

MEDIA HABITS OF TEENAGERS:  
A STUDY OF THREE URBAN SCHOOLS IN MELAKA

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study reported on the ethnic differences in media habits of teenagers. The media chosen in this study included newspaper, magazine, radio and television. A non-probability sample of 358 teenagers in Form Four and Form Five from Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Bukit Baru, Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Gajah Berang and Sekolah Menengah Sri Tanjung in Melaka were selected. A self-administered questionnaire was used to analyse the pattern of print and broadcast media exposure and the differences in the media habits of Malay, Chinese and Indian teenagers. The main objective of this study was to analyse the ethnic group differences in the readership on newspaper and magazines of teenagers and also ethnic group differences in the exposure of radio and television. The results of the study indicated that even though teenagers have extensive access to all types of print and broadcast media they spent more time watching television than listening to the radio or reading the newspaper. Newspapers were used by teenagers for providing them with news and information but radio and television were used for entertainment. The two most popular newspapers they read were Berita Harian and The Utusan Malaysia. The favourite sections read by teenagers in the daily newspaper were current affairs, entertainment/artistes and the sports section. The favourite types of magazines read by teenagers were entertainment/artistes. As for the broadcast media, Hitz Top 40 was teenager's favourite radio station and NTV7 was their favourite television channel. When ethnic group comparisons was made, there were more differences than similarities in the media habits of teenagers. There were significant differences in the patterns of selection of each individual media and also within the categories of media. The preference of media use is greatly influence by language because teenagers tend to select media of their own language. It can be concluded that teenagers make little use of their multilingual capability in using the print and electronic media.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Mass media is a means of public communication that can reach large numbers of people over a wide area in a relatively short time. Ease of communication is a distinctive and exclusive feature of modern life. Both the print and broadcast media comprise an important part of modern man's environment. This communication web serves as a background for many daily activities of adults or even teenagers who are attune to all these media. This media revolution that is taking place in the entire globe maybe the threshold of new media breakthroughs in the age of satellite and advance electronic. The technological innovations in the areas of high definition television, CD Rom software, new generation electronic games and other interactive media that will emerge on the so call information highway open up new areas of interest for teenagers.

Malaysia like any other countries is a society in a world with no boundary lines in the new technology and information age. Technological advancement in telecommunication has brought the world closer and has almost revolutionised the communication industries. Rapid changes in the available media in the near future will even be more dramatic than those of the recent past. Our culture appears to be the edge of an unprecedented communication revolution that has an impact on the exposure of such media especially the teenagers.

Mass media is a source of entertainment, information and education and is an important contemporary social phenomenon. According to Schramm (1961), print media that include books, magazines, newspapers are depicted as information media while broadcast media are primarily for entertainment. Teenagers are the most important consumers of various kinds of media disregarding whether mass media is use as an information or entertainment medium. These are both mass and individual media that can be directly and easily accessible for the teenagers who can select the type of media and the content convey by the media as much as they want. In Malaysia, they may



choose to read the Malay Language newspapers - Berita Harian and Utusan Malaysia which have the largest circulation, or The New Straits Times, The Star, Nanyang Siang Pau and Sin Chiew Jit Poh and Tamil language dailies, besides the wide array of other newspapers, books, magazines and comics.

The two major electronic media comprising of radio and television, are powerful medium and are these two broadcast media play an important role in the of life teenagers. For those who choose to relax and be entertain, they may choose the broadcast media that is available in every corner of the country in Malaysia. There are four terrestrial, five cable television and 23 satellite television channels transmitted throughout the country. The government owned Radio Television Malaysia (RTM) operates TV1 and TV2, while TV3, Metrovision and NTV7 are the three private television network in the country which offer a wide variety of local and imported programmes. Each station has different programme line-up and format to attract different segments of the audience.

Teenagers in general seem at first glance to be sophisticated and worldly. They enjoy all the advantages of modern science like television, radio and various print and electronic media. Households with children and teenagers are likely to have higher ownership of a wide range of electronic entertainment equipment and also varieties of print media. The majority of the Malaysian households have television, radio, tape recorders, compact disk, video player or even personal computer. The access to such media in the home affects the media habits of these teenagers. Pop music, the latest movie, the latest disk or magazines in the market are very important matters that interest them greatly. These teenagers have ample time on their hands. How these teenagers select the type of programmes or media depends entirely on each individual's taste and talents. Some may spend hours pouring over books, magazines and newspapers or laze around in front of the television or listening to the radio. In order to know broadly how lives of these teenagers are organised and to what kinds of media they are expose to, it is essential to examine their habits in media use.

### **1.1 Objectives of the Study**

The study will give a snapshot of the totality of teenager's media habits and experiences besides updating existing literature on teenager's patterns of media use by examining a variety of media, including newspaper, magazine, radio and television. This study is to examine the media habits of teenagers in three urban schools in Melaka. The objective of this study is to answer the following research questions.

- 1 To analyse the ethnic group differences in the newspaper and magazine readership among teenagers.
- 2 To identify the ethnic group differences in the selection and preference of radio and television stations and programmes.
- 3 To examine the daily average time spend by teenagers reading newspapers, listening to the radio and watching television.

In attempting to capture the influence of ethnic group on media preference, it is hypothesise that different patterns of media use will be found among different ethnic groups, in this case, among the Malay, Chinese and Indian teenagers. It is further hypothesise that patterns of selection would vary markedly in the case of individual media and within categories of media. It is assume that these different patterns will be explicable in terms of cultural factors associated to ethnicity.

### **1.2 Scope of Study**

This study will investigate the media habits of 358 secondary school students in Form 4 and Form 5 in Melaka. The respondents are from Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Bukit Baru, Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Gajah Berang, and Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Sri Tanjung. The media habits in this study refer to the exposure of teenagers to mass media. In dealing with mass media, the study is confine to four types of media consisting of newspaper, magazine, radio and television.