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**IMX-in-Industry**

# **People Generally Know In Advance Exactly What They Want To Watch on TV**

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# Introduction:

## The Study Question

When people watch TV, do they generally know in advance exactly what they want to watch? Or do they typically not know, and browse through alternatives before choosing something to watch? The answer has significant implications for the design of the TV's "first screen".

Should the "first screen" of the TV prioritize showing a person's routinely-watched content, to facilitate easy access, or should it prioritize showing relevant alternatives for the person to browse through, to discover new content?

# Introduction:

## Recent Case Method

The prior research on the question of whether people generally know in advance exactly what they want to watch on TV revealed that they generally do know. But these studies were based on surveys where people reported what they do in the “typical case” [1,2]. This “typical case” survey method assumes people know what they typically do.

We wanted to test this question using the “recent case” survey method [3], asking people to report on only their most recent TV watching experience, rather than what they believe they typically do. We also asked a series of questions to see if their answer differed by content type, viewing mode, etc.

# Method:

## Survey Respondents

There were 867 respondents, who completed the survey (on-line questionnaire)

- SurveyMonkey.Com was used
- Respondents were members of SurveyMonkey US panel
- 48% male; 52% female
- Age from 18-65+ roughly following US Census
- From all regions of US
- Household income \$75K+
- Survey taken during week of January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020
- To represent both weekdays and weekend days, 25% of the respondents received survey on the weekend and 75% received survey during the work week

# Method: Survey

The survey asked the respondent to think about the last time they watched TV

- When was it?
- What content type was it? (e.g., Movie, Series, Sports, etc.)
- How was it accessed? (Cable, Satellite, App built into TV, etc.)
  - If an app was used, which app (Netflix, Amazon, etc.)
- What type of media was it? (Live TV, Video on Demand, DVR)
  - If it was on live TV, which channel was it?

# Method:

## “Key” Question

Then respondents were asked the “key question”

*<sup>1</sup>Which of the following best describes how you chose the last thing you watched?*

- I knew exactly what I wanted to watch*
  - I had a rough idea but didn't know exactly what I wanted to watch*
  - I didn't know what I wanted to watch at all prior to watching*
  - I didn't choose it, someone else did*
  - I don't remember*
- If the respondent had a rough idea or didn't know at all, how much browsing did they do?
    - If they browsed, which browsing activities did they do?
  - How many minutes did the respondent spend in the process of choosing the last thing they watched
  - If the respondent watched a series episode, had they watched it before?
    - How long since they previously watched an episode?
  - What was the name of what the respondent watched?

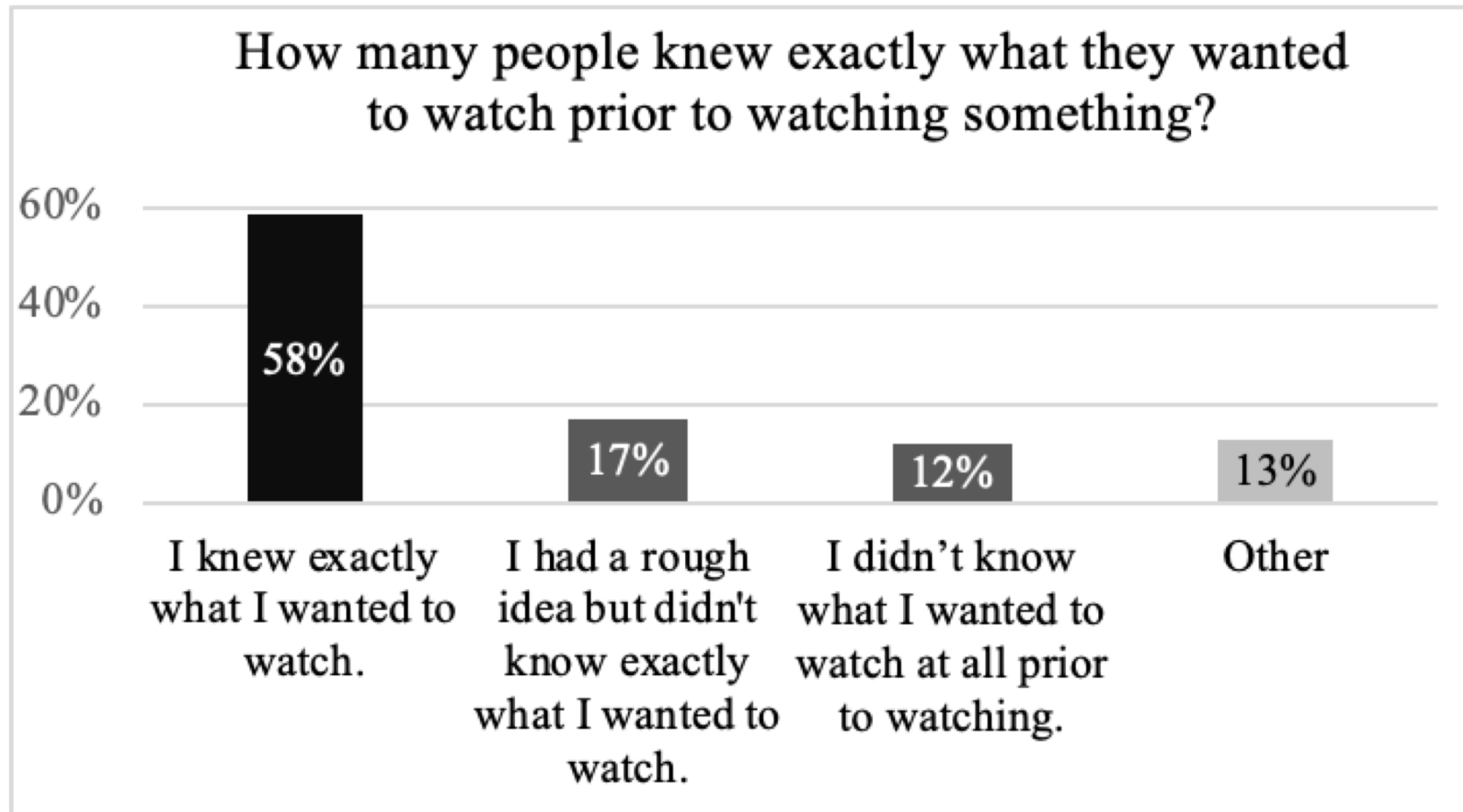
*<sup>1</sup> Actual survey question wording*

## Results:

The last time respondents watched TV was within one day

Ninety-two percent of the respondents reported that the last time they watched TV was “today” (51%) or “yesterday” (41%). Thus, their memory of the last thing they watched, and whether or not they knew exactly what they wanted to watch, was relatively fresh.

# Most respondents knew exactly what they wanted to watch

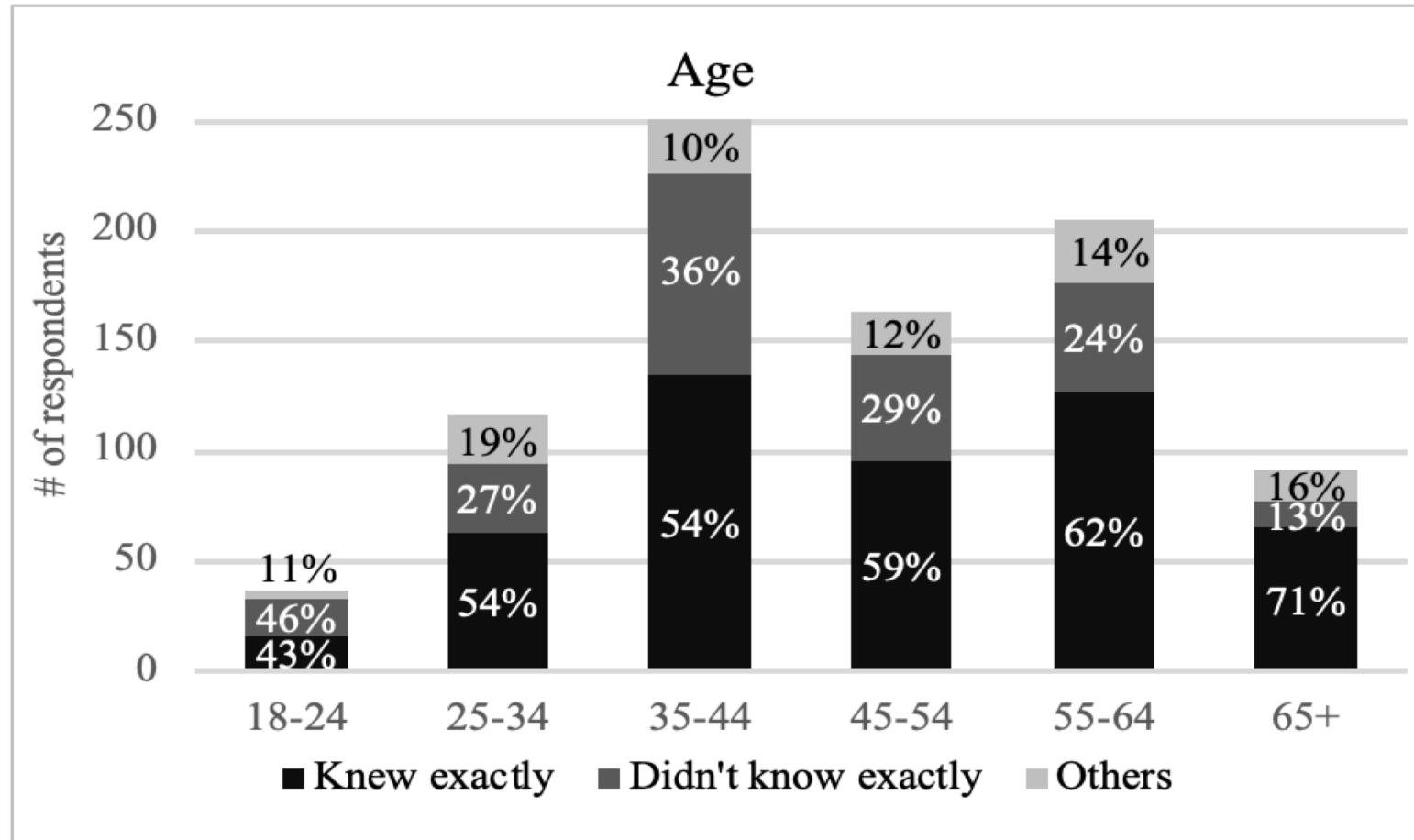


Knew exactly what they wanted to watch vs. Did not know; Significant by Binomial Test,  $p < 0.05$

Other: *I didn't choose it, someone else did; I don't remember*

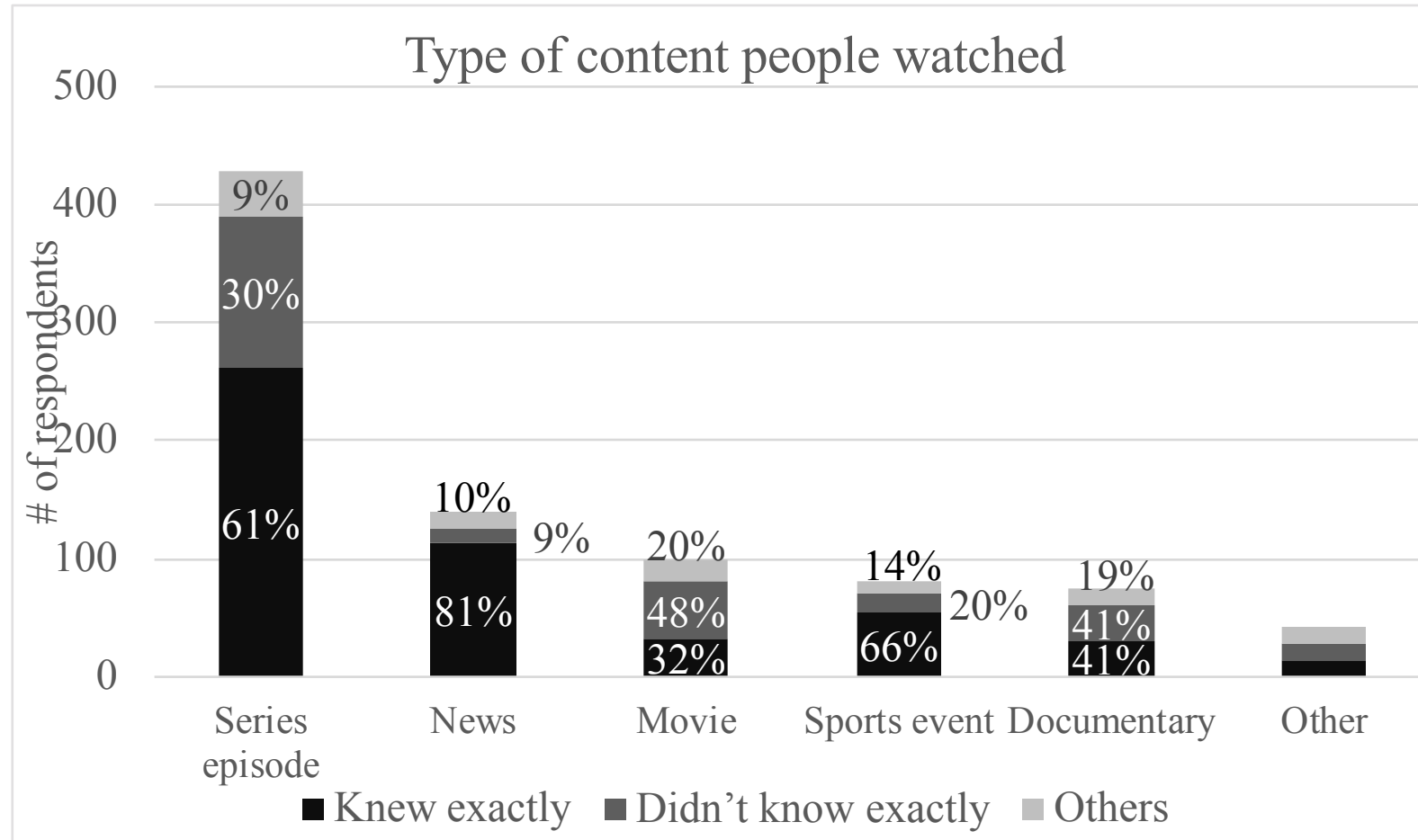


# Older respondents were more likely to know exactly what they wanted to watch



( $\chi^2$  (1, N = 751) = 11.631, p = .001)

# The last thing most respondents reported watching was a series episode



( $\chi^2$  (5, N = 754) = 77.850,  $p < .001$ )

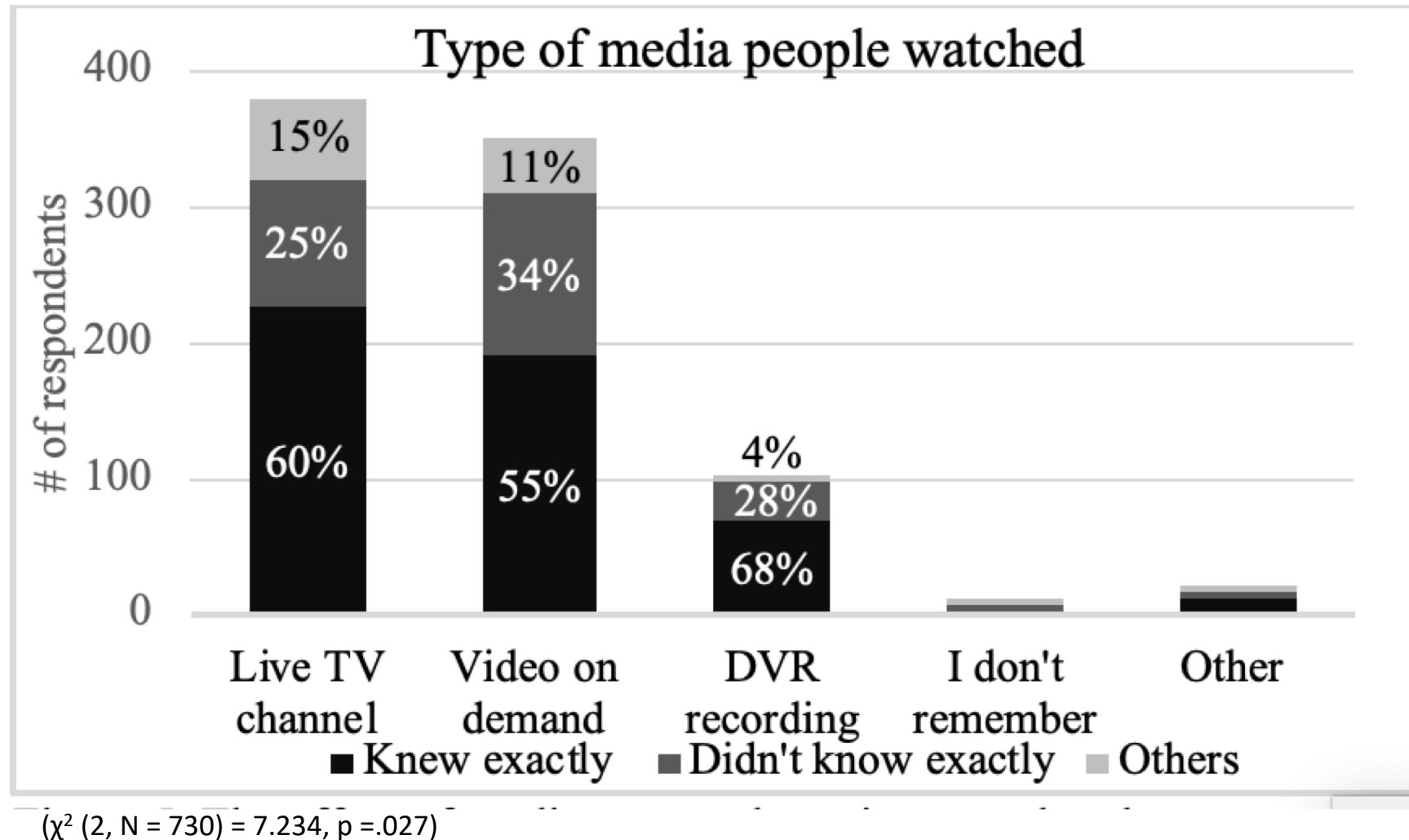
# Results:

## Respondents reported watching series “routinely”

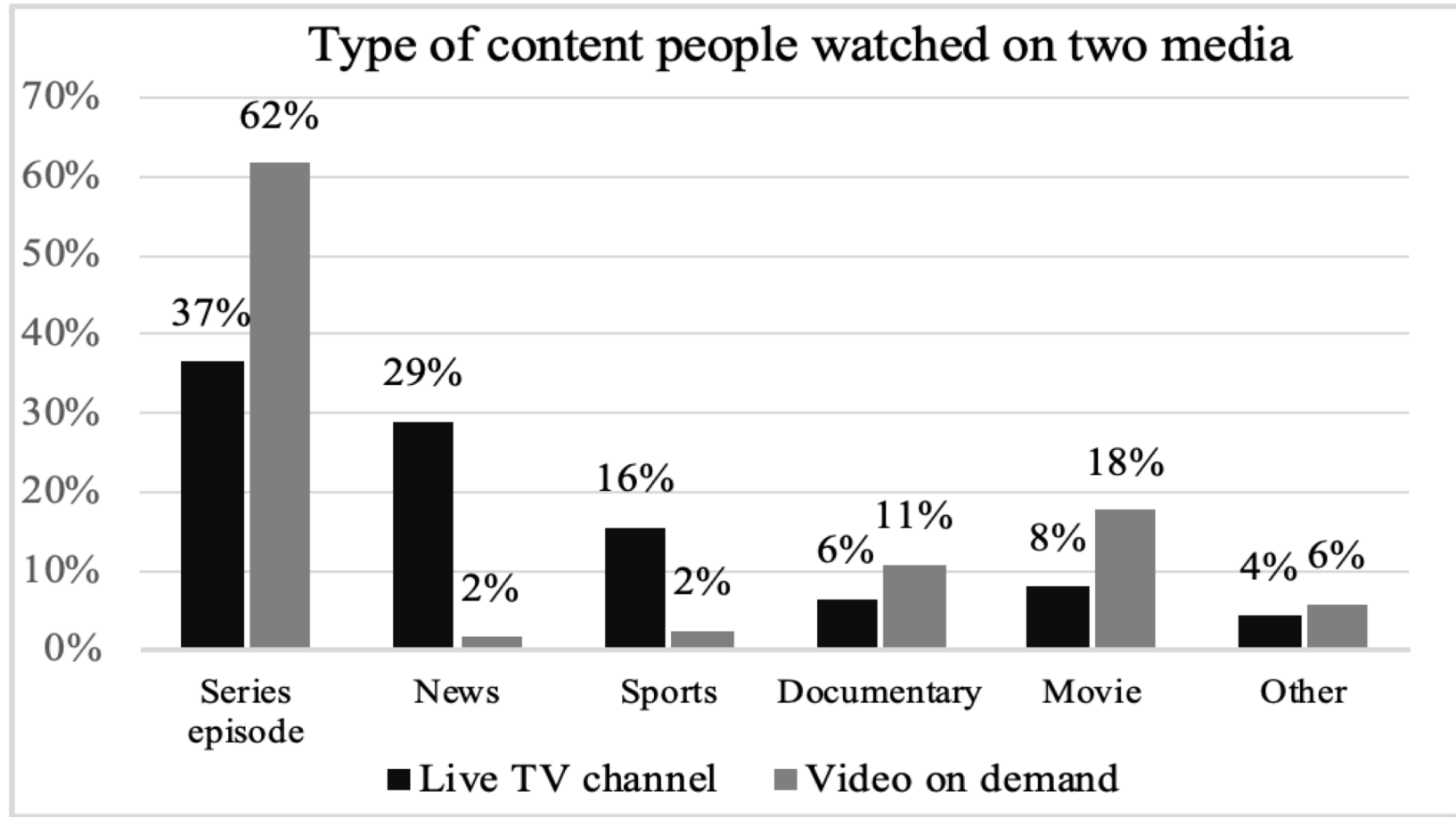
If the last thing respondents watched was a series episode, 88% of respondents reported they had watched some of that series before.

Forty-six percent reported they had watched an episode only a day or two before. Another 22% of respondents reported having watched an episode within the past week.

The last thing respondents watched was mostly on live TV or video-on-demand

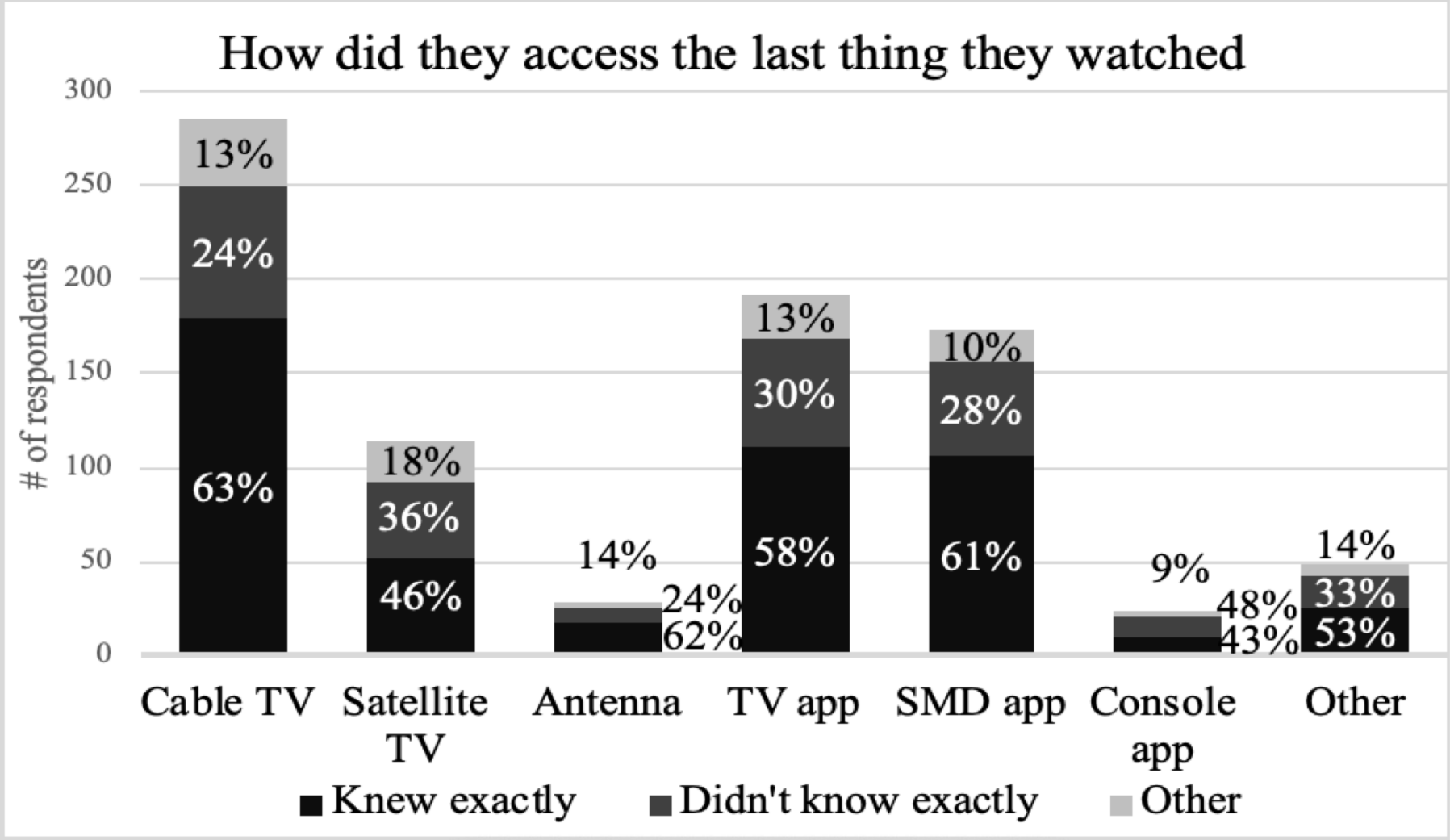


News and sports were mostly watched on Live TV whereas series and movies were mostly watched on video on demand



( $\chi^2$  (8, N = 756) = 188.274,  $p < .001$ )

The last thing respondents watched was on cable TV or on an app built into their TV; they usually knew exactly what they wanted to watch in both situations



( $\chi^2$  (6, N = 754) = 12.868, p = .045)

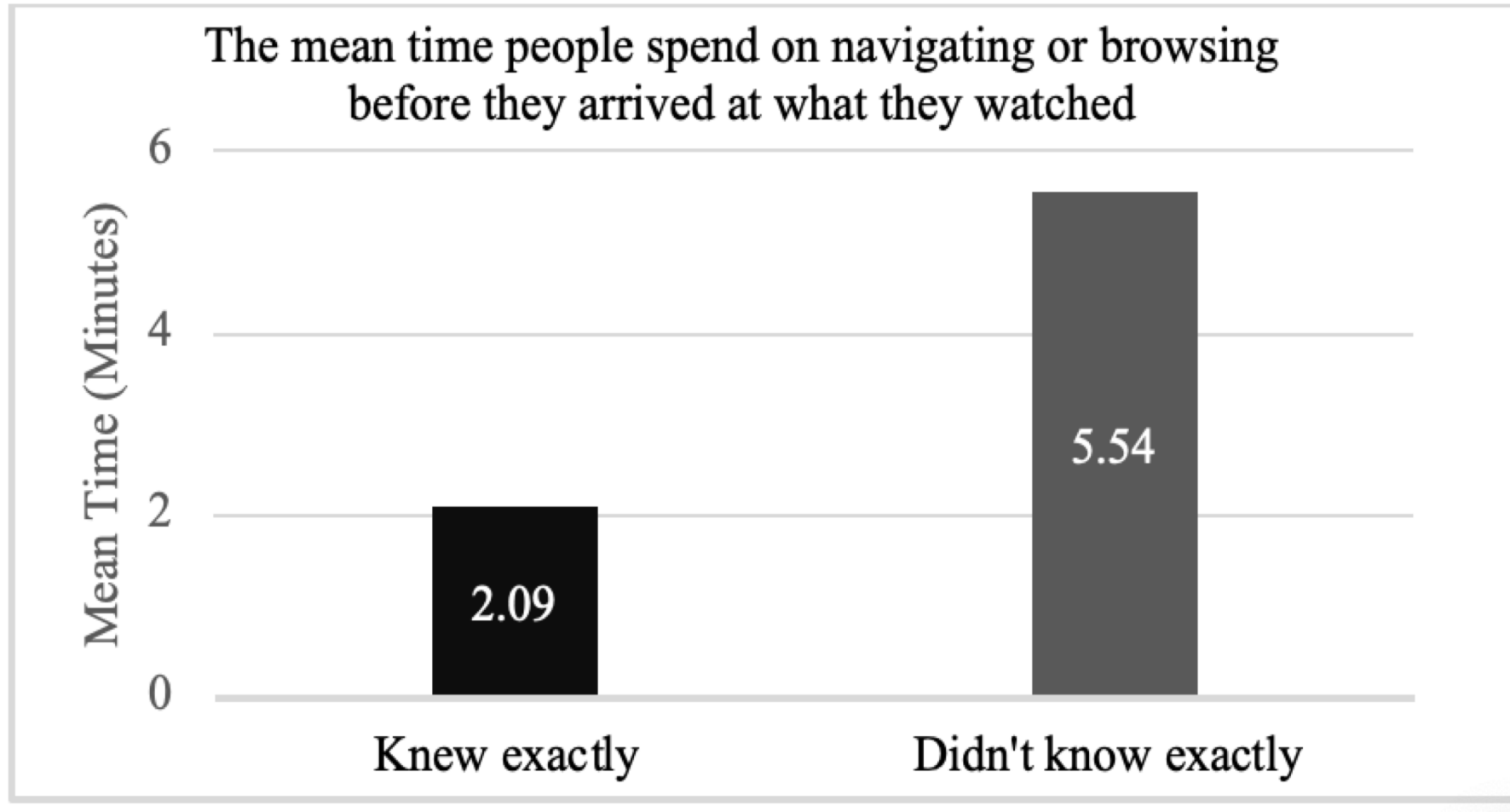
## Results:

Respondents remembered the name of the last thing they watched and which app was used

Eighty-eight percent of respondents reported remembering the name of the last thing they watched and they were able to provide the name.

If the last thing respondents watched was via an app, either built into the TV (TV app) or on a streaming media device (SMD app), 94% reported remembering which app was used and they were able to provide the name of the app.

# When respondents knew exactly what they wanted to watch, they estimated accessing it much quicker



A Mann-Whitney test indicated that less time was taken by people who knew exactly (Mdn = 1) than for people who didn't know exactly (Mdn = 5),  $W = 117780$ ,  $p < .001$ .



## Summary & Conclusion:

# Respondents usually knew exactly what they wanted to watch

The current study replicated the previous findings by using a “recent case” method, potentially more accurate, where respondents are asked to consider only the most recent content they watched on TV.

Most respondents reported that, in their most recent TV watching experience, they knew exactly what they wanted to watch before selecting it.

# Summary & Conclusion:

## Respondents mostly watched series

Respondents usually knew exactly what they want to watch because most of what they watched were series episodes that they had been routinely-watching.

So most of the time respondents didn't have to browse or discover new content to watch, they knew what they wanted to watch and went directly to it.

# Summary & Conclusion:

## Prioritize quick access to routinely-watched content

The implications for TV design are that accessing routinely-watched content is more common, and thus a larger part of the TV user experience, than browsing and discovering new content.

Thus, TV design should prioritize making it quick to get to routinely-watched content on the TV's first screen.

# References

1. Katsingris, P., (2019) “The Nielsen Total Audience Report Q1 2019”.
2. Lee, B., and Lee, R. (1995). “How and Why People Watch TV: Implications for the Future of Interactive Television”. Journal of Advertising Research. (Nov.-Dec. 1995) 1-18
3. Chang, L. and Krosnick, J. (2003). “Measuring the Frequency of Regular Behaviors: Comparing the ‘typical week’ to the ‘past week’”. Sociological Methodology, 33: 55-80