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MEDIA CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOUR OF YOUNG INDONESIAN  
EXECUTIVES: SEARCHING FOR OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
CONVENTIONAL MEDIA TO EXIST

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate how young executive audience interacts with both conventional and contemporary media in their daily life. Although it has not played as the dominant source of information and entertainment due to high competition from digital media, this study found that conventional media still have a place in the life of this audience. Interestingly, in situations where online media is consumed in a continuous manner, the complementary of conventional media such as printed and electronic remains a necessity. This research finds that it is very important for media managers to acknowledge the differences in needs within a certain period or a particular moment associated with the benefit sought. Through ethnography study, it revealed that difference in media choices are also determined by situational behaviours such as (1) Work-driven vs. Self-driven needs; (2) Passive Content Search vs. Active Content Search; (3) Speed/Urgency vs. Profoundness of content; (4) Work-related vs. Lifestyle-related content; and (5) Mobile vs. Static. This finding contributes in widening the perspective of conventional media managers about the way to survive in an increasingly narrow market.

### INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of various types of smartphones, the increase in wireless service coverage areas, and the extensive varieties of social media have triggered a change in the way young executives consume media (McKinsey & Company, 2016). News updates from conventional media, i.e., print and electronic, can now be accessed from the palm of one's hand. Instead of spending time accessing conventional media, young people prefer browsing the news digitally. The increasing usage of smartphones is

an important point that cannot be ignored by conventional media managers. Interest in newspapers has dwindled drastically (Newman, Fletcher, Kalogeropoulos, Levy, & Nielsen, 2017), particularly during the morning hours when the highest consumption of newspapers traditionally occurred. Smartphones present inevitable competition to traditional media; they are practical and useful devices that can deliver news quickly and at any time or place.

In Indonesia, the Internet has shifted the makeup of the media landscape and has exceeded the consumption of print media and radio; Internet usage has reached 50% of the total population, with 60% of the adult population using smartphones (Kemp, 2018). Meanwhile, television is still preferred over online and print media as the advertising channel for first introducing a product or service (Kemp, 2018). APJII (2014) stated that in Indonesia, Internet users are primarily younger, around the ages of 18-25 years (58.4%) and 26-35 years (33.8%); therefore, it is interesting to understand how media consumption behaviour among young people has changed. Executives need information quickly and accurately. They are also known to read the newspaper in the morning; however, the latest data show that they are no longer reading newspapers.

Media managers do not fully understand the implications of these shifts in media consumption behaviour among their target audiences, particularly executives, which means that their media content is no longer relevant to the latest needs of their target audiences. In other words, print media are still using the same format and content that have remained unchanged for years. Media organizations have been competing to tap into the online market and implement digital strategies, but management of conventional media still has not seen many changes. The content strategy and management of conventional media, in particular newspapers, have not been updated to accommodate their audiences' changing media consumption behaviour.

In more developed countries where the number of Internet users owning smartphones has grown drastically, many conventional media outlets, particularly print media, were unable to prevail. They were required to change their business models, not by fighting against the changes but by accepting and adapting to them (Sharma, 2016). The US-based conventional print media outlet, Newsweek, for example, decided to stop printing and moved to a digital platform in late 2012 (BBC News, 2012).

Currently, the media landscape is more complex than ever; to understand media usage and consumption, the most widely used variables to differentiate one type of media from another is the method of delivery, such as electronic media vs. print media. In the context of advertisement placement, marketers often use the time-based terminology of prime time (when most media is consumed) vs. non-prime time (when media is least consumed). However, these variables are no longer adequate for explaining media consumption behaviour in the current reality, where the choice of media has changed and shifted online.

Some more contextual variables have been used in past studies and can be a reference for understanding audience consumption behaviour (Bjur et al., 2013; Schröder, 2015; Swart, Peters, & Broersma, 2017; Yuan, 2011). However, the choice among various types of media can no longer be

explained by variables that are simply demographic or socio-demographic. The main purpose of this study was to gather information about how executives interact with both conventional and contemporary media in their daily lives and, more specifically, the effect of that interaction and its influence on the selection of media. This study further explores the different motivations for media consumption based on the needs and behaviour associated with particular situations. The results of this study provide new media segmentation maps based on situation and behaviour, which can be useful for media owners, especially for conventional media companies targeting young executives.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

With the rapid growth of information and communication technology, the public seeks to access more information and entertainment, and their connections with their network expand even more. However, not everyone has the same knowledge and skills regarding Internet media usage. This creates what are called digital natives and digital immigrants (Prensky, 2001). Digital natives are individuals who have access to and familiarity with computers, cell phones, email clients, tablets and other technologies that are available today. Digital natives are younger generations who were born and grew up in the Internet era. They understand how to utilize Internet media. They are very comfortable using these technological innovations. Many labels have been used to describe this group, including 'the Netizen', 'the Net generation', 'the Millennials' and 'the Google Generation' (Selwyn, 2009).

Conventional media, such as magazines, newspapers, and public radio, were previously adequate sources for up-to-date information on what was happening nationally and globally. However, this is no longer the case. Audiences want to know more about many different things, and they are very contextual about their needs. An Internet search engine helps them find any information they need. Online media are capable of providing much more information with many references to the public in a relatively short amount of time, even within seconds. This suits today's society and its increasing need for information in various aspects of daily life, including the workplace. Online media makes it easy to collect information efficiently with minimal effort, as opposed to using simpler conventional media. Online media are also able to accommodate audio, visual, and textual content. This type of media also offers exceptionally easy access to a remarkably large quantity of information.

Online media provide unlimited access to information, in which audiences can obtain information whenever needed. This is in contrast to print media, for example, newspapers, where there is a time limit in accessing the information. Moreover, social media, which is also one part of online media, allows users to access information shared by others (Dewanthi, Anggraeni, & Setjadinigrat, 2018). There is a growing assumption that conventional media no longer have a place in the day-to-day lives of young people, particularly young executives. Young executives are selected as the audience for this study because they represent an educated consumer group that understands technology and generally owns

smartphones. This group is also known to have high mobility while still needing media as the source of their information and communication.

Society today is given choices regarding its use of information and news media. A study conducted at Gothenburg University from 1986–2012 by Westlund and Färdigh (2015) explains that in 2012, cross-platform mobile news and media, or cross media, consumption showed an increase compared to newspaper consumption. Because the use of mobile devices is becoming universal, to understand consumption behaviour in the era of mobile digital natives, one must also understand the holistic nature of complementary usage across devices. In particular, it is important to understand how people consume content on different devices and how audience consumption habits are changing in response to recent technological shifts. A study by Maulana and Hikmah (2016) found that in Indonesia, smartphones are no longer used merely as platforms for communication and entertainment, such as listening to music and watching videos, but are also frequently used for other activities, such as accessing information, storing mobile data, and making shopping transactions. Smartphones are now closely tied to all the daily activities of their users.

Previous studies have showed that new technology will not completely replace old technology (Chan-Olmsted, Rim, & Zerba, 2013) Instead, while new technology pushes conventional media aside to a certain extent, there are still opportunities for conventional media and new media to complement each other. Conventional media will continue to exist, in varying degrees of displacement and complementarity with new media technology, contingent on user characteristics, such as sociodemographics. Chan-Olmsted et al. (2013) explained that conventional media has its own place, but that place will depend on users' characteristics, such as socio-demographics.

Past studies have discussed the different dimensions and requirements of various media types as they relate to each other, and from those studies, many more relevant variables appear to explain the hyper-competitive situation in the current media landscape. The variables found ranged from technical to needs-based segmentation. For example, the functional differentiation, or relative advantage, between different types of media is related to whether the media types are interchangeable, independent of each other, or free (Bjur et al., 2013; Swart et al., 2017). Normative pressures from society to use or not to use a particular kind of media are also considered (Schröder, 2015; Swart et al., 2017). Despite the interest in and accessibility of a particular media type, situational context regarding daily routines and lifestyles is always important (Bjur et al., 2013; Schröder, 2015; Swart et al., 2017; Yuan, 2011).

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The respondents included in this study were 50 young executives, who representing the digital natives, ranging in age from 25 to 40 years, living in Jakarta city. They consist of 31 Marketing executives, 13 Non-Marketing executives, 3 Creative workers and 3 Entrepreneurs. Respondent characteristics were 55% male and 45% female; 55% between 20–25 years, 30% between 25–30 years, and 15% above 30 years.

Ethnography comes out as a way to learn further about the interaction between the audiences and their consumed media (Moore, 1993). Qualitative explorative study can help gain meaningful and useful insights to delve deeper into consumers' live experience (Elliott & Jankel - Elliott, 2003). The effectiveness of ethnography method in media behavioural context has been shown in previous studies. Prawira and Rizkiansyah (2018) used ethnography in three major online news media in Indonesia to gain deep understanding on media Search Engine Optimization effectiveness.

The study started with Webnography technique aiming to thoroughly explore the behavioural variables influencing media consumption among young executives in digital media. Webnography is an extended version of netnography principles. In netnography, online observations and interactions are valued as a reflection that produced deep human understanding in online forums (Kozinets, 2002). Webnography introduced by Puri (2007) as ethnography within the Internet world in order to search for insights from the natural conversations that occur in various web forums. The objective of webnography is to uncover some hidden insights that is hard to delve from the face-to-face conversation, and to target the data triangulation procedures in qualitative research.

After webnography, a follow-up exploration through direct observation was conducted. This is a quite effective way to get insights from investigating what types of media the young executives interact in their daily life. Researchers visited the premises where respondents can be observed directly, both in the work-related premises and in the outside work premises such as cafes, mall, home, etc. Moreover, the process of validating insights continued by exercising Subject diaries among young executives, combined during week days and week-end. Respondents were asked to fill the diaries with structured tables to work on for five weekdays and over the weekend. Finally, the study was concluded with contextual in-depth interviews to confirm and validate gained insights.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Media Consumption Characteristics**

In this study, despite online media's obvious domination in the lives of young executives, the study also provided evidence that conventional media, such as newspapers and magazines, were still a part of their lives. The study confirmed that the consumption of printed newspapers has declined drastically because people prefer contextual information that can be sourced quickly. For young executives, digital media has almost no time constraints. Digital media allows continuous access, starting from the moment one wakes up to the time one goes to bed. Digital media is also not limited by location. Whether at home, commuting, or in a meeting, digital devices always accompany young executives. The only thing that can disrupt one's access to online media is Internet connectivity. Media consumption occurred through devices at certain times, while at other times, conventional media sources were a better fit for the needs of young executives. To further elaborate, television, for example, was still the first choice for richer news with audio and visual content displayed on a screen larger than that of a smartphone.

There was an assumption among respondents that newspapers were not important, as they provided information that was also available on the Internet. Respondents also sensed that, compared to smartphones and other media outlets, newspapers were obsolete. For them, reading newspapers was only about reading the headlines; they stopped to read further only if there was something interesting. They rarely read newspapers in detail and thoroughly. Respondents thought magazines were more suited to spare time; they only chose to purchase one when there were certain topics that interested them or helped them stay up-to-date. This study also found that newspapers and magazines provided at cafes were rarely read. By observation, this study found that visitors only read magazines as entertainment or as a substitute when they were bored with their devices. The visitors who were still interested in reading newspapers and magazines usually took several newspapers/magazines to their tables at the same time, then merely skimmed the headlines and pictures. This study also found that magazines were rarely carried around everywhere, as they previously had been. Occasionally, people brought magazines home; initially they intended to read them, but it did not happen. Magazines piled up, unread, and people only glanced at the headlines. Magazines brought home were rarely read; when magazines were read, it was usually at the office.

For young executives, magazines were only a source of information for lifestyle, entertainment and personal interest stories. For content related to work, they usually substituted magazines with other media channels such as the Internet. The content that was still consumed from business and marketing magazines was usually lighter information, such as trends, self promoting information, awards, various personal interest stories, or community-related updates.

*“I once put a magazine in the car. I was planning to read it during travel time or at home. But I was more attracted to interact with the gadget rather than reading the magazine. At the end, the magazine was sitting there for weeks, without notice” (Male Marketing Executive, 32 years)*

Television and newspapers were among the conventional media types consumed on weekdays, although at a decreasing rate. From this information, we can see that the opportunities for conventional media are getting smaller. Television was viewed early in the morning, prior to carrying on with daily activities, and later at night before sleep. Meanwhile, newspapers were more preferable in the morning, whether at home, on the way to the office, or at the office before work. Radio, including music and traffic update, was reserved for driving. Magazines were rarely consumed. In the event magazines happened to be located near the executives, they might be consumed in the evening when the executive was relaxing. However, it is noteworthy that the executives would never intentionally go out and buy a magazine. Whether print media was available at the right time also determined whether it would be read.

The difference between weekend and weekday consumption was particularly evident in television, newspaper, and magazine consumption. These conventional media were read more frequently over the weekend at almost all times, except during the day when the majority of the respondents were out. Interestingly, radio consumption also varied based on

time. Since radio consumption was generally associated with driving, more consumption occurred during the day when people were out in their cars.

Meanwhile, consumption of newspapers and magazines was rather stable over the weekend. This is an opportunity that managers of print media and other conventional media need to act on. Content that may be read more thoroughly, such as stories pertaining to lifestyle and things unrelated to work, is optimal for weekend consumption. Weekly summaries of matters related to the economy and politics can also be published on weekends, as long as they are kept short and contain pictures, which have been proven as an effective way to encourage audiences to stop and read an article.

### Behavioural Dimensions

With a growing number of media alternatives, it is increasingly difficult to understand the motivation of audiences such as young executives in selecting a particular media type in a given moment. At first glance, it appears that the media selection is not patterned. However, after tracing the results of further studies through ethnography studies, various variables were revealed as drivers of media selection behaviour. Table 1 and Table 2 are summaries of various exploratory techniques, describing media journey young executive describing media usage patterns on weekdays and weekends, divided by the continuous/partial used, at certain time blocks, and various content types it seeks.

Understanding the motivation of media selection becomes more contextual when the categorization of particular situations and media types is more concrete. Some new variables that are situational emerged from insights into time-based behaviour. There are 5 interesting types of dichotomous behavioural variables that can be used for media segmentation (1) work-driven vs. self-driven needs; (2) passive content search vs. active content search; (3) speed/urgency vs. depth of content; (4) work-related vs. lifestyle-related content; and (5) mobile vs. static. These findings complement and improve our previous understanding of media consumption variables in previous studies.

Table 1. Seven block time in the consumer media journey during weekdays

	<i>Block Time</i>						
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Continuous vs. Contemporary</i>							
Smartphone	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
Television	V						V
Newspaper		V					
Magazines						V	
Laptop/Desktop			V		V	V	
Radio		V				V	
<i>Selected Content of the Media</i>							
Community topic	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
General News	V	V					V
Business			V		V		V
Info Traffic		V	V	V			
Entertainment	V	V	V	V	V	V	V

*Block time:* (1) Before any daily activity, 5:00–7:00; (2) Early morning, 7:00–9:00; (3) Late morning, 9:00–12:00; (4) Lunch, 12:00–13:00; (5) Mid-afternoon, 13:00–17:00; (6) Late afternoon, 17:00–19:00; (7) Evening, 19:00–22:00.

Table 2  
*Five block time in the consumer media journey during weekend*

	<i>Block Time</i>				
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Continuous vs. Complementary</i>					
<b>Smartphone</b>	V	V	V	V	V
<b>Television</b>	V	V		V	V
<b>Newspaper</b>	V	V		V	
<b>Magazines</b>		V		V	
<b>Laptop/Desktop</b>		V			V
<b>Radio</b>			V		
<i>Content Selection</i>					
<b>Community topic</b>	V	V	V	V	V
<b>Personal Interest</b>		V	V	V	
<b>General news</b>	V	V			
<b>Lifestyle</b>	V	V	V	V	V
<b>Entertainment</b>	V	V			V

*Block time:* (1) Before any daily activity, 5:00–9:00; (2) Morning, 9:00–12:00; (3) Afternoon, 12:00–15:00; (4) Late afternoon, 15:00–19:00; (5) Evening, 19:00–22:00.

***Work-driven vs. Self-driven needs***

The diaries shows that there are two kinds of need to access the media, which are work-driven based on work-related needs, and self-driven based on one’s needs. Work-driven efforts include joining workshops, reading books, consuming media (both electronic and printed), reading printed journals or research report, and accessing online formal media such as e-journals, e-news, and e-books. Self-driven efforts include having a discussion with one’s superior or colleague, consuming media (both electronic and printed), consuming online contents such as blogs and forums, and following opinion leaders’ social media updates.

*"Sometime I got few interesting magazine articles from my boss. He highlighted some sections and put sticky notes here and there. I found that handy and useful"* (Female Marketing Executive, 28 years)

*"My company maintain the subscription of the financial newspaper because they have financial report sections that are useful and we bring this into our regular meeting"* (Male Financial Executive, 35 years)

***Passive vs. Active Content Search Behaviour***

When in need of particular information, one would actively search based on topics or scopes. This is now done mostly on digital media through search engines due to unlimited access. These behaviours are more focused and are incomparable to other activities. Search activity was not limited to certain media but instead makes use of multiple resources, as much information is garnered from several reliable sources. Furthermore, while business-related inquiries call for more credible data, lifestyle-related ones allow information that is not research-based.

Passive search occurs when young executives are not in need of specific information but merely want to stay up-to-date with what is going on. This is synonymous with conventional media consumption in which passive consumption occurs the most frequently. This consumption occurs most often during people’s spare time and in parallel with other activities. One of

the factors limiting conventional media consumption is the fact that the news can be accessed at set hours and times, and it is not available to access anytime or anywhere due to its limited format. During a passive search on more serious topics such as business or finance, although the data might not be research-based, respondents still looked for reliable sources. Any credibility was based on the chosen media brand. Conventional media still has a market here. However, with time constraints, respondents tended to be selective and would limit their activity to just a few choices. Interestingly, when something triggered attention, a passive search could turn into an active search by follow-up search on a particular topic. Table 3 and Table 4 show summaries of active vs. passive search block time in the weekdays and weekend.

Table 3 *Active vs. passive search in the weekdays*

	<i>Block Time</i>						
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Community topic</i>	Passive	Passive	Passive	Passive	Passive	Passive	Passive
<i>General News</i>	Passive	Passive					Passive
<i>Business</i>			Passive & Active		Passive & Active		Passive & Active
<i>Info Traffic</i>		Passive	Passive	Passive			
<i>Entertainment</i>	Passive	Passive	Passive	Passive	Passive	Passive	Passive

*Block time:* (1) Before any daily activity, 5:00–7:00; (2) Early morning, 7:00–9:00; (3) Late morning, 9:00–12:00; (4) Lunch, 12:00–13:00; (5) Mid-afternoon, 13:00–17:00; (6) Late afternoon, 17:00–19:00; (7) Evening, 19:00–22:00.

Table 4. *Active vs. passive search in the weekend*

	<i>Block Time</i>				
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Community topic</i>	Passive	Passive	Passive	Passive	Passive
<i>Personal Interest</i>		Passive & Active	Passive & Active	Passive & Active	
<i>General news</i>	Passive	Passive			
<i>Lifestyle</i>	Passive	Passive	Passive	Passive	Passive
<i>Entertainment</i>	Passive	Passive	Passive	Passive	Passive

*Block time:* (1) Before any daily activity, 5:00–9:00; (2) Morning, 9:00–12:00; (3) Afternoon, 12:00–15:00; (4) Late afternoon, 15:00–19:00; (5) Evening, 19:00–22:00.

***Speed/Urgency vs. Profoundness of Content***

When speed is essential, update frequency or, in other words, the most up-to-date news, is of the utmost importance. News audiences will be satisfied with short and general information, and no further analysis is needed. They also preferred information that came with pictures or other visualization.

Meanwhile, when trying to grasp certain topics that required a deeper understanding, the audiences looks for longer pieces with more analysis. For political, business, financial, and marketing information, these audiences will get their information from TV talk shows, columns in magazines or newspapers, or other sources providing in-depth analyses. Social media is also used as a source for articles and online lectures. At the

same time, online journals are used for more serious and academic information.

Magazines are the preferred source for a deeper understanding of lifestyle issues. Those that specialize in certain areas, such as home and living, and interior design, are highly welcomed when an audience needs in-depth input about that particular area. When in need of a deeper understanding, audiences prefer information with a sharp analysis and attractive data and infographics, with the knowledge that it was made by a credible reference. This was a scenario in which the source's credibility was more important than the speed of the information. The different perspectives and points of view in the content analysis were also appreciated by the audience.

In a situation where it is urgent to get the information, respondents tend to rely on an online search engine because it gives them the choice of many reading options. If they are looking for more in-depth information and need more thorough content, they will spend time reading the full text of the articles. In contrast, in an urgent situation where they need just cursory information, they read short summaries such as journal abstracts or Wikipedia definitions.

#### ***Work-related content vs. Lifestyle-related content***

In the workplace, the supporting media must be reputable and well-known. Sources have to be reliable, and therefore the available choices are limited to scientific journals, well known TV programmes, and reputable print media sources. Media with analysis and research data were preferable. Research-oriented business and financial data with full analyses are preferred for financial executives. Meanwhile, those in marketing preferred data related to business competition, such as awards accepted and market movements.

Specifically, for work-related content, Internet-savvy executives prefer their sources of information to be accessible from their devices. Reading time for newspapers has decreased, with many executives preferring to merely skim the contents or headlines and then continue their reading online. Magazines were consumed only when people had nothing else to do. TV consumption became more limited, and the choices for viewing decreased. For lifestyle-related content, or information not related to work, the selection of the programme or media type was customized to suit a particular need.

#### ***Mobile vs. Static***

Mobile young executives rely more on their gadgets for both active and passive search of information. Printed media would be an option only when they have no other choice, for example during an appointment at the beauty-salon where they would entertain themselves with lifestyle news. Other times calling for printed media would during break or spare time. They might also consume printed media on weekend morning before going out with friends or family.

Young executives with more static schedules combine the use of gadgets and printed media to get information. Having lower mobility means they

have more time to consume printed media, such as newspaper and magazine, or TV.

## CONCLUSIONS

Speed, accessibility, and context are the benefits of digital media that cannot be matched by conventional media. Therefore, television, magazine, newspaper, and radio media managers should not attempt to protect conventional media as a primary source of information. Rather, they should aim to be an excellent complementary media source alongside online media.

For these conventional media outlets, efforts to survive should be focused on identifying the 'complementary spaces' for their audiences. Newspapers and magazines have smaller roles in the lives of their consumers/audiences. However, this study found several useful time blocks on weekdays and weekends, in which print media and magazines were still used for deeper content exploration.

Media consumption varies not only in terms of socio-demographics, as suggested by earlier studies, but also in terms of the particular situation and the motivation for the consumption. This study further found that differences in media choices are also determined by situational behaviour, such as (1) work-driven vs. self-driven needs; (2) passive content search vs. active content search; (3) speed/urgency vs. profoundness of content; (4) work-related vs. lifestyle-related content; and (5) mobile vs. static content.

This ethnography study has answered several questions, including what young executives' consumption patterns look like and to what extent conventional media's functions and benefits have been replaced by digital media. The study also found that there are still opportunities for conventional media to have a share of media consumption as long as they understand their audiences' behaviour more comprehensively. The content strategies and management styles of conventional media, in particular newspapers, have not been updated to accommodate their audiences' changing media consumption behaviours.

There are many areas that can be explored and studied in future research. It would be interesting to understand the differences in media consumption patterns among young executives with different levels of device usage frequency or with different levels of mobility, etc. More studies are needed to supplement our current understanding of variations in media consumption based on time, such as during weekdays compared to weekends or during working months compared to holiday months.

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