CIRCULATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF MALAY MAGAZINE BEFORE THE SECOND WORLD WAR

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Abstract

For a magazine to survive in the market, three elements must be strengthened—the editorial content, circulation or distribution, and income from advertisement. Editorial content is responsible for attracting readers and thus will improve circulation. Increased circulation often results in the increased revenue from advertising. Thus, these three pillars, namely editorial, circulation, and advertising are very important for the survival of the magazine. Circulation refers to the number of copies sold to the readers. A good magazine circulation depends on the efficiency and effectiveness of marketing techniques, as well as the efficiency of distribution system used by publisher to deliver magazine to readers. Publishers of Malay magazines before the World War II are entirely dependent on circulation of the magazine to cover expenses and to expect profit. This article will discusses on the status of circulation and distribution practices of Malay magazine publishing before the war and its impact on magazine in the market.

Key words: Malay Magazine; magazine circulation and distribution; media marketing system, Economy publishing, magazine history; media before the Second World War

Introduction

In Malay magazine publishing before World War II, publishers relied heavily on circulation or sale of copies to earn income. The income is used to cover the expenses of publishing, marketing and printing, while the surpluses will be considered as profit. Another source of income, the sale of a magazine to advertisers is often difficult to explore by publishers because of the difficulty to obtain it.¹ Magazine or newspaper in the Malay language, let alone in the Jawi script is not common to general producers or manufacturers who could spend money on advertising. Most of them are generally Chinese and European traders who choose publications in English or Chinese for promotion of their goods or services.

The absence source of income from the advertising sales causes instability for Malay magazine. To be stabilized, magazines must have a good balance of the three pillars, the editorial content, circulation or distribution, and advertising revenue.² This is called the concept of the three legs of a stool, which is how the three elements help each other to allow the magazine survive in the market. A magazine is well established if its editorial content managed to attract readers and the increased in circulation will in turn attract advertisers who want to introduce their product or service to the reader through the pages of magazine.

But the task of selling magazine space to advertisers is hard for publication in the Malay language. Over the past until today, the commercial appeal of Malay magazines always defeated by the magazine in English or Chinese. Although the circulation for Malay-language magazine is much higher, advertisers are more confidence to the segment of English and Chinese readers, since they are seen as being more capable in terms of purchasing power.³ It

³ A recent study found that the lower income in advertisement revenue for Malay magazine than English is due to lack of confidence among advertisers on the ability of Malay magazine to bring their messages to segments of readers who can afford to buy, as well as the inability of an
was particularly felt in the period before World War II, when the number of Malay readers is lower and their economic position is behind away from others.  

Malay magazine before the World War II is entirely dependent on the circulation to cover expenses of the publishing and printing and to expect for profit. However, publishers have to face various problems in this respect. The most basic is the low potential of readers. Pengasoh (Educator) in July 30, 1920 states that “No person of the Malay like reading newspapers because they do not know or have not learned to read and write. Even if any of them literate, reading newspapers was deemed a matter of no benefit to them.” Muhammad Dato’ Muda, editor of Majalah Guru (Teacher’s Magazine) stated:

And shall you remember! Population in the peninsula is small. Out of two and a half million Malays, not even half or a quarter of them know how to read because the number includes all the blind (blind eye, blind stomach, and blind wood) and the deaf, the lame, those who uneducated, and children. Out of those who literate, how many of them want to read and out of those who want to read, how many of them afford to buy or subscribe newspaper or magazine? Calculate of your own!  

Since magazine is too dependent on circulation, various problems faced their publication. The number of reader is still small.

Estimates made by the author of the Dunia Akhirat (After World) could reflect the number of potential readers at the time. According to the authors: “People who like to read magazines and newspapers in Malaya are only about 5,000 people, including those who are still in schools. Majority of these people are government officials, people who work to merchants, religious teachers, and some of the gardeners and merchants. And most of them are of the men of knowledge.” With the limited number of target readers, dependence solely on circulation will cause the publication of a magazine to be not viable. As such many magazine ceased publications soon as publishers feel that it may not be able to draw reasonable reader to survive its presence in the market.

It is clear that the total market for publications such as books, magazines or newspapers in Malaya is very limited. However, the literacy rate has been steadily increasing. The Census of British Malaya in 1921 showed that about 30 per cent of Malays “able to read and write a letter.” For Penang, Singapore, and Malacca, the rate is 25.4 per cent, while the rate in selected cities like Taiping (38.5%), and the Kota Bharu, Johor Bahru, Muar, Ipoh, Kampar, Klang, Kuala Lumpur, Seremban, Taiping and Teluk Anson (respectively 12.3%). In 1931, the percentage of Malays who are literate in Straits Settlements is 42.8 per cent, 42.5 per cent in the Federated Malay States, and 34.5 percent in the Unfederated Malay States.

With the increase in the literacy rate, the number of schools especially in 1930’s is also increasing. But the average increase did not have significant impacts on reading magazines. Of course, circulation rates for magazine or newspaper increased from an average of 500 copies in the first decade to 700 copies in 1920’s and to 1,000 copies in 1930’s. But the rate of increase is not in line with the increase in literacy rates. As a specific example, Majalah Guru was first distributed at 250 copies (1924) before increased to 600 copies (1925) and to 1,000

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5 Pengasoh, 30 July 1920, p. 7.  
6 Muhammad Dato’ Muda, Kitab Tariikh Sarakhabar (The History of Newspaper), Taiping: Maktabah Az-Zaainah, 1938, p. 403.  
7 Dunia Akhirat, 10 November 1936, p. 5.  
copies in 1932. In 1932, the magazine’s circulation is surpassed only by the daily Majlis (Council) which has a circulation of 2,000 copies. However, if magazine published in Straits Settlements were also taken into account, the circulation Majallah Guru are not too proud of because Idaran Zaman (Time Cycle) and magazines such as Semangat Islam (The Spirit of Islam) has more than 1,000 copies.

In general, reading is still seen as the activity of free time for those who can afford and educated. With poverty and low level of education, reading is not a priority for Malay community in the period before the World War II. With such characteristics, circulation or distribution of reading materials such as magazines through open market could be facing problems. This paper discusses the issue of circulation for Malay magazine in the period before the World War II. Information about the circulation is based from the records from FMS Government Gazette and Straits Settlements Government Gazette as well as data from the Blue Book is extracted from Proudfoot (1985).11

Circulation of Pre-War Malay Magazine

Issues on the circulation of Malay magazine do not impress most scholars. This is mainly due to limitation of available data, which is also often misleading. The most authoritative source that is commonly used by researchers is that information recorded in the Blue Book for a magazine or a newspaper published in the Straits Settlements or the government gazette for periodicals published in the Federated Malay States. Unfortunately, not all publications are recorded in both sources. Enforcement for publishers to register their publication was not strict at that time, especially if it hardly seen as a threat to the status quo of colonial government. Thus, out of 120 Malay magazines published in the years before World War II, only 15 have a record in the Blue Book. Data presented also often misleading, particularly relating to the terms "circulation" or "total print". Most magazines recorded the number of copies printed as the circulation in Blue Book, while in the real sense; circulation is total copies sold during the period of recording.12

On average, magazine circulation before the decade of the 20’s was 400 copies and grew to 1,000 copies from the decades of the 30’s, when magazine was national in character. While there are magazines with limited circulation and distributed in a specific area or for specific readers in organization or association, the average magazine published in Singapore can be found at major bookstores in Kota Bharu or Alor Setar. Among the major bookstores in the days before the war were Hj. Muhammad Siraj”, Hasyim Abdullah, and Dulfakir & Co. in Singapore, the Federal Rubber Stamp in Kuala Lumpur and its branches in Penang, and Matbaah Az-Ziniah in Penang.

Details on circulation obtained from FMS Government Gazette, from 1924 to 1932 and the figure of the Blue Book presented by Roff (1972) and improved by Proudfoot (1985). As stated by Roff (1972; 19) question related to Malay magazine circulation is difficult to explain satisfactorily. Among them, there is no circulation data can be obtained about magazine or newspaper published in the Malay Peninsula. For the Straits Settlements, the annual figure recorded in the Blue Book contains data that are incomplete or inaccurate. The available data is actually the number of copies printed by the publisher for the issue which is close to the date of the report. Thus, information from the Federated Malay States Government Gazette and the Straits Settlements Government Gazette is not accurate. For circulation data of selected Malay newspapers and magazines, see William R. Roff, Bibliography of Malay and Arabic Periodicals Published in the Straits Settlements and Peninsular Malay States 1876-1941, London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1972. For the improvement of the list, see Ian Proudfoot, “Pre-war Malay periodicals notes to Roff's bibliography drawn from government gazettes”, Kekal Abadi 4.1, 1985, pp. 1-28. 11 Ian Proudfoot, 1985, Ibid., pp. 1-28. 12 See John Wharton, 1992, op. cit., p. 35-46. See also Sammye Johnson & Patricia Prijatel, Magazine: From Cover to Cover, Chicago: NTC Publishing Group, 1998, pp. 67-89. 13 The book business for Hj. Muhammad Siraj was started at the end of the 19th century and until the early 20th century, it was the largest book store in Singapore. The store in No. 43 Sultan Road, Singapore provides a variety of reading materials from the whole of the Malay world. In 1898 alone, Hj. Muhammad Siraj had advertised 120 titles for sale in his shop and it has a network of sales agents in Johor, Muar, Malacca, Penang, Deli, Sandakan, Batavia, and then in Taiping and Kinta. For a comment on the book catalog, See Ian Proudfoot, “A Nineteenth-century Malay bookseller’s catalogue”, Kekal Abadi 6.4 (1987), pp. 1-11.
Those bookstores are not just selling books and magazines at retail, but act as distributors or representatives for most Malay newspapers and magazines.

Records obtained from the FMS Government Gazette and Straits Settlements Government Gazette offers some explanation of the Malay magazine circulation. Since not all of them registered under Book Publishing and Enactment, 1915; not all data or copies 120 Malay magazines published before the war could be obtained. Only 66 magazines registered in both gazettes can be traced with Al-Imam (The Leader) recorded the highest circulation with 5,000 copies14, and the least in circulation was Tetauan Muda (Young Generation) with 100 copies. Data for pre-war magazine circulation as follows: Al-Ikhwan (The Brother, 2,000 copies), Kadhidapan Dunia Akhirat (The Life of After World, 3,000 copies), Dunia Sekaran (Today’s World, 2,000 copies), Chahaya Singapore (The Light of Singapore, 1,000 copies), Mustika (The Magazine, 2,000 copies), Kemajuan Melayu (Malay Progress, 1,000 copies), Majallah Guru (1,000 copies), Majallah Pemuda (Youth Magazine, 1,000 copies), Lidah Ibnu (Mother Tonge, 1,300 copies), Semangat Islam (1,000 copies), Dunia Melayu (Malay World, 750 copies), and Ar-Raja (King, 50 copies).15

Magazine Distribution System

Marketing system for magazine typically divides into two, namely the sale directly to public through the subscription system and most popular, the trading relationship between publisher and selected bookstores.16 Subscription rate among readers is very limited even when the postage rate was not so high. Shipping charges for magazines or newspapers in 1938 was 2 cents for 2 ounces and 2 cents more for each additional 5 ounces. The package rate was about 30 cents for weight not more than three pounds, 50 cents for weight not more than seven pounds, 70 cents for not more than eleven pounds, and RM1.10 for not more than 22 pounds.17

In this subscription system, readers who are interested to subscribe a magazine is required to pay in advance for the subscription period chosen, either three months, six months, or twelve months. The deposit will acts as a guarantee for publishers. Majallah Al-Riwayat (History Magazine), for example states: “Money for subscription for one year or six months would be issued a receipt as a deposit and the receipts will be issued once the subscriber received all copies of their magazine. If you want to unsubscribe at any time whatsoever, surely Al-Maarif is ready to refund the balance of the subscription, although a little bit of money!”18

This subscription system, if smoothly in place would be more profitable to publishers. They do not have to give a 20 to 40 percent discount if they rely on agent or dealer for the magazine. Yet sometimes the subscription price may be reduced to particular reader. Ar-Raja, for example gave special discounts to school children at a subscription price of RM2.50 per year (normal RM3.75) and RM1.50 for six months (normal RM1.90). However, pupils should be sent the subscription money directly to publisher and not through dealers.19

Payment for subscription made in several ways, sometimes confusing, and this requires explanation from the publisher. One of magazines who often remind clients on how to pay the subscription was Al-Hedayah (The Guidance). For example, in August 1923, subscribers are advised that: “The simple and quick way to send the subscription payment is to put money together with a letter in a sealed envelope, then send it by register to the distributor’s magazine as send the order will delayed until up to two months.” 20

14 There are conflicting reports in the Straits Settlements Government Gazette which recorded circulation of Al-Imam as 5,000 copies while the Blue Book report stated the circulation is 2,000 copies only. Consider the circulation for other magazine during and after it as well as newspaper circulation, the number of 5,000 copies may not be reasonable.
15 Ian Proudfoot 1985, op. cit., pp.1-28
18 Majallah Al-Riwayat, 16 November 1938, p. 6.
19 Ar-Raja, 3 July 1928, p. 4.
20 Al-Hedayah, August 1923, p. 5.
following month, Al-Hedayah once again reminds their subscribers: “With the greatest hope, if you’re paying a subscription of Al-Hedayah put the money into the envelope and sends it by register and seal the envelope as posting by money order will delay and inconvenience to us. We do not receive payment by bank cheque unless you add the bank commissions; for every RM3.50 shall be added 82 cents”.23

Sales through direct subscription to the reader gave three advantages to publishers. First, publisher will obtain subscription payments in advance and the money could be used as working capital in magazine publishing. With a lot number of subscription and with long term duration, such as one year, the amount of working capital available will be larger and publishers could plan its magazine better. Second, with subscription, publisher does not have to give discount to dealers or distributors. While some publishers still give discount to subscribers, the number is far less than the discounts given to the dealer if publisher uses them in magazine distribution channel. Third, the rate or amount of subscription will be used as an indicator to the publisher for the amount of copies to be printed in an issue. Since subscribers will be the final buyers, publishers are able to make a more realistic estimation and the risks of unsold copies are reduced.

However, management for direct subscription is sometimes problematic and burdens the publishers. Tasks of campaign for subscription, subscription processing, receiving and recording payments, updating subscriptions records, delivery, and other management tasks, are often diverted the focus of publishers and often also the editor, from the more important work of preparing the content of magazine. As a result full attention cannot be paid to magazine, let alone given to the small size of publishers in pre-war period. For Malaya as an example, only one person, namely Mohd Yunus Abdul Hamid who works as the “editor, manager, clerk, office boy and others.”22 It similarly happened to the first author of Mujallah Guru, Mohammed Dato’Muda. He manages the magazine’s publication alone and frustrated after getting criticism from readers about the style of his authorship, he stated: “... this teacher act as an author, manager, clerk who distributing magazine and others. He had to face a lot of problems with the printer, with the lack of paper, the faulty printing press, with printing workers who stop working, had to overcome all these.”23 With a simple organizational structure on a small publisher with limited number of employees, the author’s work is often disturbed by the affairs of subscriptions. To reduce costs, there are magazines, such as the Dunia Sekarang, which do not receive any subscription less than a year.

Agents as Magazine’s Distributor

One distribution channel which was also important is the agent which is usually a large bookstore in the city or town. As in common practice, publishers will get orders from the agent. They will first make offer to the seller who wants to distribute their magazine. Royal Publishing Company, Singapore, which publishes several magazines such as Medan Laki-Laki (Male Field) and Medan Al-Islam (Islamic Field) and the newspapers such as Shorga Dunia (Paradise), Melayu Muda (Malay Youth) and Dunia Sekarang (Today’s World) for example, advertises: “Wanted! Agents in every town and village throughout Malaya to sell our books, magazines, and newspapers to Malays. With a capital of RM10.00 you can easily earn RM15.00 to RM20.00 every month in your spare time.”24 Specifically, Dunia Sekarang, July 28, 1934 stated: “Dunia Sekarang is now very salable and sold everywhere, people rush to buy them until it never enough copies in every issue. As such if you become an agent for Dunia Sekarang in your place you’re comfortably gain profit for every month. Hundreds of copies are sold at one place.”

Most publishers use an agent as sales representative and not sole agent unless Malaya which was first appeared in March 1933. The magazine in its issue on January 29, 1934 states:

Notice is hereby given that I have this day appointed S.A. Ibrahim Ghunny & Co., of No. 16, Queen Street, Singapore as my sole agent for the Tanah Melayu magazine. In future copies of the Tanah Melayu will be distributed throughout Malaya by S.A. Ibrahim Ghunny & Co, who will also dispatch the magazine every month to subscribers and sub-agents in

21 Al-Hedayah, September 1923, p. 3.
22 Malaya, March 1928, p. 3.
23 Mujallah Guru, July 1933, p. 365.
24 Shorga Dunia, 1 Jun 1936, p.5
Singapore and out stations. All payments for subscriptions, advertisements, sale of the magazines, etc., must be paid to S.A. Ibrahim Ghunny & Co., and not to any other person. Newsagents, advertisers and subscribers throughout Malaya are kindly requested to deal direct with S.A. Ibrahim Ghunny & Co. only. 25

The main advantage of using sales representative agent is that publisher will not too dependent on any one dealer alone (or sole agent). If a dealer cause problems, such as inefficient or do not make payments due, publisher can still get the payment from representatives. As such, working capital will still be around because while one or two dealers may be problematic, others still can be expected to doing a good job. But the risk is that publisher may have to deal with too many dealers at one time and it may cause other management problems.

Thus the use of sole representative may looks better option. Publisher will better manage their account since the collection of payments will be the responsibility of the sole representative. Sole representative usually play its role as a distributor efficiently than the publisher, and also capable of collecting debts from agents more effectively. One of the important sole representatives in the 1930s is SA Ibrahim Ghunny & Co. operating in Queen Street, Singapore. The company did various notices to their agents to settle their payment. For example stated in one magazine:

> With this we inform that if the money of previous issues was not sent to us immediately, we had to come to your place in the near future to collect the money due from you. At that time we had to claim from you the expenses of our travelling to your place. Because that would make you at loss, you are advised to quickly send the money to us with money order or register as usual. This is prior notice before anything happened. 26

<p>| TABLE 1: List of Pre-War Main Magazine’s Agents |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME OF DEALERS /AGENTS</th>
<th>TOWN/STATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hj. Muhamad Siraj</td>
<td>Bussorah Street, Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Sulaiman; Hasyim Abdullah</td>
<td>Arab Street, Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K.A. Fakir Mohammad</td>
<td>Keppel Road, Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.K. Samy &amp; Co.</td>
<td>Changi Road, Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Mohammad Kassim</td>
<td>Kallang Road, Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dulfakir &amp; Co.</td>
<td>North Bridge Road Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.M. Dulfakir &amp; Co.; Federal Rubber Stamp; Zainuddin &amp; Co.</td>
<td>Kuala Lumpur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muhd Hj. Abdul Salam &amp; Co.; Hj. Abdullah Fakeh</td>
<td>Melaka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matbaah Al-Mansuriah; Wan Mohd Taib Lembong; A.S. Kechik</td>
<td>Alor Setar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muhammad Din; Matbaah Az-Zinia</td>
<td>Taiping;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alwi &amp; Co.; Shah Hamid &amp; Co.</td>
<td>Tanjung Malim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.Y. Brothers</td>
<td>Kota Bharu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

25 Tanah Melayu, 29 January 1934, p. 5.
26 Tanah Melayu, August 1934, p. 5.
There are also agents who are individual or government official which never owned a bookstore. They acted as agents to magazine because of their closeness to the publishers and not as a means for collecting additional money. For example, Muhammad Nuruddin, Tapah Malay headmaster who became dealer for Ar-Raja, Haji Abbas Ali, Malay schoolteacher Temiang, Seremban (Al-Ikhwan) Mohd Hashim, the education Taiping (Mujallalah Guru); Abdul Samad Tahir Malay schoolteacher Kampung Tengah, Kuala Pilah (Tetauan Muda) Pilus Muhammad Ismail, land office, Tampin (Tetauan Muda); Ahmad Mohd Taib, Malay schools Pontian (Al-Ikhwan); Abdul Manaf, siak mosque Batu Gajah (Bulan Melayu); Ahmad Lazim Bokhir and Tuan Hj Ali, both teachers at the Batu Pahat School (Masa); and Tuan Hj Mohammad Said, Yan (Tetauan Muda).27

Smooth transactions are often affected, especially if publishers are dealing with an agent who just opened his own bookstore or publisher who are nor familiar with magazine sales. The question of who should bear the shipping cost of the magazine had often arises. The publisher of Masa (Time) has consistently reminded the agents to send subscription money through register or money order, and not by stamps in lieu of payment.28

To protect the magazine sales from any risk, some publishers require their agents to pay a deposit even though most of them are more willing to bear the risk. This deposit secures the publishers of any business risks, particularly fraud from agents or sole representatives. The publisher will take the deposit if the dealer or the agents failed to make payment at the time agreed. Usually publishers require agents to pay the deposit prior to taking any copies of the magazine. For example, Panduan (Guidance) states, “Whoever wants to be representatives please send upfront money of RM5.00; so we can send 25 copies of Panduan. The deposit will be increased if the number of copies more.”29

The sum of deposit specified by publishers varies for each magazine, with values ranging from RM5.00 to RM10.00. Some magazines, such as Tanah Melayu (Malay Land) asked agents to provide a substantial security deposit, which is RM200.30 But generally the deposit is quite low. Only once the deposit is sent to publisher, then copies of the magazine will be delivered to the dealers. Dunia Sekarang which is sold at RM0.15 requires agents to pay RM3.00 in advance. The deposit will be taken by the publisher if agent does not make the payments, but returned when they ceased to be an agent. According to Dunia Sekarang, “... The deposit is a guarantee or assurance in our possession only as a sign of sincerity and will be returned to you adequately when you cease to be our agent in future.”31

Number of copies to be printed for each issue is determined from the number of copies ordered. Publishers send the ordered copies of magazine to agents by mail and incur the expenses. There are also publishers who do not wait for orders from bookstores. They directly send copies of the magazine to the dealer with the hope that they will make additional orders. Langkah Baru (The New Step) for example

27 Ibid., p. 86.
28 Jasa (Service), September 1929, p. 3 stated, "If you send subscription or money for books or any payment, please sent by register or money order. Never sent it by stamps (as substitute for payments) as it will make us harder. Please don’t anymore. Send us by register or money order. It is cheaper, safe, and quick."
29 Panduan, Disember 1934, p. 3
30 Tanah Melayu, September 1934, p. 3.
31 Dunia Sekarang, 14 July 1934, p. 5.
They also have their ideas and thought to society through reading materials. Their strength is in the preparation of materials to be published, not in the acumen of magazine business. Thus, the question of circulation and distribution, as well as income from advertising is not much explored by Malay magazine before the war.

The three pillars—editorial, circulation, advertising—should work together to achieve the objective of publisher. Editorial materials should manage to attract readers. Even the excellence in editorial content will not only keep the loyal readers, but will also attract the new one. On the other hand, circulation which closely associated to subscription, distribution, and the sale of magazine will bring revenue to publisher. Revenue from sales of magazine copies is expected to cover the expenses of production and marketing. Therefore, the right editorial contents and the good circulation will finally attract producers to advertise their products. Income received from the sale page (advertisement) can be relied to bring profit to publishers. However, this ideal cannot be achieved in the enterprise of Malay magazine before the World War II.

Bibliography


Conclusion

Most magazine publishers in the period before the Second World War paid their focus more on the elements of editorial than two other, namely circulation and advertising. This is due to the ultimate goal of magazine which is to fulfill its social responsibility, the consciousness that often arise among Malay intellectuals to communicate

sent copies in advance although no approval received from the dealer to act as the agent for the magazine. Cited for example:

We sent copies of this first issue to ask for an agreement: 1. Are you happy to be our agent in your place? 2. If you agree, give us a statement of how many copies it could sell in your place. 3. However if you do not agree, please return the copies to us. 4. In two months, the unsold copies should be sent back to us. If not, it is consider sold and the money should be sent.

For each copy of magazines sold, publishers will give discounts of 20 to 30 percent of the sales price. Discount rate depends on the number of copies that can be sold and the transaction between publisher and the agent are done on-orders and consignment. For transactions in order, if copies of the magazine cannot sell, the agent or the seller is not allowed to return to the publisher. For consignment, agents can return it back to the publisher, but they had to bear the cost of shipping. This is because the number of copies for consignment is determined by sales agents, not by publishers. Nett payment will be made by agent once or twice a month.

Along with the fee, there are publishers who ask the sellers to provide a sales report. Langkahan Baru stated that one of the agreements with the seller is in “every 5th day of the month they must submit a report together with the money for the magazine sold.” Dunia Sekarang, states: “The other terms are as usual; we pay 20% commission to reward you as you sell the newspaper/magazine. The unsold copies must be returned to us at the end of every month. While we will bear the postage costs to you, you will do the same for your postage to us.”

32 Langkahan Baru, January 1942, p. 3.
33 Dunia Sekarang, 21 July 1934, p. 5.


