arts and humanities

Teenagers and the new media
A case study

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Abstract

The issues of cultural identity underlying the interaction that teenagers establish with the new media are the subject of this investigation in the scope of the Doctorate in Cultural Studies and the Media.
It is about the consumption of the cultural products conveyed by the new media - television, Internet, World Wide Web, computer games - that are popular among young people. Being the young the most exposed to the impact of 21st century cultural globalisation in which the internationalisation of the market of dreams and images through technologies predominates, it makes sense to ask: Are young people consuming and producing cultural content conducive to the construction of intercultural identity? What cultural literacy comes from the use of technologies?

Contextualisation

This new research has its origins in the scope of the Masters thesis in Languages, Literatures and Cultures - *American popular culture and the lifestyle of Portuguese teenagers* (2009). This study highlighted the new paradigm of media integration in teenagers' lives - that is, immersion in the dynamics of cultural consumption where appropriation and sharing of content are routine actions.
Meanwhile new media have spread rapidly worldwide. And younger people are the ones who have enthusiastically adhered to their use. The connection they establish with the new media is part of their daily life in such a way that, as Marshall McLuhan so brilliantly predicted, these have become an extension of body and mind, creating new social patterns as a consequence of the ambivalence of these media that allow users to immerse in new forms of cultural content and develop a distinct framework of cultural literacy.

Methodological choices

The choice of the case study as methodological approach is the most appropriate taking into account the complexity of the phenomenon and the need to investigate in detail and in depth the questions posed. Quantitative and qualitative methods are combined.

Some of the research achievements

1. Sampling procedure – The questionnaires were implemented in the three public schools of S. João da Madeira to teenagers from 15 to 17 years old. Three variables are taken into account: age, gender and type of course - scientific humanistic courses and professional courses.

2. Quantitative methods - Some data and analysis - The data obtained by the application of the online questionnaire reveal a number of 283 respondents. The predominance of older female and male respondents is a fact - 45% (see graph 1).

When asked about their preferences from a range of options (reading, watching television, being on the Internet, playing electronic games and listening to the radio), the answers are unequivocal – being on the Internet is at the top of the preferences (see graph 2).

There is also a variety of TV programmes (online or on TV) that are routinely watched and the ones seen by the majority are films and TV series, 81% and 74% of respondents (see graph 3).
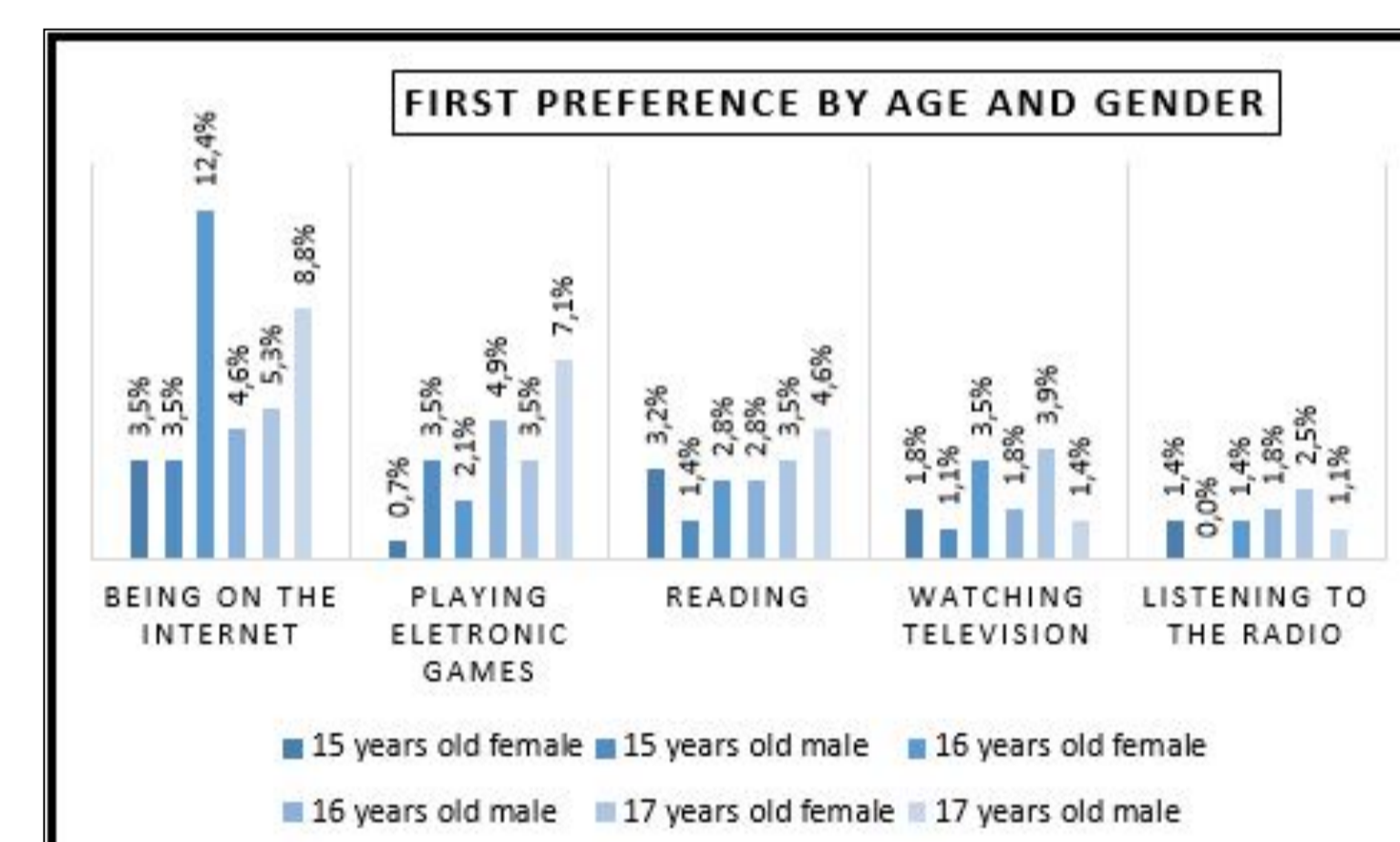
Conclusion

The analysis of these data in detail and depth will certainly pave the way to the purpose of this thesis.
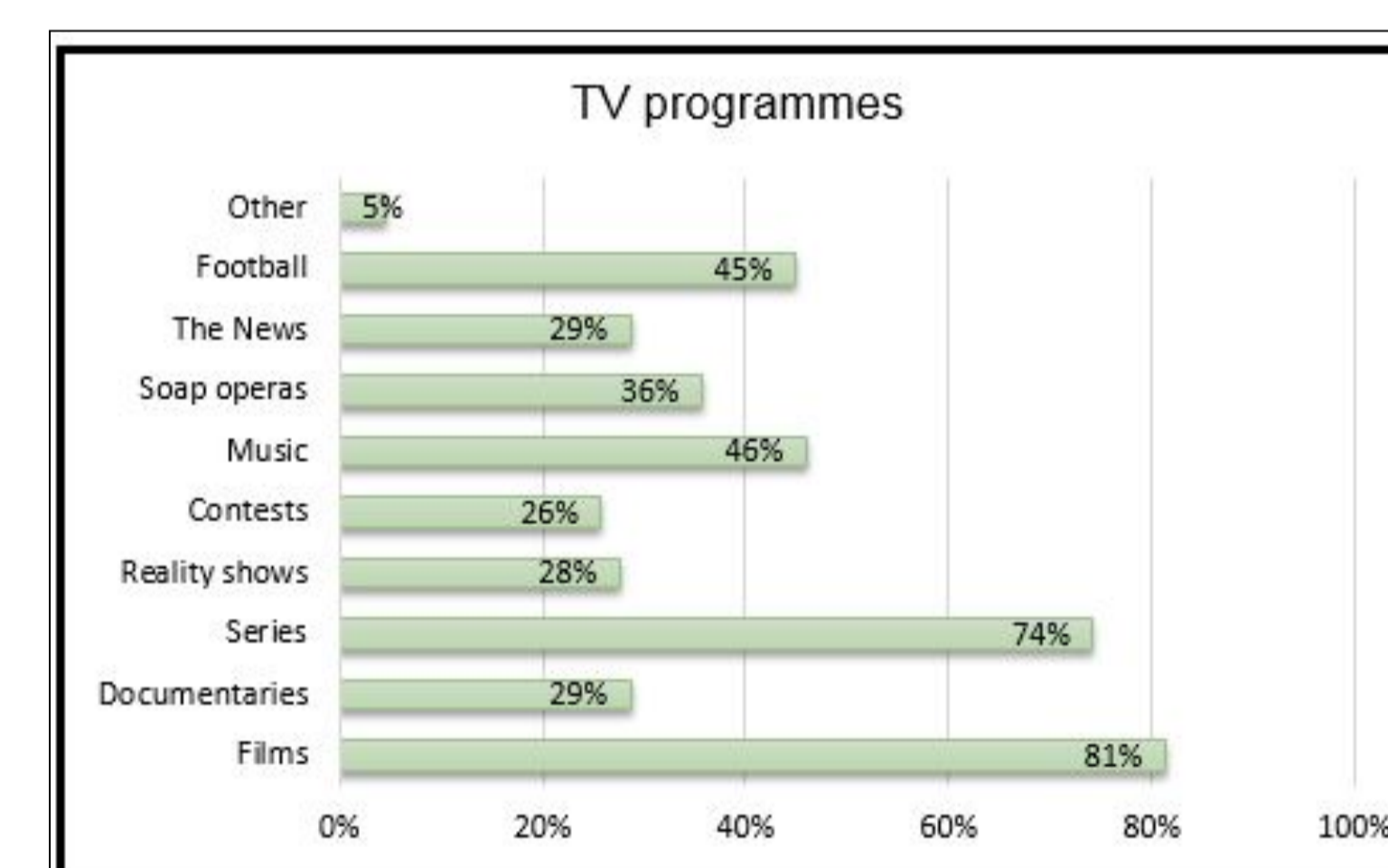
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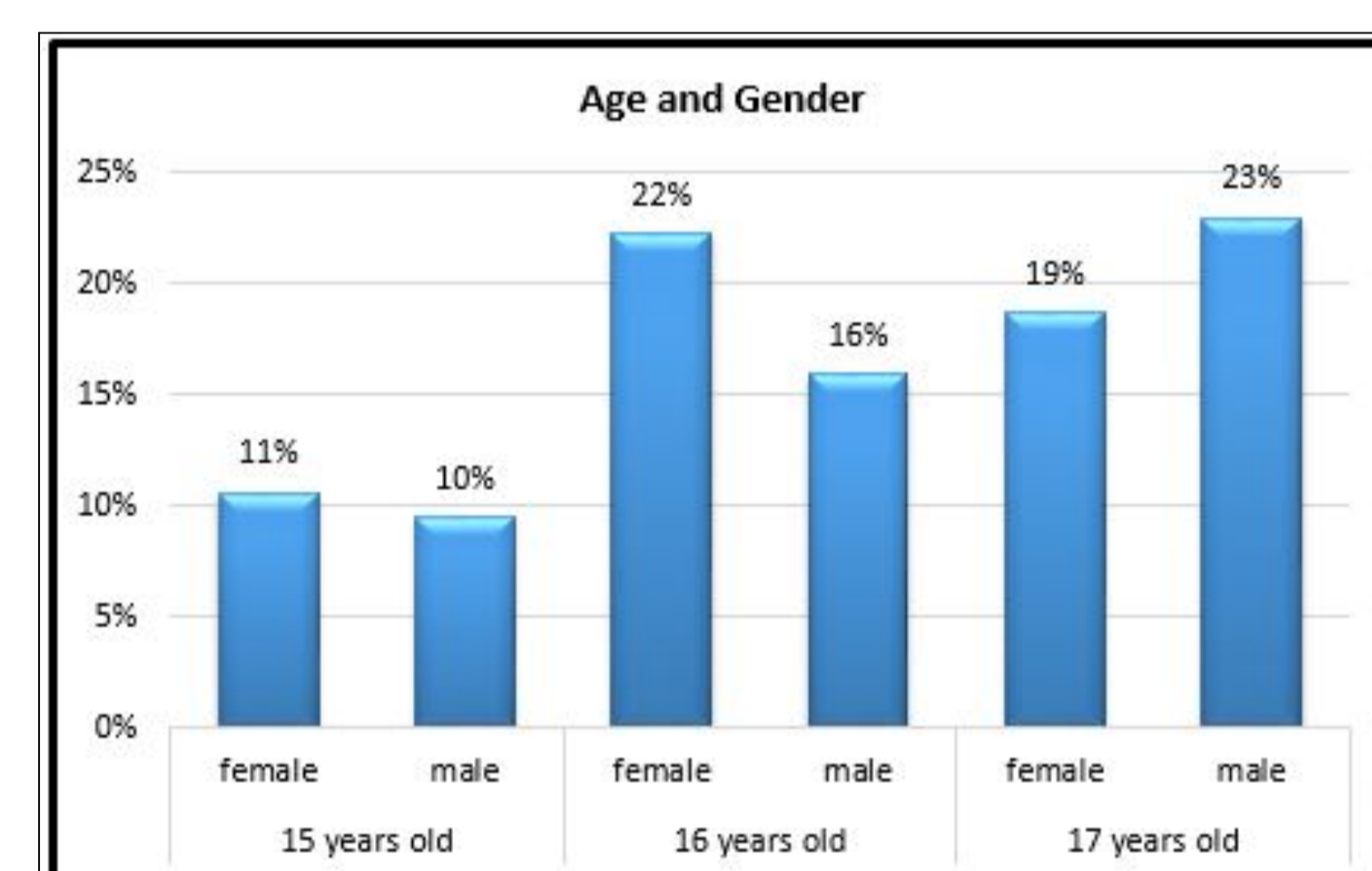
Graph 1 / Percentage of respondents by age and gender

Graph 2 / Percentage of respondents -1st preference by age and gender

Graph 3 / Percentage of respondents watching TV programmes