

The Examination on Media Preferences Among Ethnic in Malaysia

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Consumers are always exposed by thousands of commercial messages everyday. It can be either from newspapers ads, billboards, flyers, TV commercials, radio, emails or even SMS (Short Messaging Service). This study is attempt to help the marketers and advertisers to focus on media that most preferable by the consumers and able to come out with more informative and attractive advertisements. This will create high rate of attention to the advertisements and save more costs to the marketers and advertisers. The study will focus on the usage and the convenient in using both mediums, costs, brand recall and the accessibility. A total of 358 printed questionnaires were distributed among respondents and Internet users. The study has been taken around 5 months to complete. The study has also proved that different races may have different interest towards advertising medium due to language and family orientation

Field of research: Marketing (Advertising)

1. Introduction

Malaysia comprise of three major races which majority dominated by Malays followed by Chinese, Indians and other races (such as Eurasian, Kadazan and Bajau- the territories of Sabah and Sarawak on the north end of Borneo). Malaysia's population comprises 29 million people, and throughout its history the territory has been sparsely populated relative to its land area. The government aims for increasing the national population to seventy million by the year 2100. Eighty percent of the population lives on the peninsula. The most important Malaysian demographic statistics are of ethnicity: 60 percent are classified as Malay, 25 percent as of Chinese descent, 10 percent of Indian descent, and 5 percent as others (Department of Statistics, 2009). These population figures have an important place in peninsular history, because Malaysia as a country was created with demography in mind.

Advertising is an important part to the marketers for promotional mix. It helps in creating brand image and product awareness. Advertising is one of the most popular tools that are used by the companies to convince and communicate with the target buyers and customers. All these while traditional medium have been used widely starting with human ads (where we hang a board or poster at human body and they walk here and there to advertise), and progressed to billboard and banners, newspapers, radio and then television. And now where E-commerce sales are growing; cyber advertising

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(including wireless advertising through hand phones) is in demand. Dou, Nielsen, and Tan (2002) state that even though technological changes create uncertainty and our understanding of consumer usage preferences on the internet are still emerging, it is clear that online advertising is now a fact of life. They further added that as a credible medium, the internet should be automatically considered as part of a company's strategic media mix. Since Malaysia comprise of different ethnic groups, the preferences of advertising media may different from one ethnic group to another. In fact, in Malaysia, the advertisers always have different languages of TV advertisements that cater to different ethnic groups. In response to these gaps, this study attempt to identify the power of traditional advertising and online advertising and the effect of these mediums on Malaysian consumers to determine the consumers' preferences.

Specifically, this study also tries to answer the following problems:

- Does demography (the ethnicity) has any impact or show the advertising media preferences?
- Which media is more effective to give total satisfaction to customers?

The study is based on the comparison between two types of major advertisement that is traditional advertisements and online advertisement. The overall objectives of this study is to analyse which media is more effective and able to attract Malaysian consumers, creating brand awareness and in the end, to achieve the total customer satisfaction. The reason behind to carry out the study is because lately, there are many types of media for advertisements in Malaysia. However, there are not many studies have been found tapping into this matter on which media is able to attract Malaysian attention. Only one study by Firdaus (2006) has explored on traditional media preferences among ethnic in Malaysia without looking at online advertising media. Therefore, this study attempt to explore both types of media preferences among different ethnic in Malaysia.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Importance of Advertising

There are many different ways of defining advertising, and whether it is the traditional way, or its interactive part, definitions vary from mindset to mindset. Whether in the form of online or traditional, the purpose of advertisement will be to persuade and attract people to the product, services or even brand. Not only must the advertisement effectively communication the desired message, but the individual audience must be willing to "buy into" the desired message. In other words, for the advertisement to be effective, the communication must be sent and received.

The designation of advertising certainly reflects the claimed desire of most marketing practitioners to communicate openly and honestly with consumers. Indeed the law in most countries forbids false or deceptive advertising. Marketers justify advertising by arguing that advertising is intrinsic to markets and fundamentally beneficial to the customer (Pierre and Leyland, 2005, p539)

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Advertising is a two way communication process. Advertising must communicate appeals that are relevant and effective in the target market environment. The primary purpose of marketing communications is to tell customers about the benefits and values that a product or service offers. The environment in which marketing communications programs and strategies are implemented also varies from country to country. Advertiser need in depth knowledge about appropriate media for reaching certain types of audiences. (Keegan, 2002). Advertising media are the channels of communication through which advertising messages are conveyed. Choosing the best media for an advertising campaign is a critical task, requiring a sound knowledge of the benefits each channel provides for the audiences being targeted and the products being advertised (Arens, 2006).

Keegan (2002) assert that marketers and their advertising agencies invest great amounts of time and money to develop the appropriate advertising appeals, but effective media must be selected to reach consumers with these advertising appeals. The creative task of developing appeals in turn should be informed by knowledge of the media channels that will be used to communicate the appeals. Although markets are becoming increasingly similar in industrial countries, media situations still vary to a great extent. The availability of television, newspapers and other forms of electronic and print media varies around the world. The rapid increase of Internet users is also changing global advertising. This can have an impact on media decisions.

Plummer (2005) claim that the technology of media has undergone amazing change from the growth of the internet and satellite radio, to the emergence of wireless and video games as an advertising channel, and the continuing segmentation of traditional media like television, magazines, and newspapers.

On the other hand, online advertising is not considered as mass media. Internet advertising differs from traditional media advertising in many ways. According to Sung and Joo (2001) among the most salient characteristics are (1) unlimited delivery of information beyond time and space, (2) unlimited amount and sources of information, and (3) the ability to target specific groups of individuals. An information provider can deliver large amounts of information to a specific information consumer at very low cost. The communications costs are minimal; the costs of storing the information on a server are so low as to be insignificant. The only significant cost to providing more information is the production process. Plummer (2005) believes that now the advertisers will spend more with Yahoo and Google to advertise the product and services.

2.2 Traditional Advertising Mediums

Traditional advertising mediums can be either printed or electronic. With the emergence of newspapers and magazines continued by the appearance of radio and television era, these mediums have becoming a necessity place for advertiser to advertise their advertisements. Thousands of advertisers use these mediums to reach consumers and millions of people worldwide will purchase those medium at least one to get information.

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It aims to target all ages from kids, teenagers to adults. Tellis and Gerard (2005) declare advertising is a powerful force in shaping consumer preferences and the effects of advertising last for years and even decades.

Millions of newspapers and magazines have been introduced hoping to catch the attention of many people to read those media and attract revenues. There are magazines and newspapers failed to continue to exist and struggling to stay in market probably because do not have attractive contents and low performances also due to high competitions. Belch and Belch (2006) claim that magazines and newspapers have been advertising media for more than two centuries and for many years, they were only major media for more available to advertisers. With the growth of the broadcast media particularly television, reading habits declined.

Since radio and television emerged, it has become the most popular medium of information and entertainment after newspapers and magazines. Obviously, radio and television has outstanding advantage compared to printed media. The principal advantage for radio is radio is high reach and frequency. It offers an excellent combination of reach and frequency. The average adult listens more than three hours a day and able to build a large audience quickly. A normal advertising schedule easily allows repeated impact on the listener. As a way to reach a mass audience, no other medium today has the unique creative abilities of television: the combination of sight, sound and motion, the opportunity to demonstrate the product, the potential to use special effects, the empathy of the viewers and the believability of seeing it happen right before the eyes (Arens, 2006) makes television more and more appealing than printed media. Electronic media or broadcast media offer many channels for viewers to view based on their interest. Having these media consumer will feel more thrill and pleasure because it is not as 'dead' as printed media.

2.3 Internet Advertising as the New Marketing Medium

Technology has created new ways of living and doing business. The fastest growing advertising medium in history has also opened the door to electronic commerce. The new media are truly revolutionary in their effect on our daily lives and it is a revolutionary for marketers too. As the fastest growing medium in history, the Internet offers incredible opportunities for a wide range of people in both business and advertising, despite the unknown factors of the medium. For advertisers, there is a whole new world of potential customers out there, waiting to be engaged. Internet advertising can be considered as the best interactivity with consumers and web site able to fits into company's overall strategies and replaces a more traditional approach since Internet is the only true global medium by providing information and commerce opportunities that are immediately accessible around the world (Arens, 2006).

Internet advertising is a multi-faceted phenomenon. Print advertising comes in many colors, shapes, and sizes; television advertising might range from a simple 10-second message to a long-format infomercial. Internet advertising has all those kinds of variations, too. But it also spans time and space (unlike print which is space bound and

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broadcast which is time bound) and seems different in other fundamental ways as well (McMillan, 2004).

Although internet advertising provided many unique features, it has not displaced most media as sources of advertising information. Many consumers found that internet advertising was a complementary medium based on their favorable attitudes or frequent use of other media advertising. It could be assumed that the internet might have the potential to affect the use of other mass media because of its interactive and diverse features (Tsao and Sibley, 2004).

2.4 Ethnic and Media in Malaysia

As mentioned earlier in the introduction section, previous study did not explore all types of media to find out the preferences among different ethnic in Malaysia. As online advertising and wireless advertising become more and more popular worldwide, it is useful for researchers especially in Malaysia to find out whether all races in Malaysia still prefer traditional advertising (such as television, radio, newspaper or magazines) or the Malaysian has divert their interest towards online advertising. Malaysian media providers make it a practice to target audiences and create niches according to racial lines and language (Firdaus, 2006). The largest ethnic group in Malaysia are the Malays. Obviously they are the major players in the market for newspapers. To accommodate such demand, there are quite a number of Malay language newspaper publications. One of the earliest and popular one is the *Utusan Malaysia* (formerly known as *Utusan Malayu*). As for the radio, we do have many local radio stations for the listener in Malaysia. From Malay, English, Mandarin and Tamil stations provide a variety of choices for listeners to choose. Radio being an electronic medium is also controlled by the government of Malaysia. The Malaysia Advertising Code of Ethic, implemented in 2002, controls the content of advertisement on air. Advertising and marketing professionals involved in the production and broadcasting of TV and radio commercials should obtain the latest Advertising Code of Ethics (*Kod Ethika Pengiklanan*) from the Commercial Department of the *Ministry of Information*. Like the news media, the Malaysian advertising code provides for strong control by the *Ministry of Information*, to ensure that information is closely controlled, especially that which would endanger the government's own social engineering. The Malaysian government realises that information is power. Every country controls the content of commercials and advertisements, and almost all would agree that it is necessary. But the extent of control varies markedly between countries and some broad understanding of the "Malaysian way" can be gleaned from studying the code (Asian Market Research News, 2002). Songs or advertisement content that uses prohibited language are not allowed to be on air. Any advertisement and song from outside the country will be processed before it is allowed to be on air for the listener. Government and private companies own radio stations in Malaysia.

Malaysia consists of private TV stations and government owned TV stations. Media Prima, the giant local media, now controls all the free private TV stations such as TV3, NTV7, CH9 and 8TV compared with the two government-owned TV stations, TV1 and

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TV2. Year 2006 showed a rapid growth in the country's broadcasting industry. Viewers enjoying more than 100 channels from the days of the "black and white" programmed by Radio Television Malaysia (RTM) since 1963. Nevertheless, all advertisements in Malaysia need to follow Malaysian Code of Ethics (Bell, 2007). Electronic media such as TV fall under government control. The Malaysian Parliament, approved by the Broadcasting Act in December 1987, gives the Minister of Information the authority to monitor and control all radio and television broadcasting. The minister can likewise revoke any license held by a private company deemed to have violated the provisions of this act. (Gale,2007). Government applies strict codes where media, TV and radio need to follow.

Appiah (2004) in his study claim that advertisers should identify the ethnic groups to create media content. He further noted that media content with direct association to a particular ethnic group, maybe salient even among people with weak ethnic identification. Firdaus (2006) believes that local media content reinforce the contradictory attitude and behavior of Malaysians with regards to multiculturalism and inter ethnic interaction. Nevertheless, she further assert that across all media, public and private, narrowcasting of content based on ethnic groups is the norm, from ethnic-based newspapers to ethnic targeted television programming belts. Richardson (2005) asserts that media framing has significant effects on audiences' identification with particular social groups. Any one individual belongs to numerous social groups all based on different things (i.e. ethnicity, socioeconomic status, favored brands or sports teams, etc) and media content and bring to surface the social group most salient to that particular content.

3. Methodology

A total of 358 printed questionnaires were distributed among respondents and Internet users which comprised of all ages from 18 years and above. Self-completion questionnaire were used where respondents must read and answer the questions themselves without the presence of interviewer. The questionnaire is divided into 6 sections which comprises both online and traditional media of advertising. Since there was no interviewer in the administration of the self completion questionnaire, the research instruments have been designed easy to follow and the questions are particularly easy to answer. The designs of the questionnaires were based on Likert Scale (1932) as a method and multiple choices for the demographics section.

In this study, simple random sampling method is selected. Malhotra and Peterson (2005) asserts that *simple random sampling* is a probability sampling technique in which each element in the population has a known an equal probability of selection. These samples are from all respondents including students, working people and marketers. For this study purpose, a combination of copy testing and pre-testing advertisement has been used to addresses issues related to the effectiveness of each advertisement. According to Kinnear and Taylor (1996) copy testing is used in practice to refer to all aspects (colour, graphics, pictures, action, and so on) of ads appearing in all media. Around 35 potential respondents from different ages (18 years onwards) were involved

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in the process. For this particular study a combination of print ads test, off-air copy testing and pre-test has being used in order to find out which medium is favourable and effective in terms of advertising. According to Dillon, Madden and Firtle (1994), print ads test is attempt to assess the power of an ad placed in a magazine or newspaper to be remembered, to communicate, to affect attitudes, and ultimately to produce sales while off-air test is a method for evaluating television commercials in which the testing takes place in a controlled environment that does not resemble the surroundings in which the individual usually views commercials. This test can be also applied for radio and Internet advertising. From these tests, the following information has been obtained.

- Brand recall
- Persuasion
- Attractions
- Pre and post purchase intentions

Those 35 respondents were tested from all mediums, online and traditional. Around 15 different advertisements from each types of medium (including newspaper, magazine, TV, radio, Internet, SMS and MMS). They were asked to complete the questionnaire. Then they were given advertisements from all types of mediums. In order to conduct the test, group of respondents were invited in a comfortable room to view several commercials for all mediums. They were given advertisements from newspaper, followed by magazines, radio, TV and Internet. Before viewing all the advertisements, each respondent was asked brand preference information about a number of product categories. After viewing the commercials and advertisements, respondents were again asked to express their brand preferences. When the respondents completed the questionnaire and had been exposed to around 20 to 25 minutes of all types of advertisements from every type of mediums, they were given a second questionnaire and asked to record their recall of any advertisements that had been showed and played. They were asked a range of questions to examine their level of recall and preferences, ranging from whether or not they have heard any advertising at all, to naming the brand that have been advertised. The results from those processes have determined the effectiveness and preferences for the advertisements by consumers'.

In addition, in order to test the effectiveness of radio advertisements, central location methodology Erica Riebe and John Dawes in 2006 has been used. However, the researcher made slight changes to suit with Malaysian environment. This method was chosen because it provided the optimum balance between realism and the ability to control for effects that might distort results. The aim is to create an environment where respondents are distracted from what they are listening to, reflecting the usual radio listening environment (Erica and John, 2006). The respondents were played a radio broadcast (which in reality it was a recording). The radio recording consists of a combination of music and radio commercials. Each respondent was exposed around 20 to 25 minute mixtures of advertising and music, but was randomly allocated.

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Hypothesis was drawn from the study:-

H₁ : Malaysian customer's culture or emotion has a statistically significant positive impact on purchasing desire between Internet and traditional advertising

4. Findings

The table shows the R value = .266, R-square = .071 which is the explained variance, is actually the square of the multiple R (.266)². F value of 27.039 from ANOVA table shows it is significant at 0.000 levels and df (degree of freedom) is 356. The coefficients table, helps us to see that Beta under standardized coefficient is 0.266 which is significant at 0.000 level. Therefore it shows that, social factors such as language, status, racial culture, belief, religion and family oriented factor under culture has positive significant relationship with customers' satisfactions towards preferences advertising media.

Table 1.0: Consumer Culture Model Summary

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.266 ^a	.071	.068	.46648

a. Predictors: (Constant), social factor

Table 1.1: Consumer Culture- ANOVA

ANOVA^b

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	5.884	1	5.884	27.039	.000 ^a
Residual	77.467	356	.218		
Total	83.351	357			

a. Predictors: (Constant), social factor

b. Dependent Variable: customer satisfaction

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Table 1.2: Consumer Culture- Coefficient

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.783	.148		25.646	.000
	social factor	.167	.032	.266	5.200	.000

a. Dependent Variable: customer satisfaction

4.1 Hypothesis Testing

The results from coefficient analysis shows that *Malaysian customer's culture or emotion has a statistically significant positive impact on purchasing desire between Internet advertising and traditional advertising* (p-value = 0.000, t = 5.200) Since the results are significant at 0.05 of significance level, there is a strong evidence to support that H₁ should not be rejected.

4.2 Frequency Analysis

Table 1.3: Description of Races and Advertising Media Preferences

<u>Race</u>	Newspaper	Magazine	Internet	Radio	Television	TOTAL
Malay	45	7	32	17	120	221
Chinese	21	3	8	3	39	74
Indian	9	1	11	2	21	44
Others	4	1	3	0	11	19
Total	79	12	54	22	191	358

Table 1.3 shows the relationship between races in Malaysia and advertising media preferences. Obviously all races prefer television as advertising medium. Newspapers are preferred by Malays (45 respondents), Chinese (21 respondents) and Indian (9 respondents). Even though that the majority are still dominated by Malays to choose Internet (32 respondents), Indian community shows that they prefer Internet slightly higher (11 respondents) compared to Chinese community (8 respondents). No doubt that all races prefer television advertisements compared to other medium but the Indians show that they are moving forward to IT although they are the minority group in Malaysia.

5. Discussion

From the findings, it is found that Malaysians are keener towards advertising media such as television and newspapers compared to online advertising and the benefits that

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created by those medium have lead to their preferences towards television and newspaper advertising. TV advertisements have a greater emotional effect on users, suggesting advertising over that medium may make a stronger impact in influencing their buying decisions. Both medium have own advantages and disadvantages. The study has shown that the advantages of traditional advertising medium have captured consumers' attention which leads to their satisfaction. Convenience and accessibility have significant impact with customers' satisfaction. Consumers' feel easy with traditional mediums as they can get it anywhere and everywhere unlike online advertisements where they need to have Internet or to go to cyber café to browse it. They can easily buy a newspaper or watch television at home or other places to find out about the advertisements or information about a particular product. Looking at social factors it does not really give impact to the choice or preferences of the advertising medium. Nevertheless, Malaysians may choose the medium based on their language. For example, Malays may prefer advertisements and medium in their own language and the same goes with other races.

Advertising can awaken problem recognition and shift attitudes, both of which can result in repeat or change behaviour (Barry, 2002). Social/ culture is also among the factors that generate customer satisfaction. Belief in the advertisement may create or motivate consumers to purchase the product. Satisfaction may arise through the information given and/or when they are pleased with the product after they purchase it based on the information from the advertisement. Persuasive mass media make the greatest contributions to attitude change by making people curious enough about the matter at hand to seek further information (e.g. by actually trying the advertised product, by noticing what opinion leaders or friend have to say about the product or by asking the man who owns one (Maloney, 2000).

No advertising researcher, be it a practitioner or an academic, doubts that emotions are an important factor in the advertising process. In models on "how advertising works", emotions have never been completely absent. According to the earliest model AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) introduced by Strong in 1925, an emotional reaction (here: desire) occurred only after consumers had experienced interest for the advertisement or the product (Karolien and Siegfried, 2006). Emotion has primacy over and can function independent of cognition, emotions gained renewed attention and were being accepted as an important mediator of cognitive and behavioural consumer responses to advertising (Batra and Ray, 1986).

Advertisement that, be it unconsciously, evoke a pleasure or arousal reaction, will receive more attention. When attention is evoked by a positive emotional reaction, it leads to further focusing and learning about the brand's benefits and, possibly, acceptance of the advertisement's message (Van Raaij, 1989). Mooris, Woo, Geason and Kim (2002) found direct impact from emotional reactions on purchase intention (PI) and furthermore, this relation was stronger than the impact of cognitive factors (such as beliefs and knowledge) on purchase intention.

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For the advertisements to be effective, consumers must come in contact with them. Exposure often occurs through consumers' own behaviours: they turn on the TV and switch to a favourite show. Once exposed, they must attend to and comprehend the advertisements i.e. affective responses and cognitive interpretations. (J.Paul and Jerry, 2007)

6. Conclusion

One way that advertisers tend to take note of differences in cultural values among the three races is to use their language as the mode of communication in certain types of advertisement. Language provides a common bond of communication among different races (Herbig and Yelkur, 1997). Different races may have different perceptions to advertisements. An individual may hold a certain level of expectations towards it based on his or her knowledge, belief, and experience related to the category to which it belongs to (Dongyoung, Cunhyeong, and Byung-Kwan, 2007). Probably because of the unique features that television has such as sounds, colours, pictures that move people chose television as their medium of choice.

Television has becoming the most popular medium in Malaysia and nearly all Malaysians own and watches television. This is a good opportunity for advertisers to advertise their advertisement on TV because viewers will be more attracted to watch TV commercials due to the sound, colours and ability to watch the products or services. This is a good way for brand recall. A study by Flemming, Jorgen and Sten (2006) shows that brand awareness for television are higher by 6.57% compared to print advertisement.

With the added value of television where viewers are able to watch advertisements and purchase the product at the same time makes television more appealing compared to other medium. The possibility of interactive communication with information on the screen by pressing a remote control button may bring about a revolution in consumers' viewing habits, attitudes towards TV advertising and even attitudes towards shopping in general. Thus, the enhancement of the traditional television media with interactive capabilities creates new challenges and opportunities for marketers and consumers alike (Levy and Nebel, 2006).

7. Implications

Even though Malaysia is heading towards Information Technology era, online advertising still remain as an alternative media compared to traditional advertising media. This finding, in fact, is supported by the study of Napoli and Ewing (2001) and the speculation of Russell and Lane (2002) who suggested that internet advertising serves a "complementary rather than competitive role." This means that, many consumers find that internet advertising is a substitute medium corresponding to their favorable attitude or frequent use of other media advertising. The Internet is considered still to be in its growth stage and still growing in terms of usage, impact and application.

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Internet user and non Internet users have different attitudes towards advertising media. Internet users have positive attitude towards online media while non Internet users are passive towards online media and prefer more to traditional advertising media. Furthermore, the features on the Internet closely resemble what the television offers the audience.

Therefore, the marketers, advertisers and government need to re-examine and develop online strategy to create an interest among the Malaysians. They need to create better advertisements not only on online but also on the traditional media to make viewers more enjoyable and secure (especially for Internet) because most Malaysians feel insecure to purchase online.

8. Limitations of Study

This study has several limitations. Firstly, in terms of questionnaires, not all questionnaires were sent back by the respondents. There are parts in the questionnaires which are not answered by the respondents. The solution was to eliminate those questionnaires. The other problem is not all Malaysians are Internet users. They frequently use the computer but many of them have no Internet at home. The only way for them to use the Internet will be in the office or cyber café. This might limit their point of view towards Internet advertising. Despite the limitations, there are some interesting research opportunities for future research.

9. Future Research

Probably future research may focus on psychographic area or maybe the area where we can to find out what type of media is useful for different types of industries such as tourism, IT and manufacturing. This may create better economic situation for the company and Malaysia.

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