

Malaysians are second most avid weekly readers of newspapers across Asia Pacific: GfK

Survey reveals reading newspapers, listening to music and shopping for groceries are weekly activities engaged by more than half Malaysians.

KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA: Reading the newspapers appear to be one of the most common activities in Malaysia, with around four in five in the country claiming to do it weekly or more often; after listening to music and shopping for groceries. In a recent online survey by GfK, consumers were given a list of activities which include reading books and magazines, exercising, going to the movies, doing volunteer work, dining in restaurants, playing computer games etc, and asked to specify which activities they do often.

The three most common ones which emerged to be most engaged by consumers in Malaysia on a weekly basis are reading papers (82%), listening to music (63%) and grocery shopping (56%). GfK findings revealed that these are also the top three frequent activities of global as well as Asia Pacific consumers, although at varying levels.

"Around 82% of respondents from Malaysia read newspapers on a weekly basis as compared to the Asia Pacific average of only 62%, and an even lower global average of 59%," highlighted Selinna Chin, Managing Director for GfK in Malaysia. "In fact, listening to music is the most popular activity of global consumers, where an average of 76% said they do it weekly or more, followed by shopping for groceries (70%) then reading newspaper (59%)."



A selection of Malaysian newspapers. (Image: Mbl2020, via Wikimedia Commons)

GfK polled over 40,000 consumers aged 15+ across 28 countries, including 11 from Asia Pacific - Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and the latest additions of Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam. Approximately 1,500 respondents per market were surveyed on their attitudes, behaviours and values across a range of topics.

Differences



The survey also revealed some differences between consumers across the globe. For instance, when compared to the regional average, more consumers in Malaysia appear to be spending time outside of home for food and drinks, than cooking or entertaining guests at home. Having a sit-down meal in a restaurant was ranked fourth amongst the list; with two in five (40%) saying they do this weekly or more; while 36% claims to frequent coffeehouse, teahouse, bar, pub or cafes for drinks or snacks. On a regional level, only 35% and 12% of consumers indulge in these activities.

"Eating out is a local culture and common trend in Malaysia, whether smaller towns or larger cities, we are spoilt with choices with a variety of good eateries, some of which are opened late into the night," highlighted Chin. "Families with double-income earnings with less time to cook prefer to spend quality time together with friends and families by dining out."

Another significant finding is the fact that Malaysia has the lowest rate of people who exercise regularly across Asia Pacific. Only 23% of those surveyed said they exercise to keep fit, as compared to the regional average of 36%. Meanwhile, at the opposite end are the Australians (56%) and Singaporeans (50%), of which half or more claim to exercise frequently.

"There are vast differences in habits and behavioural patterns of consumers globally, between the east and west, and even among the individual markets in one particular region," noted Chin. "A formula that works extremely well in one market may fail miserably in another; and hence for businesses to succeed in a market, they need to be well aware and understand the

reasons behind all these cultural diversity," concluded Chin.

The consumer insights detailed in this article are drawn from in-depth analysis of GfK's largest, longest-standing, and most robust consumer trends study in the world - Roper Reports Worldwide. The latest survey was conducted in Jan-Feb 2013.

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