on social media.

The high volume of social media coverage was largely driven by criticism from netizens over the airline's customer service.

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Malaysia Airlines was prominent on both social and mainstream media.

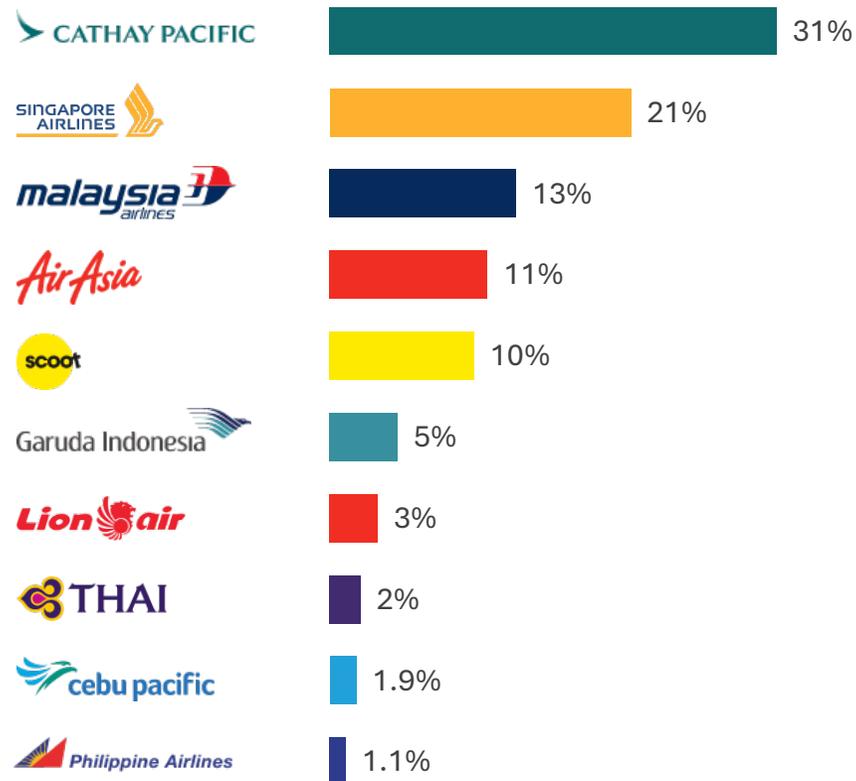
Flight MH370 continued to spark discussions, marking the tenth year of its disappearance.

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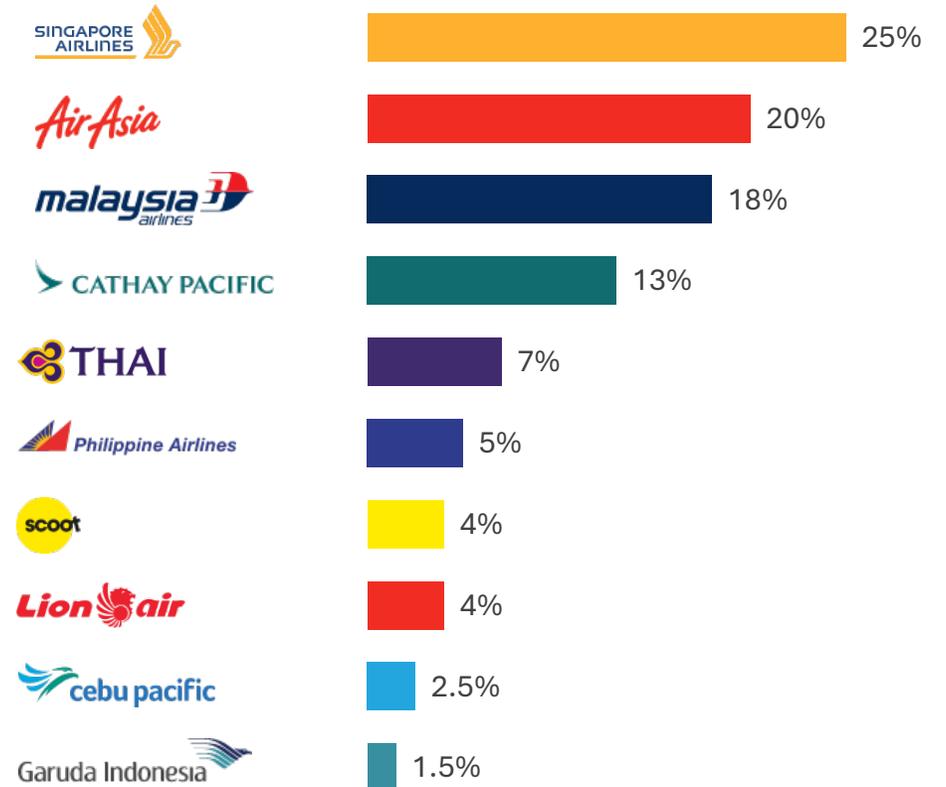


# Volume of earned coverage and social media conversation provides insights on reach, public interest and competitor benchmarking

### Share of voice in mainstream media



### Share of voice in social media





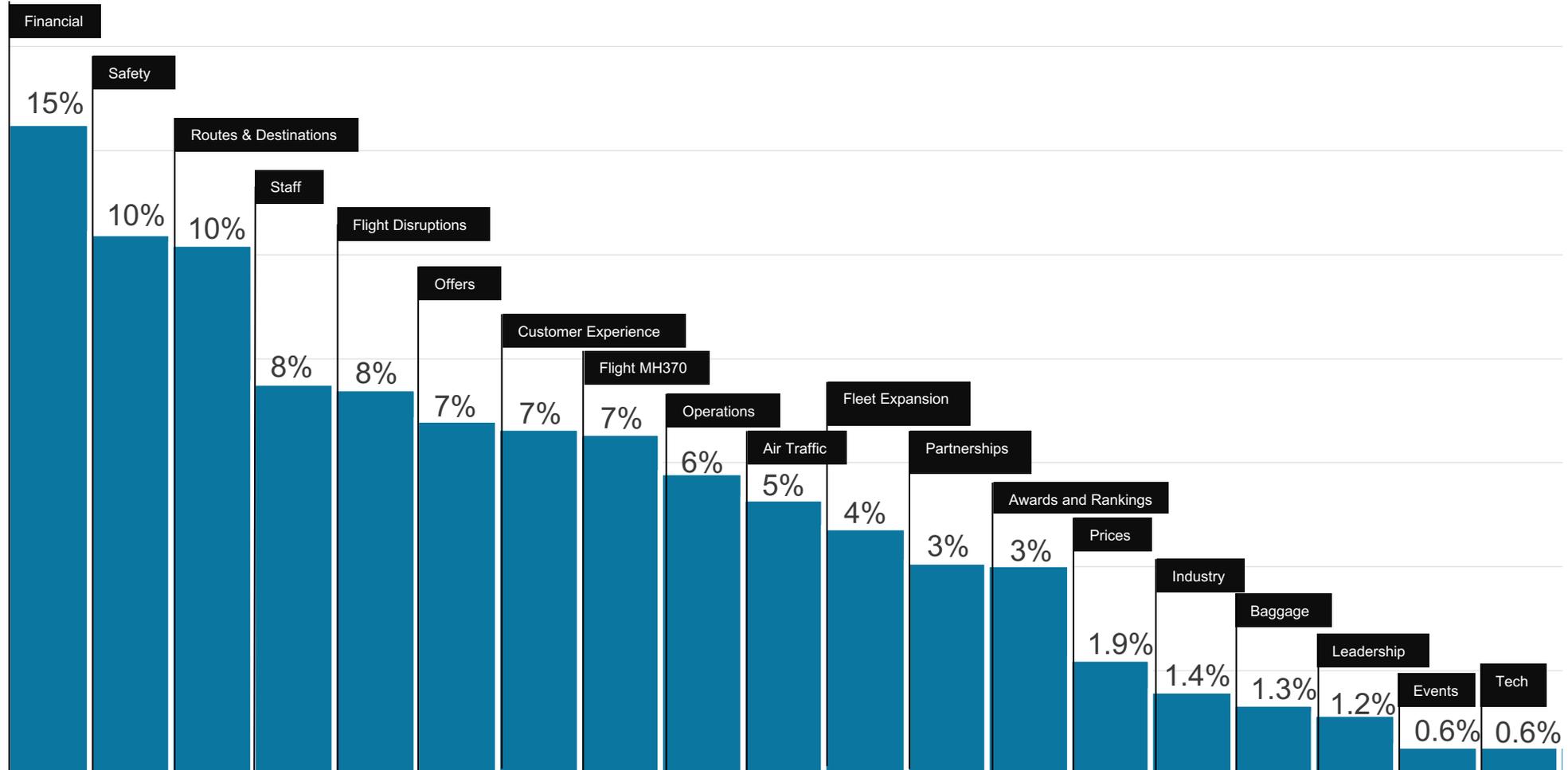
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# 1 Key themes In Mainstream Media





# Financial results attracted the most editorial interest in mainstream media



Volume of airlines' media coverage classified by theme

# Financial news was consistently among the most discussed theme in mainstream news across all airlines, with Cathay Pacific and Singapore Airlines earning the most coverage.

Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific managed to return to profitability for the first time since the pandemic, as it was impacted by the fact that its home country was one of the last to reopen.

Meanwhile, Air China was considering raising its stake in Cathay Pacific this year.

Singapore Airlines appeared in many articles discussing its stock prices, in addition to coverage around the airline's record high profits.



Cathay Pacific to add 5,000 workers in 2024 as demand recovers



# Safety has a significant impact on airline reputation, being the second-most discussed topic in the news.

Safety rankings for airlines took up a large proportion of the media discourse.

In Q1 2024, AirlineRatings.com released its list of 25 safest airlines in the world, which included Cathay Pacific and Singapore Airlines. These rankings earned massive organic coverage for the airlines.

Threats to airline passengers also was a common theme in mainstream media coverage. This includes news around bomb threats and minor aircraft collisions.

**Cathay Pacific plane 'struck' by Korean Air aircraft at Japan airport, no injuries**



**Australian man charged with making bomb threat on Scoot flight**



## AIRLINERATINGS.COM 2024 RANKINGS

1. Air New Zealand
2. Qantas
3. Virgin Australia
4. Etihad Airways
5. Qatar Airways
6. Emirates
7. All Nippon Airways
8. Finnair
9. Cathay Pacific Airways
10. Alaska Airlines
11. SAS
12. Korean Air
13. Singapore Airlines



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**Workforce** stories were also a driver of media coverage for the airlines, with Cathay Pacific frequently at the centre of such discussions.

In December 2023, the airline preemptively cancelled several year-end flights due to a shortage of pilots, exacerbated by illness and the lingering effects of COVID-related staff reductions.



**Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific cancels flights as seasonal illnesses affect pilots, union says staff shortage impacts operations**

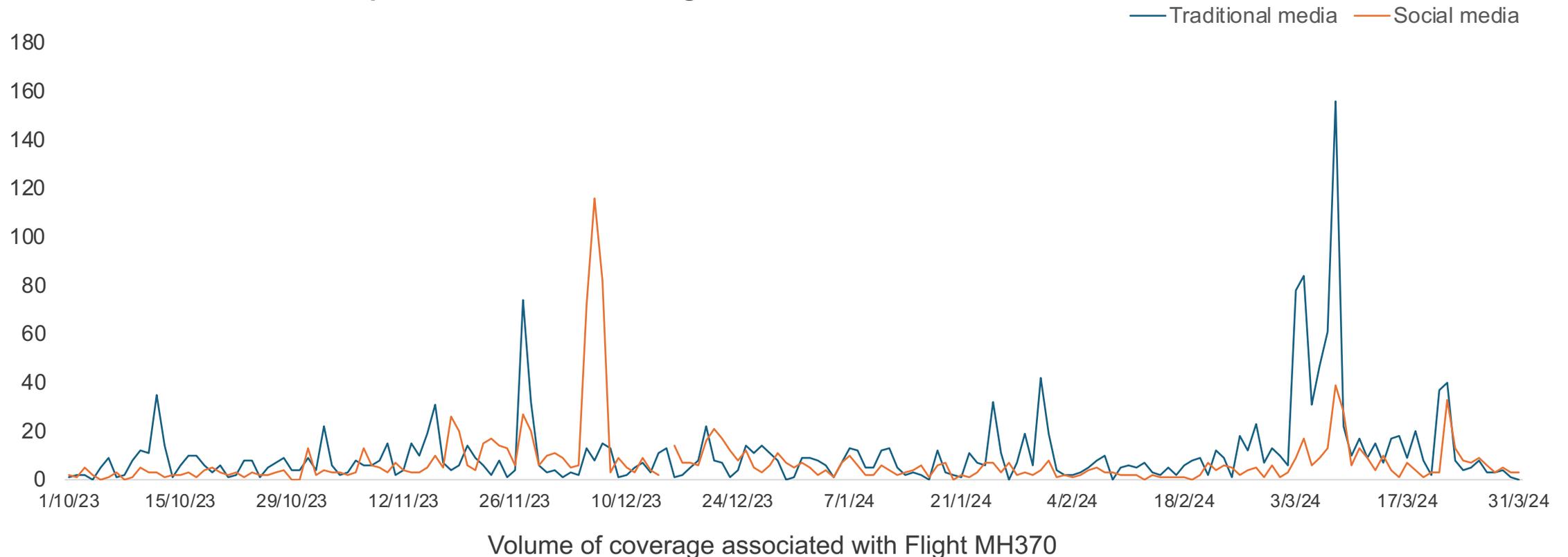




# The enduring mystery of **Malaysia Airlines** Flight MH370 continued to evoke discussions, marking the tenth anniversary of its disappearance.

This single incident reinforced the carrier's media narrative in the long term, marked by its permanence in the public eye.

This suggests that negative stories, particularly those that have a significant and direct influence on consumers, tend to **overshadow more positive or neutral coverage**.





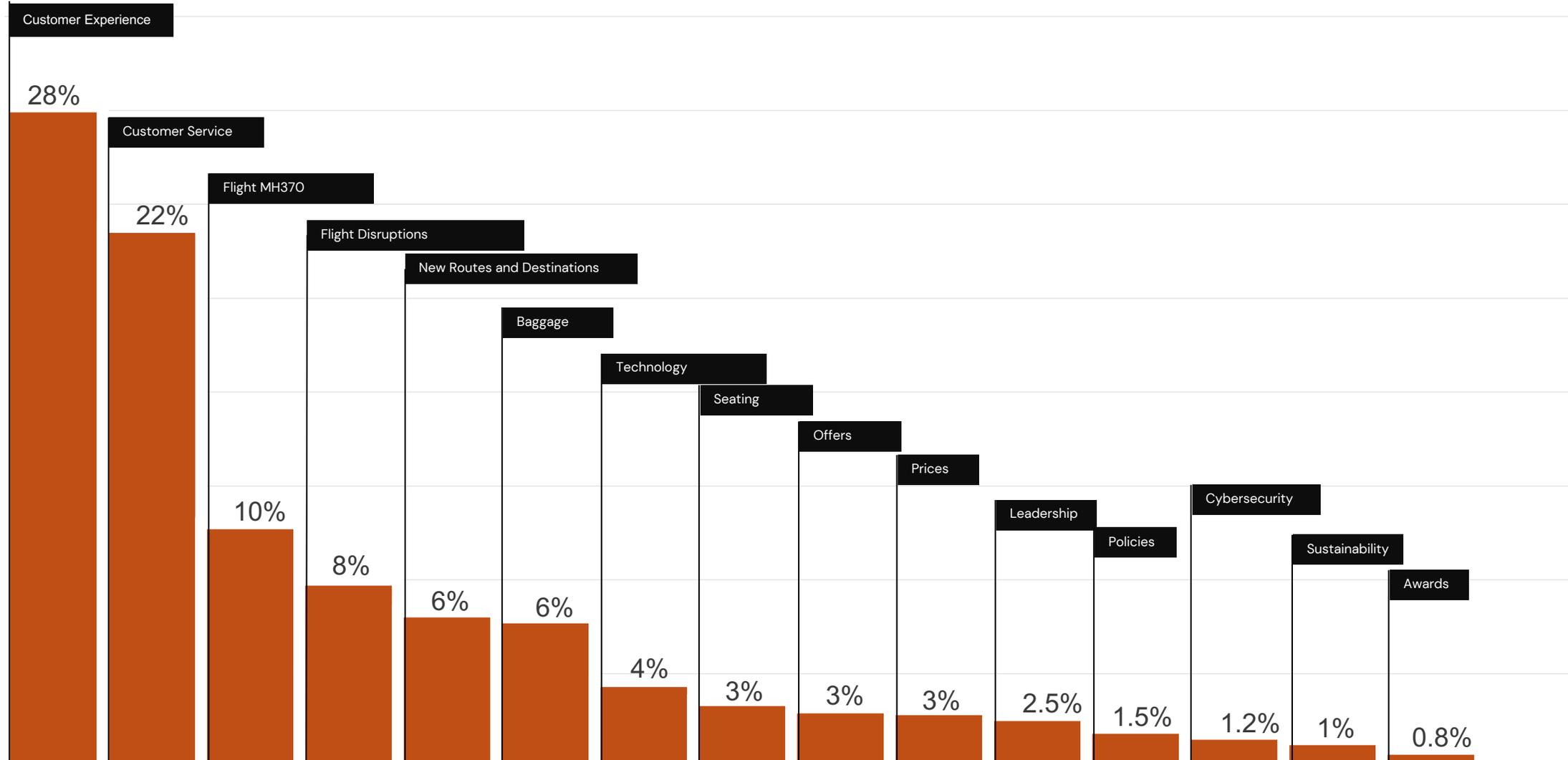
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# Social media perceptions





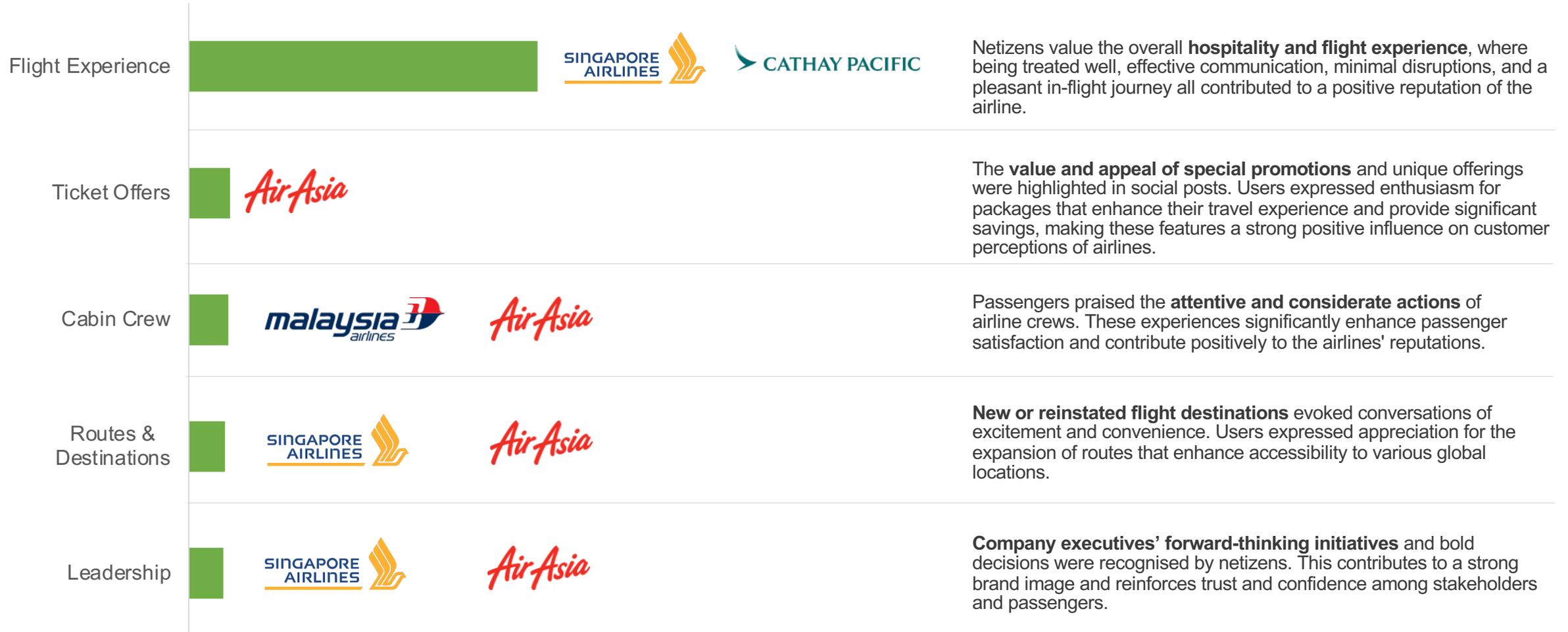
# Flight experiences and customer service were two of the most popular topics discussed by netizens on social media



Volume of airlines' social conversation classified by theme



# The overall flight experience is the biggest driver of social media conversation, influencing positive sentiments much more than other factors



# Poor customer experience and flight disruptions were major pain points that drove users to recount their experiences on social platforms



## Poor customer experience

- Unresponsive customer support, especially with automated chatbots, poor communication regarding bookings and travel insurance claims.
- handling of passengers with disabilities. Many customers reported feeling neglected or mistreated, with complaints often highlighting a lack of care from staff at check-in counters and during boarding processes
- Many customers were so dissatisfied that they vowed never to use the airline again and even considered taking legal action due to unresolved issues.

**Flight disruptions, delays or last minute cancellations**, leading to inconvenience and additional costs, was a major cause of frustration

**Baggage issues**, such as lost or delayed luggage, damaged items, and high baggage fees, were monitored.

**Technology** frequently used to serve or interact with customers posed many challenges including website crashes and failure of inflight WiFi

**Seating problems** provoked negative feedback. Common complaints included not receiving the pre-selected or paid-for seats, especially in cases of overbooking or last-minute changes.



# Reputational risks directly impact customer satisfaction and erode trust

**Peta Fanheater**

More like experience the airline cancel your flight, promise a refund and then never deliver it.



**kathleendygo** @flypal is probably the worst airline I have ever encountered from changing flights every now and then. Making us pay for additional costs and yet no assurance of seat upgrade. Worst of all, cancelling a flight because of no show but it was cancelled thru mabuhay miles. BAD SERVICE and NO RESPONSE AT ALL!!!!



**Justine Castellon** @justcastellon

I'm sorry to hear about how they treated your dad. PAL isn't PWD-friendly. They don't care about passengers with disabilities. For them we are all just boarding pass numbers.



**tremonster5** ITS BEEN ALMOST 10 months and I still haven't gotten my refund. CHAT WITH BO DOES NOTHING



**seekingpanda** @seekingpandas

You are the worst @flyPAL You change my flight (while I'm on vacation) by a whole day. Only offered me a flight a day before or after, which cuts into either my prior or next destination and no effort was made to book me with another airline.



**Tomasz Stefaniak** @tomasz\_fm

I'm compiling a list of the worst airlines in the world and Philippine Airlines is currently number 1.

I'd love if you could leave a comment about your experience with them 😊



**Jacob Johnson** @OpenskyJacob

**42DaysWithoutRefund** #airasia must promptly process the full refund amount for a valid refund request and communicate with a customer without delay.

@airasia #AirAsiaRefund @MAVCOMmy @MY\_Airports @TourismMalaysia

**Richard Curia**  
Fly AirAsia love to, BUT your customer service is none existent . People want a bit more than simple cheap prices thrown at them. You need to seriously look at your live chat ( bot), and get a helpline .  
Otherwise, these promos mean very little to a lot of people.

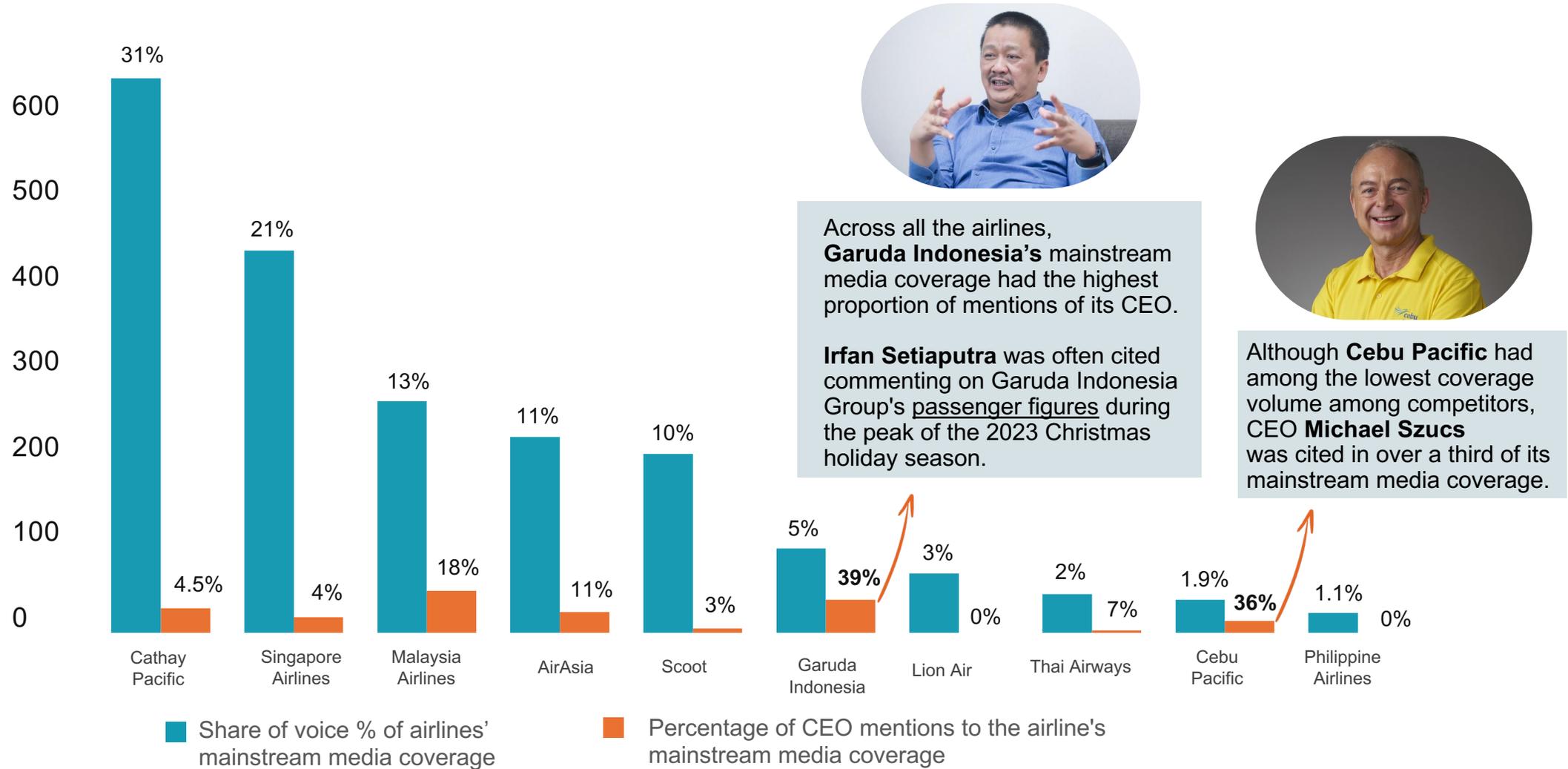


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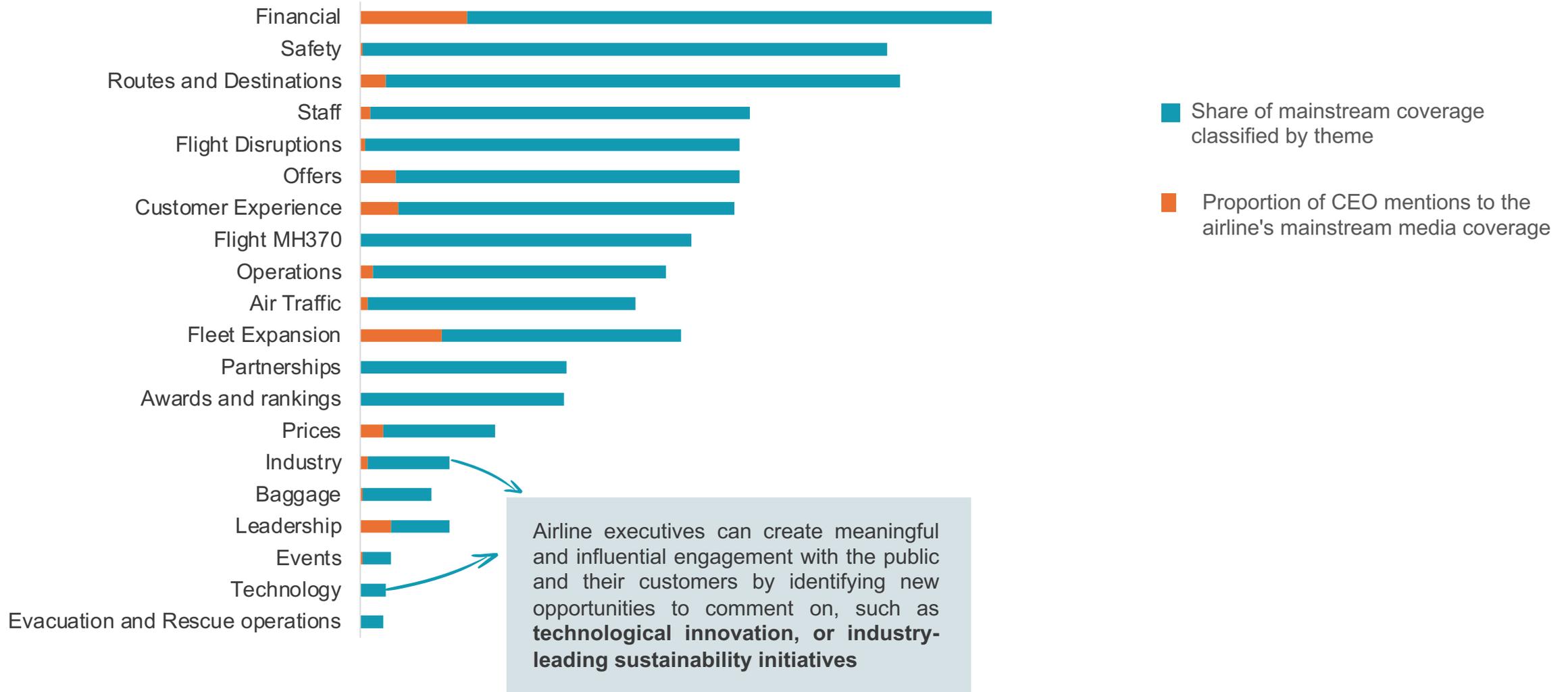
# Influence of C-Suite Visibility in the media

# On average, 10% of airlines' mainstream media coverage had mentions of their Executive Leadership





# CEO mentions in mainstream media was most associated with stories of **company financials** and **fleet expansions**





# AirAsia CEO's actions impacted social media sentiments

AirAsia, which typically earned positive social conversation, saw a sharp shift after a viral post by the CEO.

In October 2023, Tony Fernandes shared a photo to LinkedIn of him shirtless and getting a shoulder massage while conducting a virtual meeting.

Immediately, social conversation with negative sentiments doubled, while positive social conversation more than halved.

The social posts shared by AirAsia's CEO had a polarising effect on AirAsia's reputation and led to more negative comments and discussions in the aftermath.



Sentiments of social media conversation about AirAsia

Social media sentiments of AirAsia prior to the incident

**33.4%**  
Positive

**13.9%**  
Negative

Social media sentiments of AirAsia after the incident

**14.8%**  
Positive

**33.2%**  
Negative

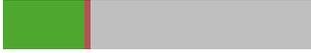
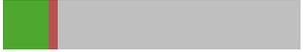


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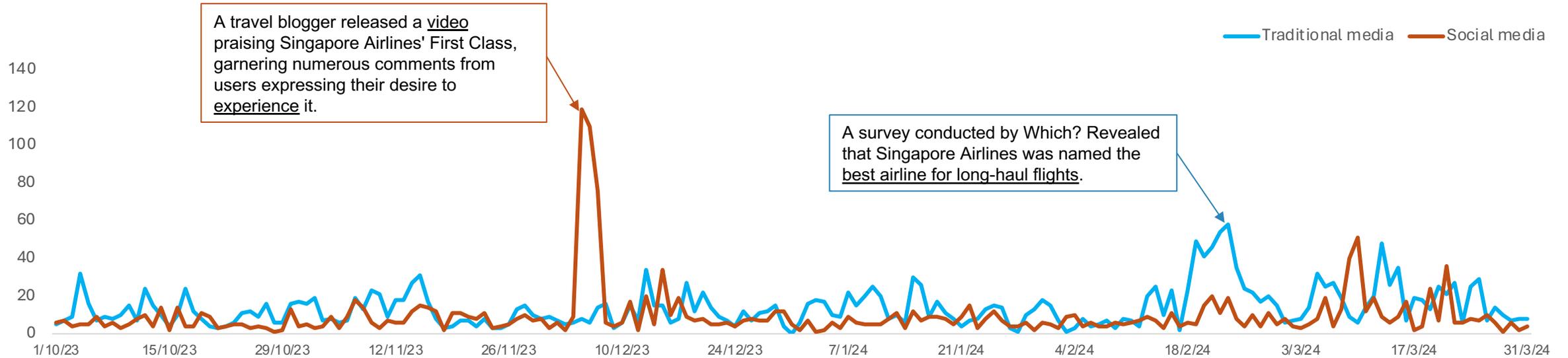
# Appendix



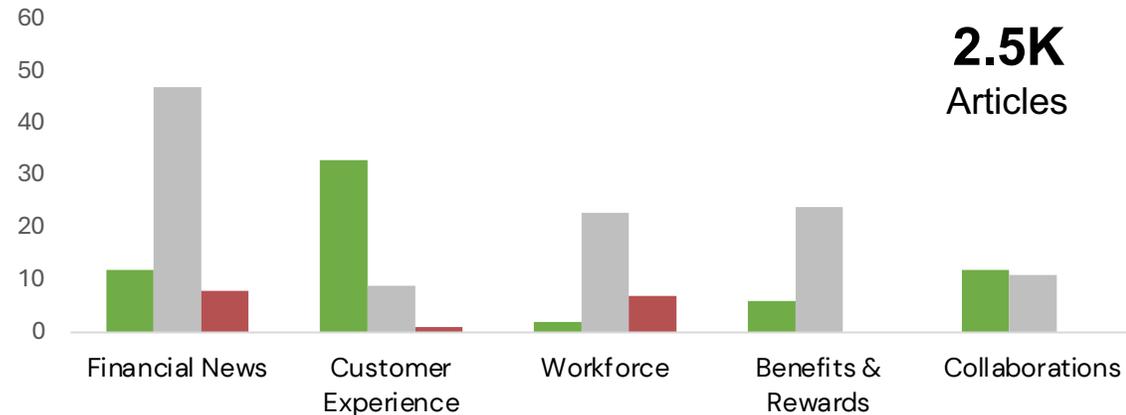
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	Volume of traditional media coverage	Volume of social media coverage	Sentiment in traditional media	Sentiment on social media	Top discussed topic in traditional media	Top discussed topic on social media
	2.5K	1.8K			Financial News	Customer Experience
	2K	1.3K			Flight MH370	Flight MH370
	2.9K	900			Workforce	Customer Experience
	1.2K	1.5K			Routes & Destinations	Customer Service
	580	342			Benefits & Rewards	Customer Experience
	638	113			Safety	Flight Disruptions
	131	465			Financial News	Customer Service
	359	195			Prices	Routes & Destinations
	95	379			Customer Experience	Customer Experience
	83	332			Financial News	Customer Service

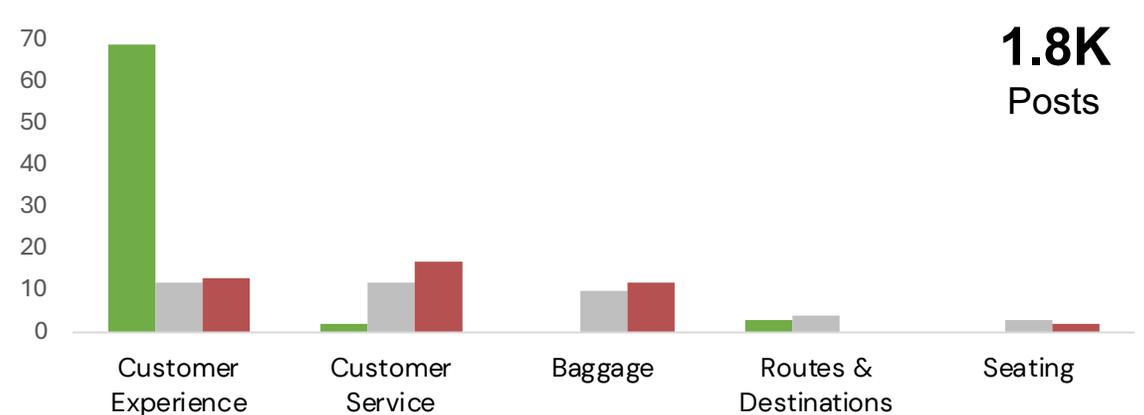
# Singapore Airlines Overview

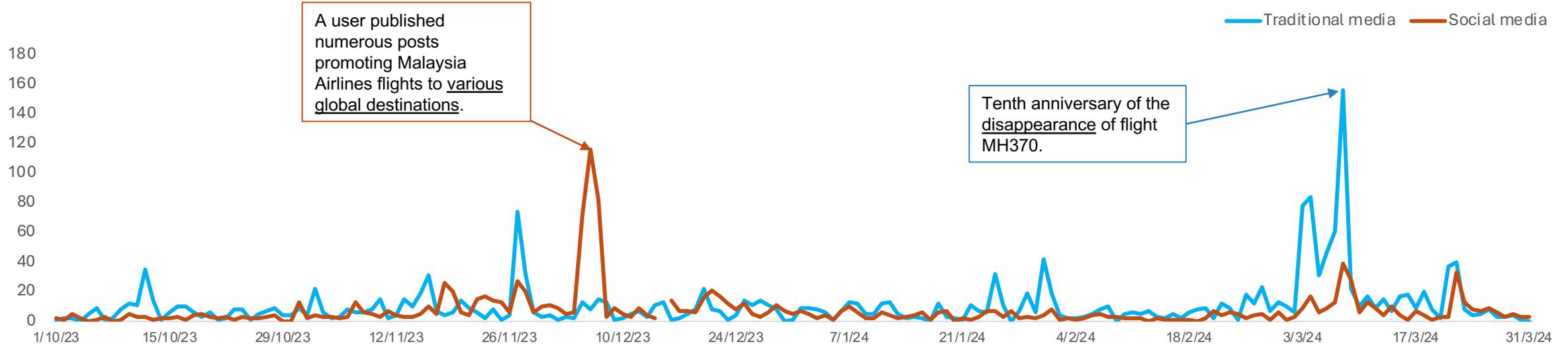


## Top 5 Topics by Sentiment in Traditional Media

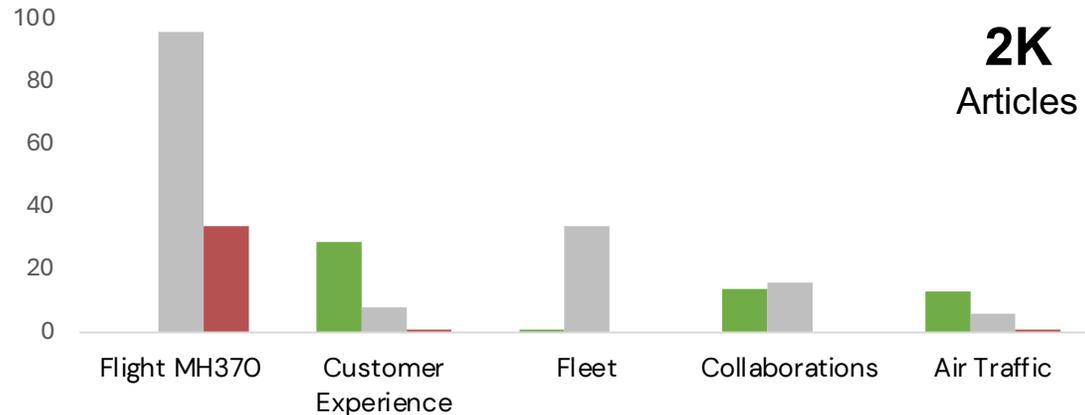


## Top 5 Topics by Sentiment on Social Media

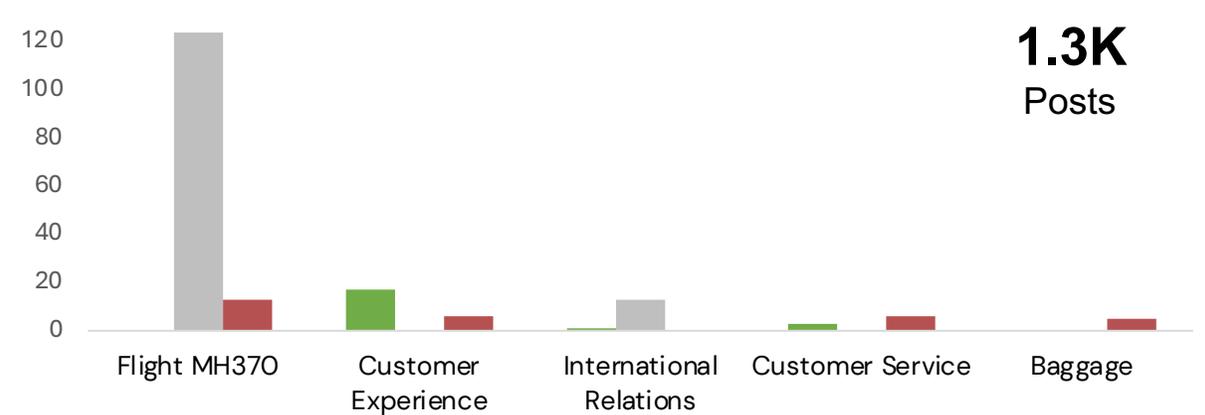




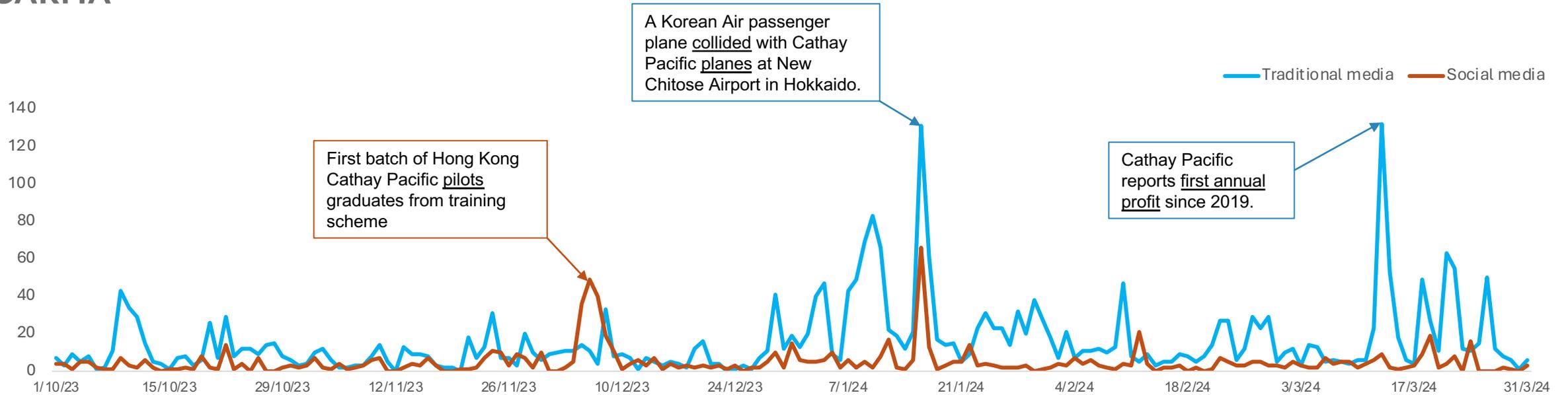
### Top 5 Topics by Sentiment in Traditional Media



### Top 5 Topics by Sentiment on Social Media

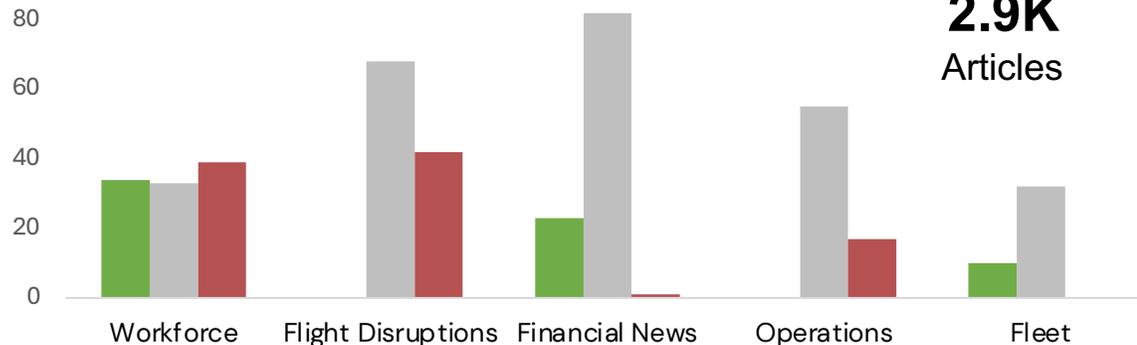


# Cathay Pacific Overview



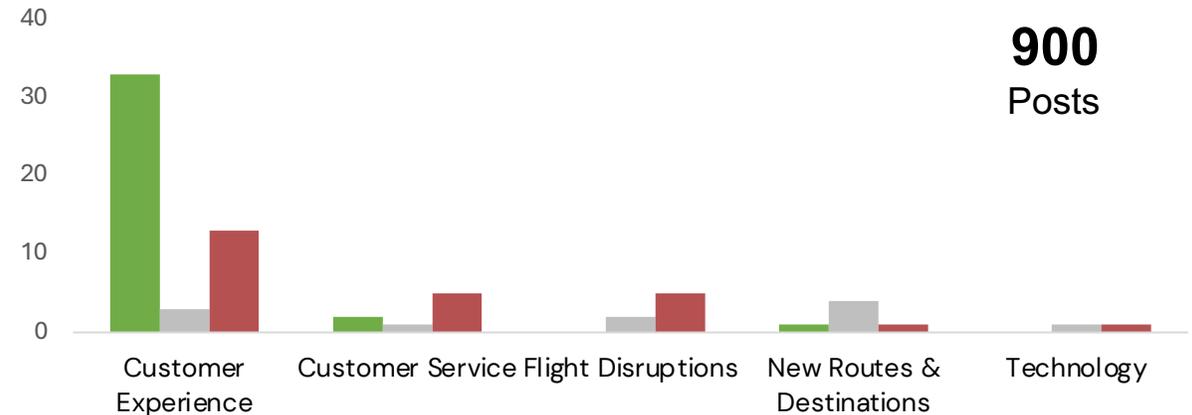
## Top 5 Topics by Sentiment in Traditional Media

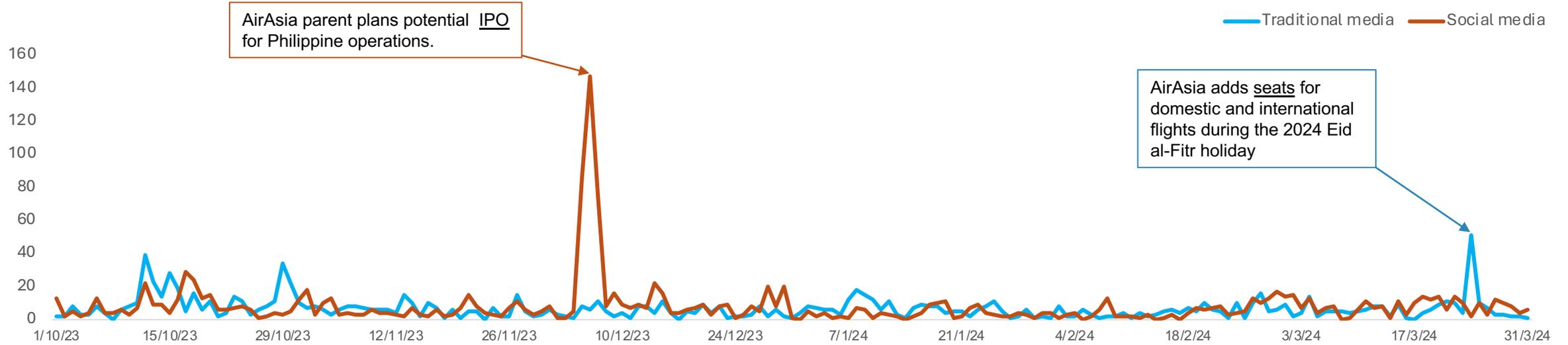
**2.9K**  
Articles



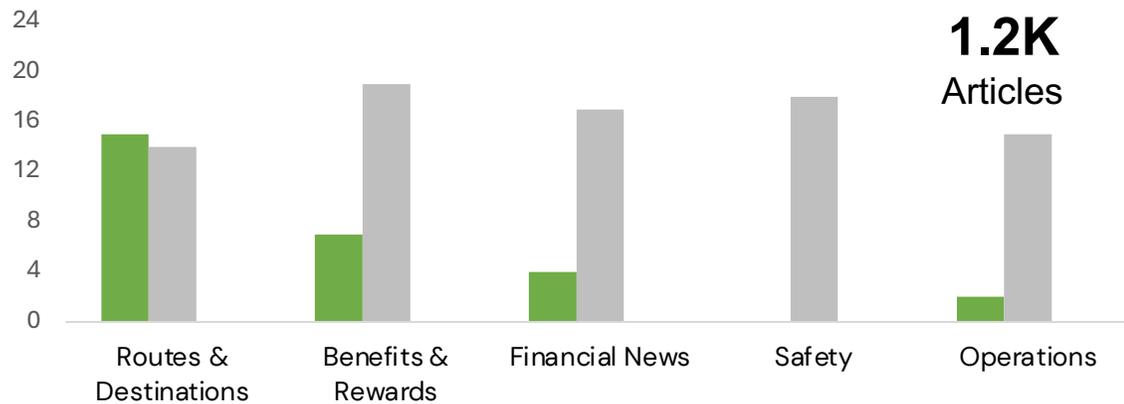
## Top 5 Topics by Sentiment on Social Media

**900**  
Posts

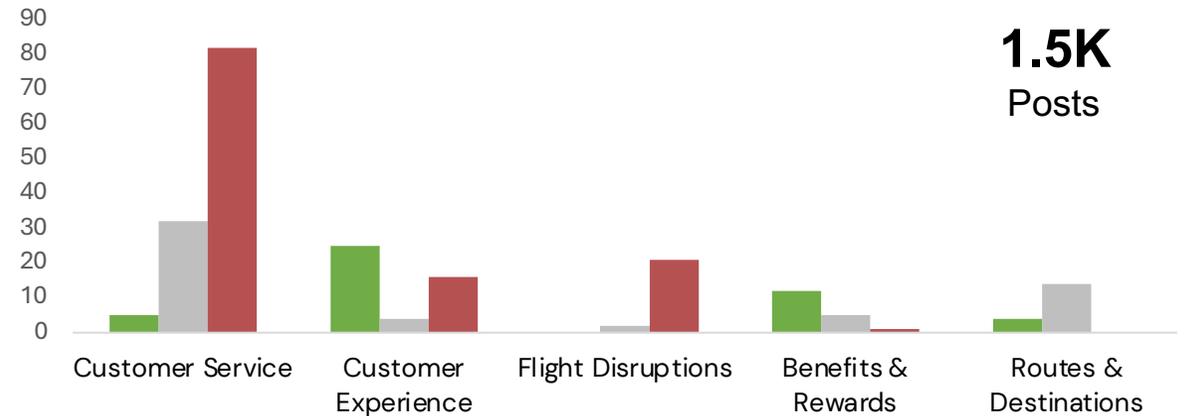




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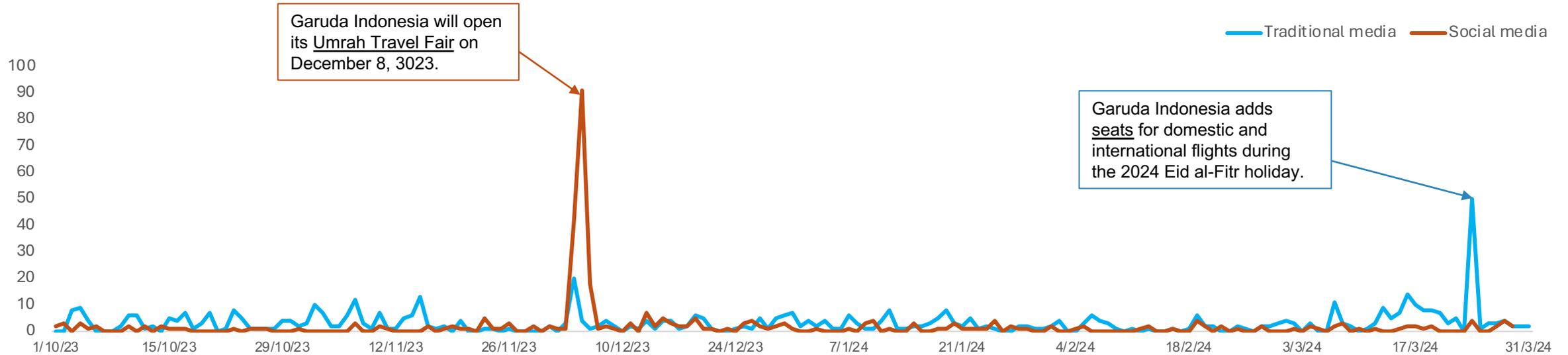


## Top 5 Topics by Sentiment on Social Media





# Garuda Indonesia Overview



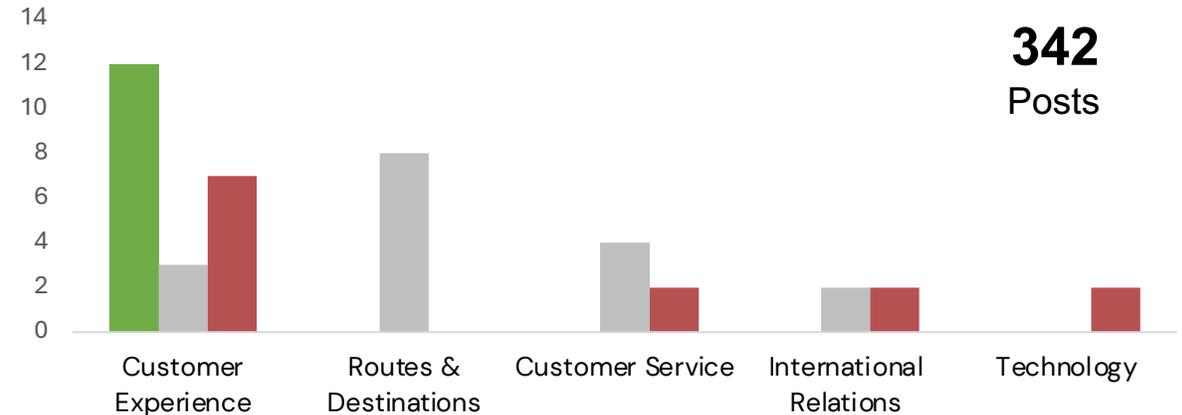
## Top 5 Topics by Sentiment in Traditional Media

**580**  
Articles

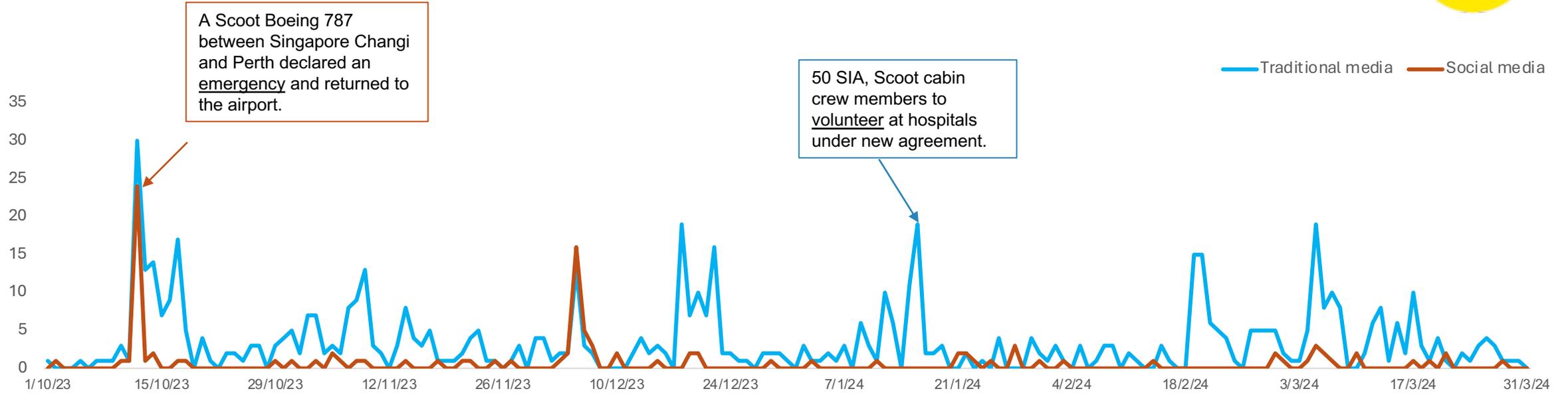


## Top 5 Topics by Sentiment on Social Media

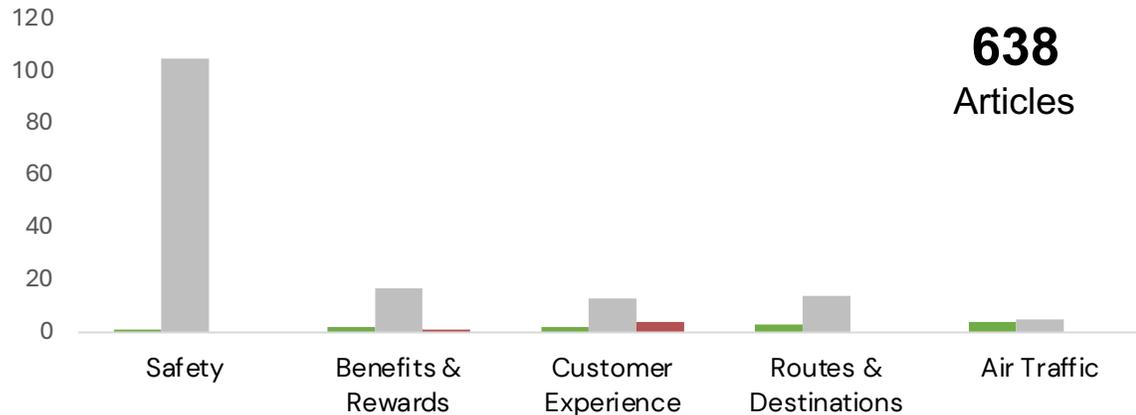
**342**  
Posts



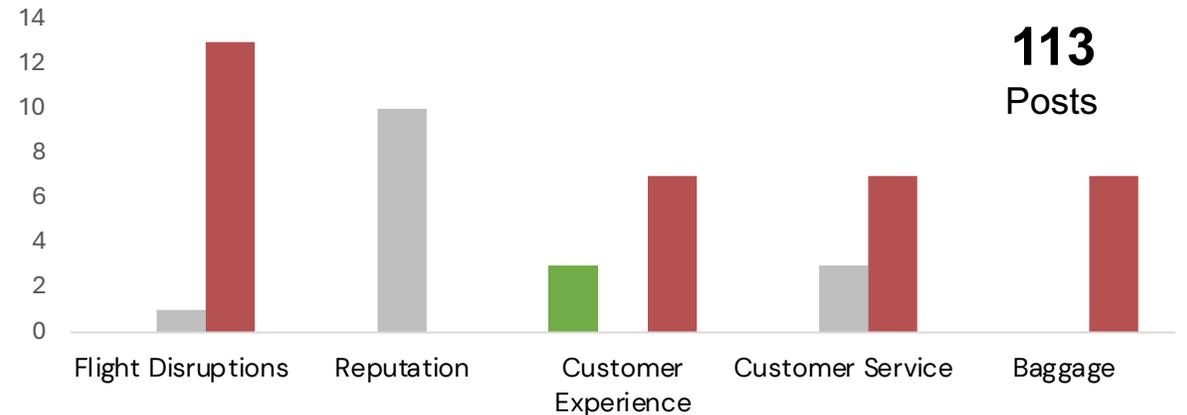
# Scout Overview

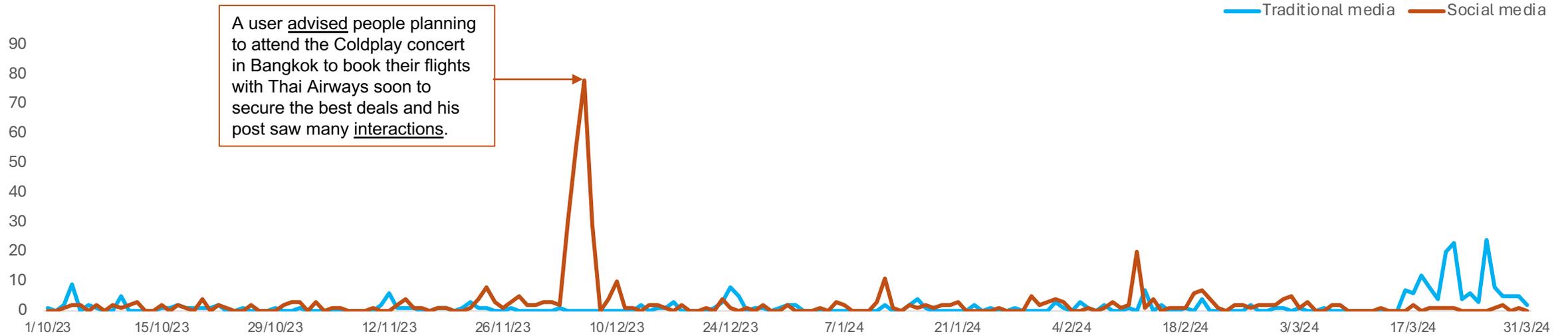


## Top 5 Topics by Sentiment in Traditional Media

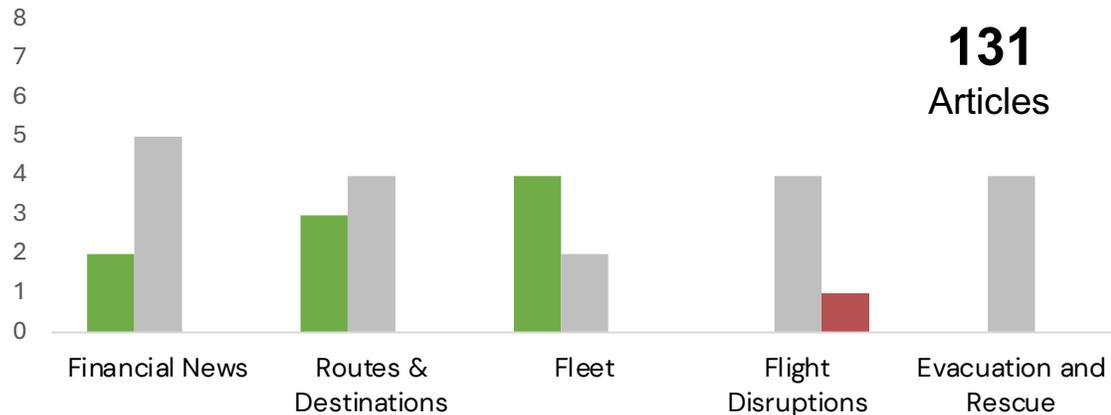


## Top 5 Topics by Sentiment on Social Media

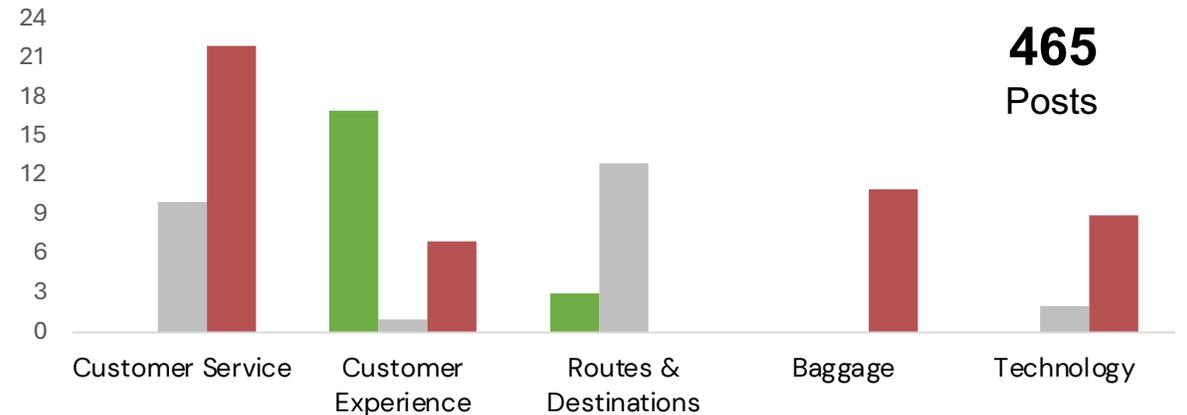




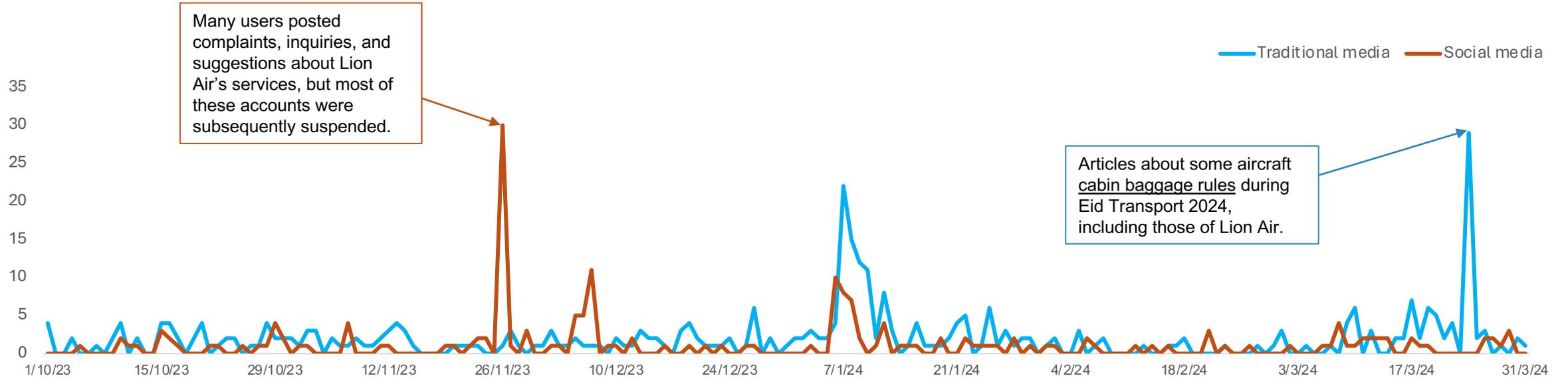
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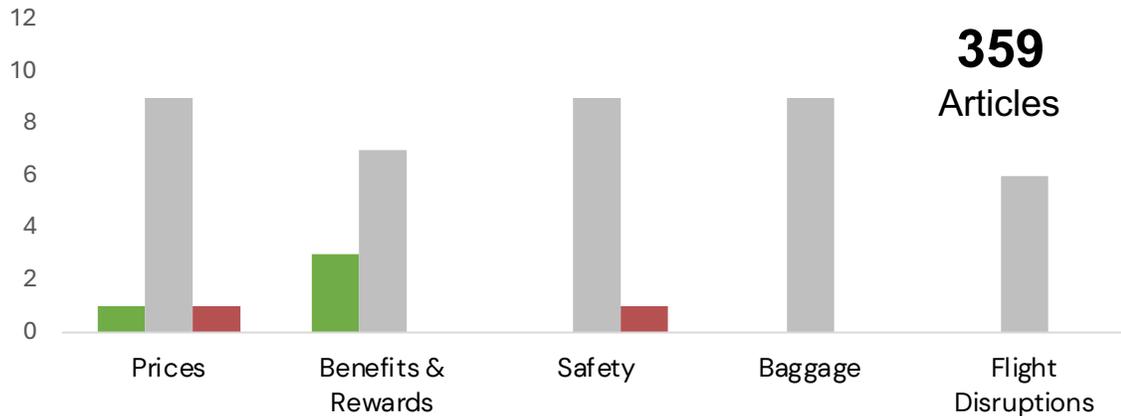
## Top 5 Topics by Sentiment on Social Media



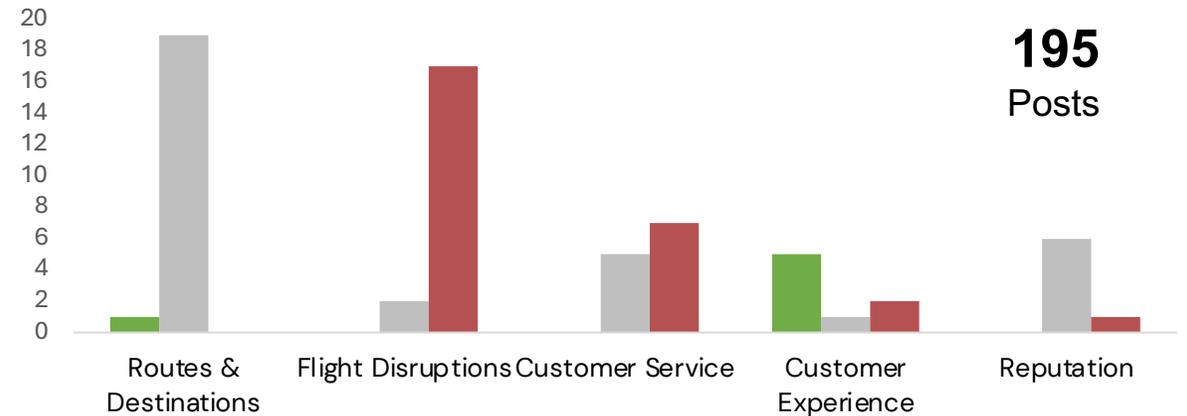
# Lion Air Overview

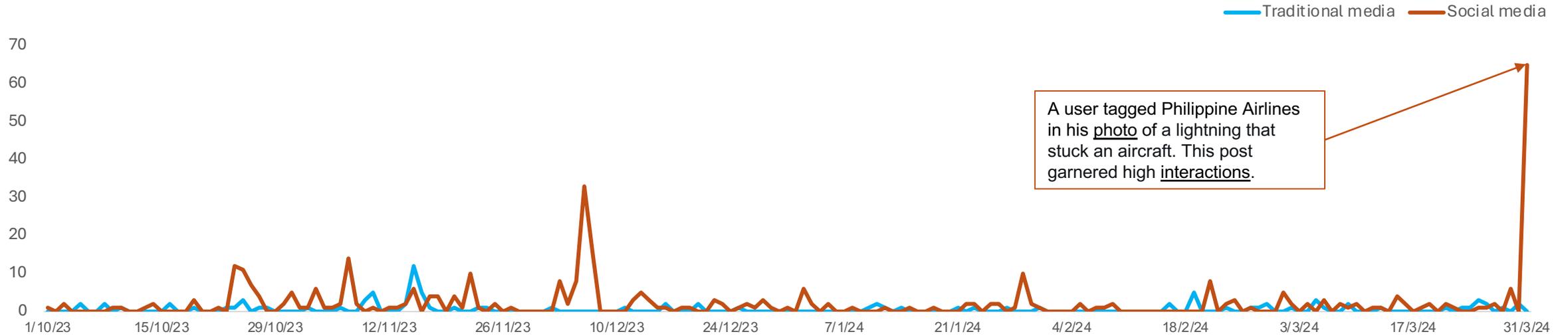


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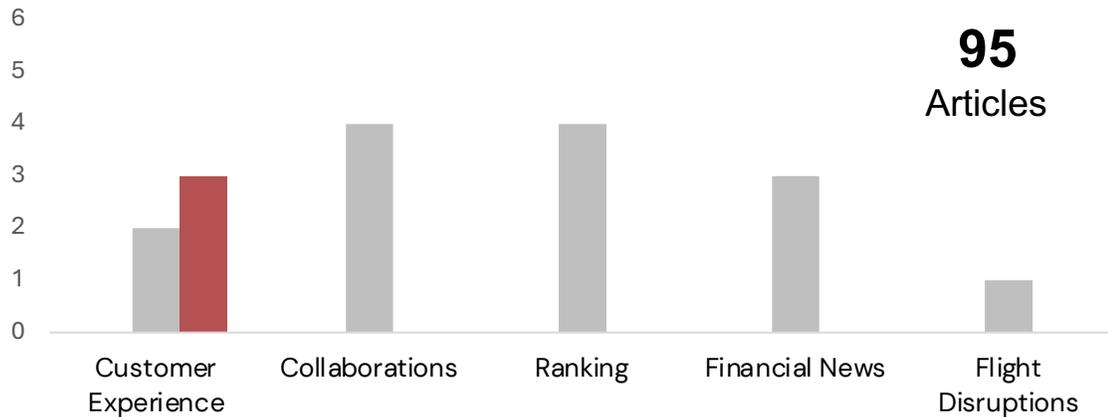


## Top 5 Topics by Sentiment on Social Media

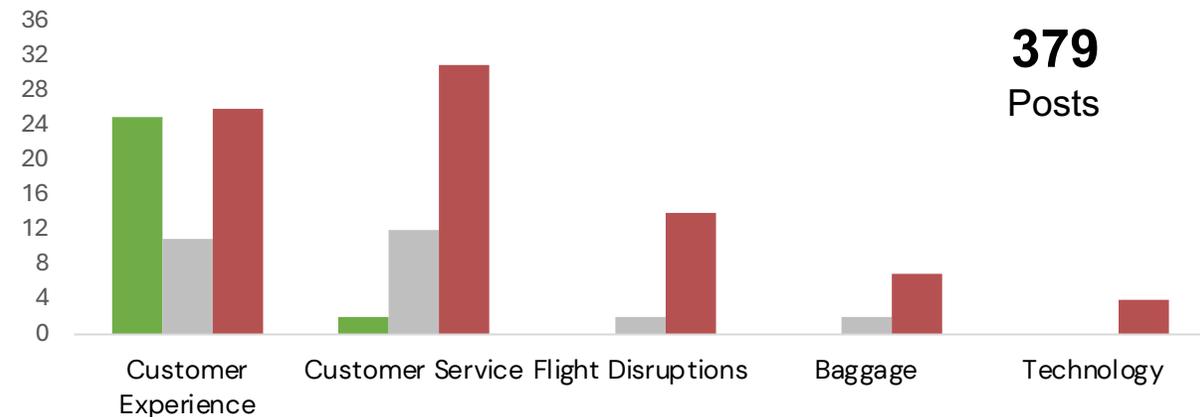




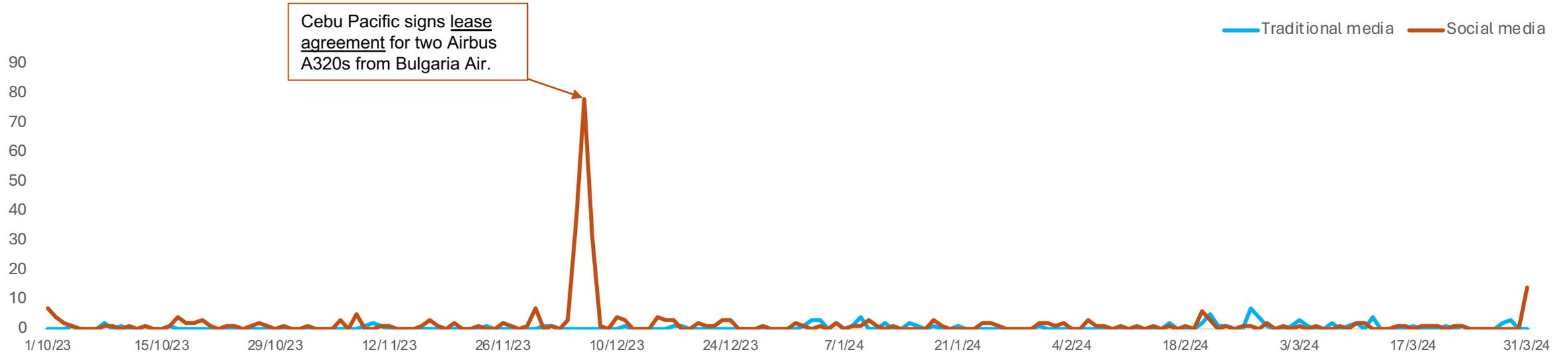
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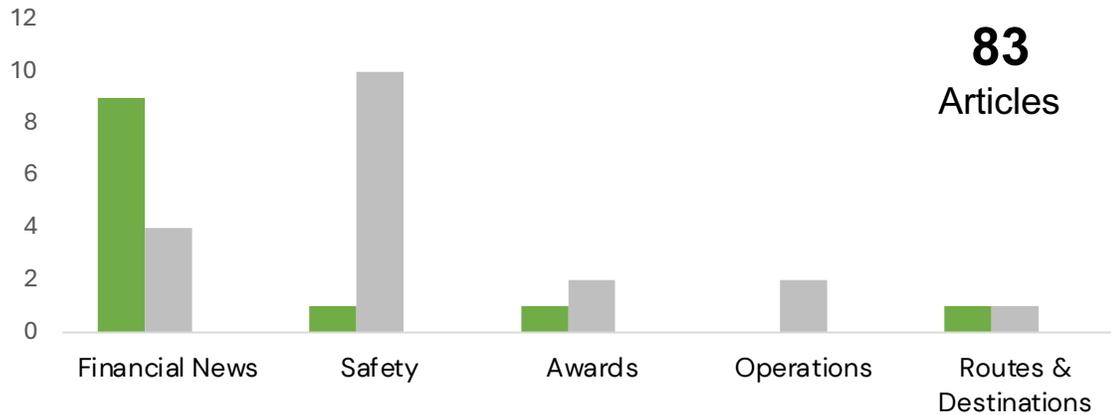
## Top 5 Topics by Sentiment on Social Media



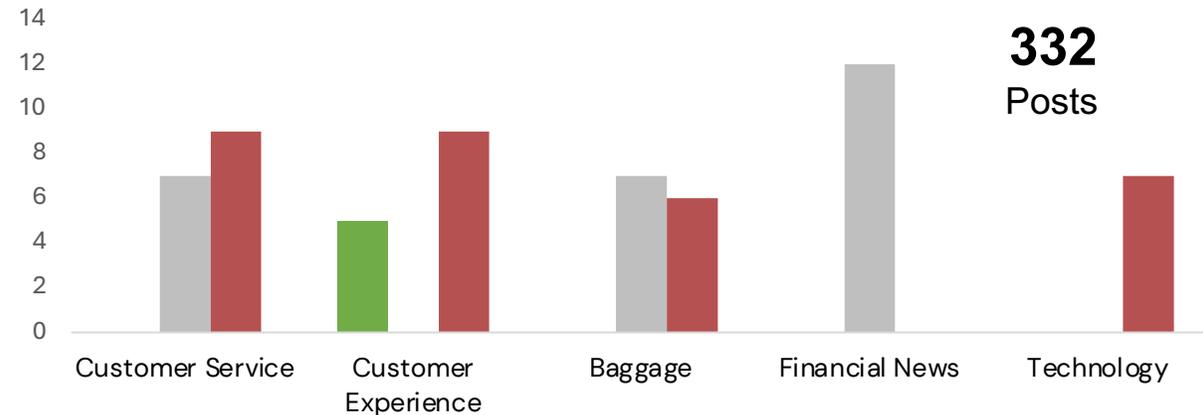
# Cebu Pacific Overview



## Top 5 Topics by Sentiment in Traditional Media



## Top 5 Topics by Sentiment on Social Media





## About CARMA

CARMA is a global leader in media intelligence and communications evaluation solutions.

We provide media monitoring and unrivalled media analysis.

Armed with our insights, our clients are empowered to make informed decisions and achieve their PR goals with precision.

Our PR measurement programs are supported by our global team of analysts, and powered by primary research capabilities and real-time media monitoring across print, broadcast, online and social media.

Our clients include PR, communications and marketing professionals in all industries in the private sector, governments and NGOs all over the world.

With over 750 employees across five continents and 20 countries, combined with our technology, expertise and client service, CARMA delivers what matters.

Discover CARMA's suite of solutions, our team of experts, and the work we do.

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