

Newspaper sales dip post-GE13

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The readership of top newspapers in the country tumbled in the run up to the 13th general election over reporting perceived as biased.

According to The Edge Weekly, which obtained the Consumer and Media View report by Nielsen, newspapers saw a drop of between 10 percent to 40 percent in readership during the second quarter of this year.

This coincided with the 13th general election period when Parliament was dissolved on April 3 and polling day was on May 5.

"The decline is mainly due to the 13th general election,"The Edge Weekly quoted Omnicom Media Group Malaysia chief executive officer Andreas Vogiatzakis as saying.

He was further quoted as saying that readers sought alternative news between March to May this year with a 60 percent surge in online traffic for political news sites and 20 percent increase for news websites in general.

According to The Edge Weekly, media analysts noted that people were upset with the mainstream newspapers owned or indirectly controlled by BN because of lopsided coverage and incessant demonising of the opposition.

However, they noted that newspaper readership may bounce back when the anger subsides.

berita harian star new strait times newspaper coverage on bersih 3.0 rally Among the English language dailies, The Star's readership fell 19.8 percent from 1.286 million to 1.032 million while New Straits Times managed a marginal increase of four percent from 277,000 to 288,000.

Tabloid newspaper Kosmo saw the worst readership drop among Malay language dailies, plunging from 1.383 million to 864,000 (-37 percent) while its sister newspaper Utusan Malaysia came in second, falling from 696,000 to 636,000 (-8.6 percent).

Harian Metro too saw a drop in readership from 3.695 million to 3.447 million (-6.7 percent).

However two Malay language dailies managed to increase their readership, namely Sinar Harian from 701,000 to 710,000 (+1.3 percent) and Berita Harian from 1.099 million to 1.168 million (+6.2 percent).

The declining trend was also observed among Chinese language newspapers with Nanyang Siang Pau slumping from 155,000 to 89,000 (-42.6 percent) followed by Sin Chew Daily at 1.345 million to 1.225 million (-9.0 percent) and Guang Ming Daily from 392,000 to 368,000 (-6.0 percent).

The exception was China Press which saw negligible fall in readership from 1.028 million to 1.026 million and Kwong Wah Yit Poh which saw its readership climb from 182,000 to 216,000 (+18.7 percent).

The readership for Sunday editions of the newspapers fared worst, observing a drop across the board for all languages with the exception of Kwong Wah.

They are as follows: Sunday Star (-30.4 percent to 818,000), New Sunday Times (-23.3 percent to 207,000), Nanyang (-34.8 percent to 92,000), Sin Chew (-7.1 percent to 1.240 million), Guang Ming (-6.6 percent to 353,000), China Press (-1.6 percent to 1.007 million) and Kwong Wah (+11.8 percent to 199,000).

The other Sunday editions include: Kosmo Ahad (-43.4 percent to 673,000), Mingguan Malaysia (-16 percent to 815,000), Metro Ahad (-10.8 percent to 3.624 million), Sinar Harian (+9.8 percent to 607,000) and Berita Minggu (-8.0 percent to 1.081 million).

No data was recorded for other newspapers such as The Malay Mail, The Sun and Oriental Daily.

The change in readership was benchmarked against the newspapers' respective readership during the same period a year ago.

'Right sizing exercise'

Meanwhile, The Malaysian Reserve reported that Star Publications (M) Bhd which produces The Star and The Sunday Star is undertaking a staff "right-sizing" exercise.

kl112 coverage 130112 starIt quoted a representative as saying that the company was offering a Voluntary Separation Scheme that will affect 10 percent of staff.

"This is not a retrenchment exercise and only applicable for Star and not its subsidiaries," the company representative was quoted as saying.

Star Publications has some 1,600 staff in its Kuala Lumpur headquarters.

It had reported a 35.4 percent drop in second quarter net profit to RM28.53 million from a year ago and a revenue decrease of 16 percent to RM251.31 million during the same period.

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