

## A SURVEY OF TELEVISION AND FILM VIEWING IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS OF NEGROS ORIENTAL, PHILIPPINES

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Two major surveys were conducted, one on **television** and the second on **film**, from August to October 1992. The television survey was in two separate versions. The first version involved a longer questionnaire and was only administered to households which owned a television set. The goals of the survey were to examine TV viewing patterns, preferences, and gratifications. The second version had a separate, shorter questionnaire and was administered to those living in households without a television set — to discover whether they were exposed to television at all, to find out generally what they thought of the medium and whether they planned to buy a set in the future. The film survey, similar in approach to the above, was conducted to examine the film-going habits, preferences, and gratifications of the residents of Negros Oriental.

### I. Television Owners

The survey research covered two cities, Dumaguete and Bais, and three towns, Tanjay, Tayasan, and Zamboanguita. These areas were chosen based on population and broadcast reception. For the survey, a multi-stage cluster method of sampling was used. Sample size was 1,200.

**Demographic Profile of the Sample.** Generally, the sample was a good representation of households in the Negros Oriental region. More females (60%) than males (40%) answered the survey, but this skewing is not serious, as the 1990 population census revealed a slightly higher percentage of females in Negros. The sample also reflects the age profile of the population because it skews toward the younger groups, with 47% between 13 and 30 years of age.

For class, the sample is definitely top heavy, overrepresenting the upper classes. One reason for this is that television set ownership was the primary criterion for sample selection. Since in the Visayas less than 50% of the households own television sets, this group is composed principally of the upper and middle classes. However, there must be another reason as well because a full 70% of the sample was classified as A or B Class. According to the population census, only 2% of the Central Visayan population is A or B class. One explanation is that the sample includes two of the largest cities and three moderate-sized towns which would have higher percentages of the upper classes. The other explanation is that students administering the questionnaires were using different criteria from those used

in the census. It is probable that each of these factors contributed to the massive overrepresentation of the A and B classes. In any case, enough of the C and D classes were present in this survey to examine their habits and attitudes separately and determine how they might differ, if at all.

Sampling within selected towns closely reflected the weighting goals which were originally set by the researchers. Forty-two percent of the sample reside in Dumaguete City and 25% are from Bais City. Thus, 67% of the sample live in relatively urban settings. The remaining 33% are split among three rural towns: Tanjay (17%), Tayasan (8%), and Zamboanguita (8%). Taken together, these towns and cities nearly span the length of Negros Oriental and offer a wide spectrum of settings. As mentioned previously, Dumaguete was oversampled because it is the only location in Negros which currently has cable.

**Viewing Patterns.** Nearly two-thirds (63%) of the sample watched television every day. The average viewing time was 3.2 hours per day. Of the towns/cities which were sampled, the most frequent viewers were the residents of Bais (73% watched 3 hours or more per sitting). Dumaguete was the next highest in viewing time (63% watched 3 hours or more). The vast majority of Negros Oriental residents (87%) watch television in the evening. A sizable number (48%) also watch in the afternoon. Much of this viewing is due to the popularity of "Eat Bulaga," a lunch-time program on ABS-CBN, which many named as one of their favorite programs. Very few people (7%) engage in morning TV viewing.

**Channel Preferences.** The channel most received by our sample was ABS-CBN; 86% reported being able to receive its signal. RPN (39%) and GMA (27%) were received by roughly one-third of the sample. Only 9% reported receiving IBC. Dumaguete had the lowest reception of ABS-CBN (76%) but the highest reception of PTV (80%), GMA (36%), and IBC (18%). All of Dumaguete's reception percentages, including ABS-CBN, were boosted by the presence of cable. Very few of those living outside of Dumaguete could receive either PTV or IBC. By and large, rural residents' viewing was limited to ABS-CBN, which 95% could receive. Among many households it was the only choice. In Dumaguete, the dominance of ABS-CBN was being challenged by the local PTV-10 station. Considerably fewer Dumaguete residents (56%) mentioned ABS-CBN as the most preferred channel, while 24% said they preferred PTV, due primarily to one type of programming, PBA basketball. Among cable viewers, a full 45% preferred cable offerings (mostly of foreign programs) over Philippine programming.

**Program Preferences.** The three most frequently viewed programs were News/Public Affairs (mean score = 3.6), Movies (mean score = 3.3) and Variety Shows (mean score = 3.2). The least viewed program type was cartoons (mean score = 2.2). For most popular program types (derived from respondents' three favorite programs lists), Music/Variety Program came out No. 1, followed by News/Public Affairs Program, then Movies.

**Gratifications.** The items revealed by respondents were grouped into three types of gratifications — reality, learning, and fantasy. The most often mentioned gratifications were those of which are reality and learning based. Fantasy gratifications were mentioned least often. It can be said that Negros Oriental viewers place a good deal of importance on realistic presentations and or learning from what they watch. Those viewers most interested in fantasy gratifications are more likely to view series, movies, American shows, and variety shows, whereas those seeking reality and learning gratifications are more likely to view news, education, and interview programs. When respondents were asked directly how satisfied they were with television programs, a majority (70%) could be viewed as moderately satisfied, saying they were either “generally” or “sometimes satisfied”. For news coverage, television was overwhelmingly voted the most trustworthy medium. Of this sample of Negros Oriental television owners, 66% judged television to be the most trustworthy, compared to 18% who selected newspapers, 14% radio, and 2% magazines. This response, however is limited to news programming, with the other media handicapped by their own limitations in this area. Newspapers in the Philippines are read by a small segment of the population, and radio newscasts are generally limited to reading news stories from the newspapers.

**The Future: Cable and VCRs.** All of the cable subscribers were within Dumaguete City. Of those in our sample from Dumaguete, 21% had cable TV. Those most likely to subscribe to cable included those in the A and B classes and the 51 to 60 age group. Only 10% of the C class in Dumaguete had cable, and none from the lower classes. As earlier mentioned, cable subscribers were much less likely to prefer the Philippine ABS-CBN and PTV 10 channels. More cable subscribers preferred the GMA channel (14% vs 4% of non-cable). They also were more likely to say that they watched American shows more often (62% watch often vs 38% for non-cable). It seems those who were subscribing to cable were gravitating toward foreign programs at the expense of Filipino programs. The VCR or “Betamax” technology was much more pervasive in the province than cable. There appears to be a trend toward technology hoarding among the upper classes so that if a person has a VCR it is more likely that he or she will also have cable, if it is available (14% of VCR owners were cable subscribers compared to only 4% of those without VCRs having cable). Like cable subscribers, VCR owners were likely to spend more time watching television (41% of VCR owners and 46% of cable subscribers watch 4 or more hours of television per day as compared to 31% and 34%, respectively, of those without VCRs or cable). Here, it is important to note that both cable television and VCR offer an alternative to those who are not fully satisfied with the program offerings on Philippine television.

## II. Non-TV Households

**Viewing Patterns.** One of the most surprising findings of this survey was that television viewership was so high among non-TV households. It has been estimated that

approximately 60% of the population in this region do not own television sets, but it appears that most of these people are still regularly exposed to television. Notably, television's reach extends to 85% of the province.

**Channel Preferences.** Channel preferences of non-TV owners are very similar to television owners' stated preferences, with ABS-CBN as the leading choice (75%). However, among non-owners living in Dumaguete there is a greater tendency to prefer PTV-10 (for its basketball TV programming).

**Program Preferences** Although news and public affairs are still mentioned often, non-owners do not mention them as often as owners do. Also, sitcoms, action, and interview programs are somewhat less appealing to them. It is the popular Filipino formats which are mentioned more often by non-owners: music, variety, and drama.

**Satisfaction with TV.** Despite non-owners' high level of satisfaction, they are less likely to name television as the best source of news. They appear to turn more often to radio as a news source.

**The Future: Buying a Television.** Nearly six out of ten respondents (59%) said that they plan to buy a TV set in the future. The desire to own a TV set may have more to do with having more control over what is watched and the convenience (and perhaps prestige) of watching in one's home.

### Film Survey

Most of the sample (60%) lived within 10 minutes of an exhibition house. It took the respondents 10 to 20 minutes or slightly over 20 minutes to reach a theater (movie house) or a "Beta house." Three quarters of the sample (74%) watched films in movie theaters. The other 26% watched in "beta houses," which are usually viewing rooms where films are shown on a television monitor hooked up to a Betamax VCR.

**Demographic Profile.** As in the two previous surveys, there was a skewing of the sample toward female respondents (58%), but to a lesser extent. The upper (AB: 30%) and middle (C: 49%) classes are again overrepresented because of the higher concentration of these classes in the areas selected. Although the results in this report are more representative of these classes, there are sufficient numbers of D and E classes (22%) to permit comparisons. Younger people also are somewhat overrepresented, particularly the 18 to 35 age group (63%), but to some extent this reflects the larger concentration of young people in the society.

Over half of the sample (55%) lived in Dumaguete City, one-fifth of the sample (20%) lived in Bais City, but there is also a broad sampling of towns in southern Negros Oriental: Valencia (8%), Bacong (5%), Dauin (5%), Zamboanguita (4%), and Sibulan (4%). Although

this is not representative of the distribution of the province's population, it does permit comparisons between the capital city and outlying regions.

**Viewing Patterns.** Film viewing in this province is a very popular pastime. A substantial number of people (37%) watch movies two or more times a week, and 63% watch at least once a week. Also, the more that people are exposed to other media, the more frequently they see movies or attend films. Those who own a television set and those who watch more frequently are among the most frequent film-goers. Reading *komiks* was associated with slightly higher film attendance.

**Preferences.** Action films are the ones which film audiences in Negros Oriental enjoy the most (viewed often and mentioned as favorite), followed by drama and comedy.

**Importance of Film Elements.** The four film elements receiving the highest ratings were story, theme, actor/actress, and type of film. Generally, the A and B classes were more likely than the other classes to say that an element was very important. There is also evidence to suggest that the more one views films the more aware one becomes of certain film elements like the directors and production company.

**Film Gratifications.** The desire to see a certain actor/actress is one of the most important reasons for attending a film in Negros Oriental. An almost equal percentage felt that action was an important ingredient in films. In contrast, violence was the least important gratification. Respondents seem to want lots of action, but without violence. Viewers also keep on extending the film experience by thinking and talking about the film after it was over.

Generally, responses on a number of measures indicate that film-goers are eager to see a connection between the film they view and the world outside the theater. The statement that movies should make them think about the world received the greatest agreement. Down the list are gratifications which relate to the more specific emotional functions of films: comedy, romance, emotional scenes, sad endings, serious movies, crying while watching films, and violence.