

This is the fifth study of a biennial work on public awareness, interest and understanding towards science and technology (S&T) commissioned by the Malaysian Science and Technology Information Centre (MASTIC) and the Ministry of Science and Technology and the Environment (MOSTE). The last four studies were conducted in 1994, 1996, 1998 and 2000.

The broad categories of data were the same as in previous studies. These are public related data encompassing perceived knowledge, perceived interest, attitudes and reactions towards S&T policies and issues, the levels of understanding of S&T and the environment and information sources for S&T programmes. The current state of public understanding of S&T is then compared with that found in previous studies and also with selected industrialised countries.

Objectives of Study

Society's involvement is required in any field including science and technology. Malaysia needs competent scientists as well as members of the public with a good appreciation of science. They must also be knowledgeable and reliable enough to use S&T to regulate their lives and help them make wise and appropriate decisions on matters related to health, environment and safety. They should be able to benefit from S&T within their own socio-cultural milieu and under certain circumstances, they can even participate in dialogues with policy makers on S&T related issues.

The objectives of this study are to determine:

- Public awareness, attitude and interest in understanding S&T
- The extent the public becomes involved in government-supported S&T programmes
- The success in the implementation of government-supported popularisation of S&T programmes
- The existence, if any, of significant differences in findings compared to those of previous studies including those involving Malaysia's performance compared to international benchmark

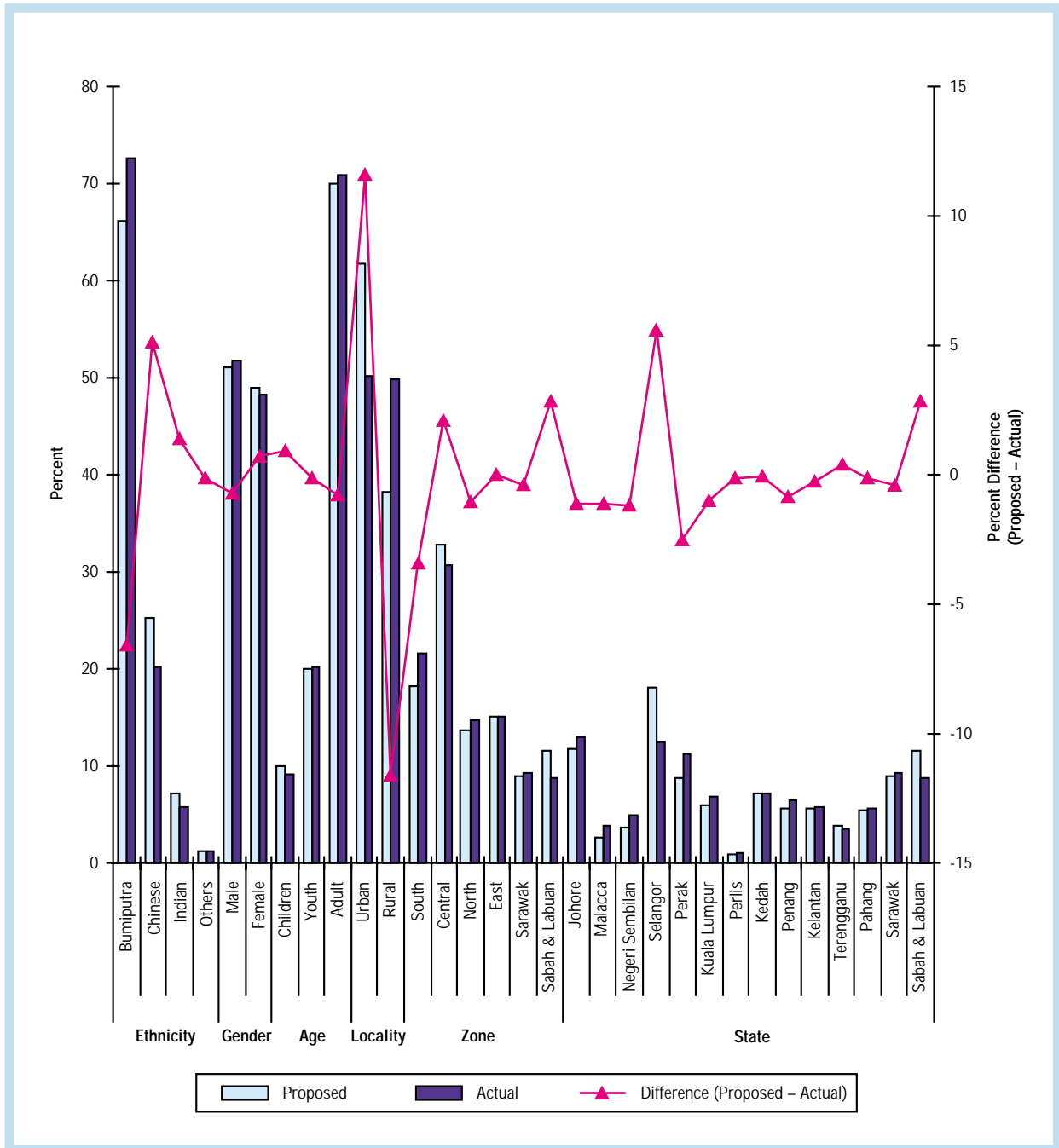
Research Strategy

The S&T Awareness Study 2002 is a large-scale study done in all states in Malaysia. It involved a large number of respondents, double the number in previous studies. To manage such a large-scale study, proper procedures were observed to ensure the quality of data collated and the necessary scientific criteria were met.

Respondents were all Malaysians aged between 12 and 60 years old. The study used a multistage stratified random sampling design in order to reflect the population distribution in the country, in accordance with the Population Census in year 2000.

The targeted sample size of this study was 10,000 out of which 9,760 respondents were successfully interviewed. The targeted and actual sample size based on age group, gender, ethnicity, locality and zone are exhibited in **Figures 1 and 2**. These figures show (i) actual sample compared to target sample size by groups and (ii) sampling distribution for year 2002 compared to year 2000.

Figure 1: Actual Sample Compared to Target Sample Size by Groups

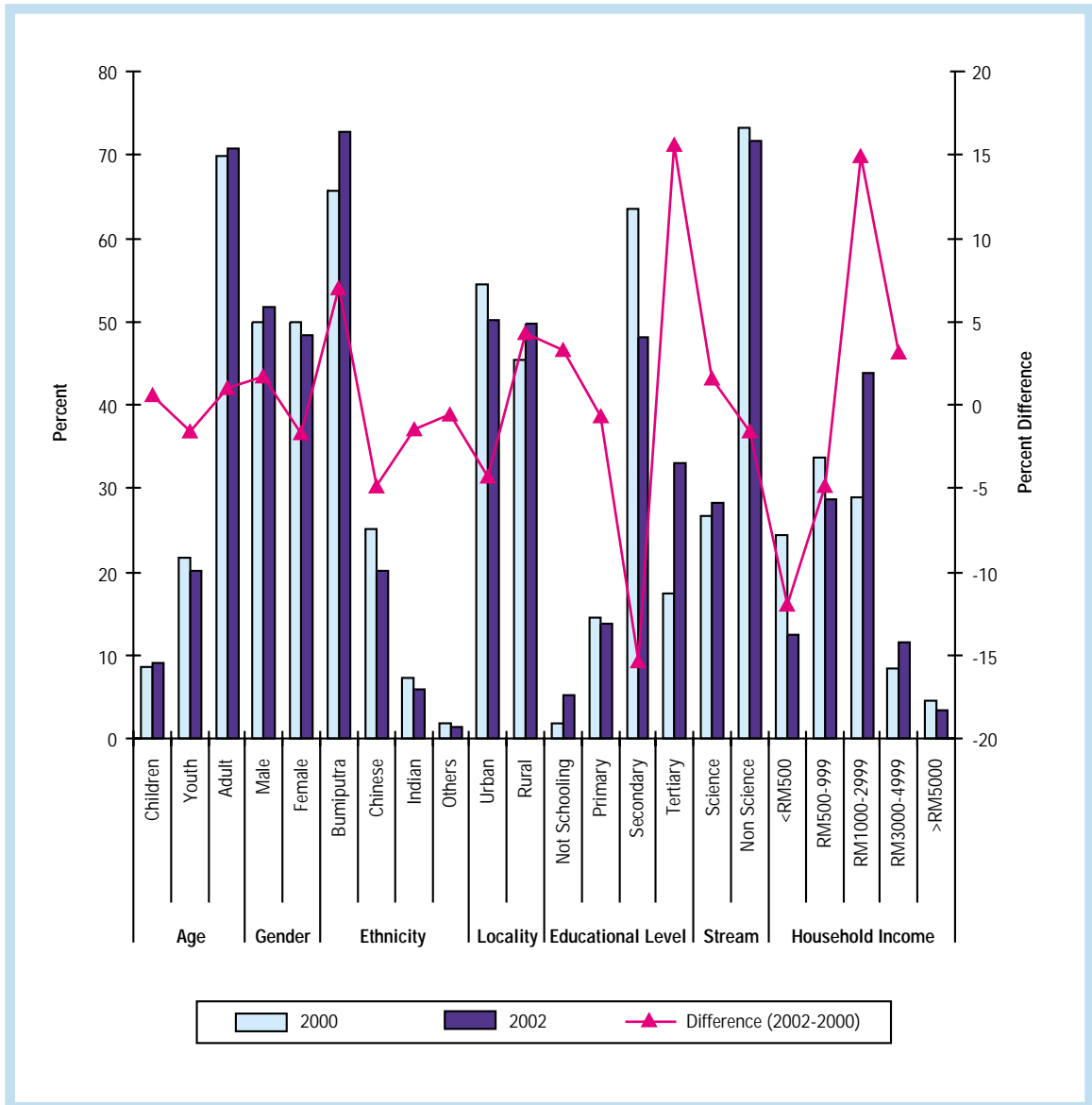


A structured questionnaire similar to the one developed for the study in year 2000 was used. To ensure the quality and credibility of the questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted in which proper sampling procedures and data collation methods were ascertained in order to obtain a sample that is representative of the population. This was achieved through analysis of some selected variables such as age groups, gender, ethnicity and locality that to the mind of the researchers, there was no significant difference between sample and population distribution. However, there was a slight difference when the actual sample was compared to the proposed sample.

Figure 1 shows there are three groups that lie outside the 5% difference between the actual and the proposed samples. The groups are:

- Bumiputra (about 7% increase)
- Rural (about 12% increase)
- Selangor (about 6% decrease)

Figure 2: Sampling Distribution for Year 2002 Compared to Year 2000



Similarly comparing the sample of year 2002 with 2000, **Figure 2** shows there are three groups that lie outside the 5% difference between the sample of 2002 and the sample of 2000. The groups are:

- Tertiary (about 15% increase)
- Those with household income of RM1,000 (about 15% increase)
- Bumiputra (about 7% increase)

Notwithstanding the differences, it can be assumed that the findings of this study should reflect the actual Malaysian public awareness of S&T.