RADIO LISTENING AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS*
KENNETH H. BAKER
University of Minnesota

Surveys of radio listening are developed for the primary purpose of ascertaining information about the listener. Instigators of these surveys are usually interested in the listeners' habits as they apply to radio listening and buying, in his attitudes toward certain types of broadcasting, including educational, commercial, and entertainment programs, and in his likes and dislikes concerning certain general policies and the more or less personal aspects of radio programming. Since most of these surveys have been conducted for commercial purposes, the information desired is usually an answer to the question of the extent to which radio advertising has led the listener to the purchase of certain commodities. In addition to these interests there is a growing tendency to attempt to determine other aspects of the behavior of the listening audience. Even commercial surveys at the present time are in many cases directed toward a measurement of attitudes towards certain types of programs, such as those intended for children, purely political broadcasts, etc. Since many of these characteristics of the behavior of the listener require a knowledge of psychological principles and an application of sound scientific procedures, psychologists and sociologists are with increasing frequency becoming interested in the problems which this new medium of communication has uncovered.

Of particular interest to the psychologist are investigations which help answer such questions as: Is the type of program preferred by children related in any way to that preferred by the parents? Is the socio-economic status of the head of the family related to the program preferences of any of the members of the family? What are the differences between the types of programs preferred by different members of the family? What types of programs are listened to at different periods of the day? What are the attitudes of the parents toward children's programs? Many other questions of psychological importance are arising continuously as the result of the continued use of radio as a medium for entertainment, education, and the dissemination of propaganda.

This paper will present a preliminary summary of the answers in 10,000 questionnaires distributed throughout the state of Minnesota. From this summary it is hoped that some suggestions per-

* Manuscript recommended for publication by Dr. B. F. Skinner.
tent to the answer of some of the questions raised above may be reached. The summary will also raise some questions relative to methodology in this type of survey, with a view to their being answered at a later time.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The first page of the questionnaire bore the title "Radio Survey of the Minnesota Congress of the Parent-Teachers, Inc." Space was provided on this page for the name of the city in which the respondent lived and the name of the council (school) to which the parent belonged.

The questionnaire was three pages long and asked the following 14 questions. (1) Which radio station do you listen to most (all around the clock)? Questions (2) through (7) asked for the programs listened to at certain periods of the day. These periods were: 6:30 a. m. to 9:00 a. m., 9:00 a. m. to noon, noon to 1:30 p. m., 1:30 p. m. to 6:00 p. m., 6:00 p. m. to 9:00 p. m., and after 9:00 p. m. Space was provided in each question for six to eight answers. (8) Now that you have listed the stations and programs to which you listen by periods of the day, will you please list below all the stations to which you listen regularly in the order of your preference? (9) The average amount of time our radio is in use each day is____. (10) In our family there are: ____ men (over 21); ____ women (over 21); ____ young people (16-21); ____ children (under 16). (11) If there are children in your home, to what programs do they generally listen? (12) We bought our radio (month and year). (13) The occupation of the head of the family is____. (14) The five programs on the air that you like best (or liked best if you no longer hear them) are: (Husband), (wife—daytime), (wife—night time).

It may be seen that the questionnaire was of the unaided recall type. It is not necessary here to go into the relative advantages and disadvantages of the various types of questionnaires. It must be remembered throughout the following summary, however, that this type of questionnaire may facilitate memory distortions. That these distortions are not particularly significant in the present instance will become apparent later when the replies to the questions covering periods of the day are compared with the 'round the clock preferences. It was believed that the inclusion of both types of question would help to safeguard against important omissions. The analysis of the answers to the questions covering the listening periods in terms of husband, wife and children preferences will also aid in de-