

7.2 The validity of intensity questions

The subject of this paper is an experiment by *Die Zeit's* marketing research department concerning the validity of questions about advertising contacts and contact probability, in addition to media contacts. Two question designs estimate the amount of the content of a periodical read by a reader of *Zeitmagazin* are compared, one of them using a numerical scale and the other a verbal. Validity is determined by a reading-noting study measuring the page traffic.

The questions are as follows:

(1) Version A (own version = *Zeit/MMA*-Version*)

Please think of the last number of the *Zeitmagazin* you read or looked at. What percentage of the magazine did you read thoroughly and what percentage of the pages did you open at all? (Please also think of pictorials and advertisements). Here I have a scale from 0% to 100%. It represents the total volume of the magazine. If you picked up the magazine several times please add them together and estimate what proportion you read thoroughly or looked at carefully. Also please tell me, what percentage of the *Zeitmagazin* you opened at all. (interviewer: Remind respondent once more to think of the complete magazine, ie including pictures and advertisements).

Of (name of the magazine)

I read thoroughly or looked at carefully...%

I opened at all.....%

(2) Version B (used by Institut für Demoskopie, Allensbach)

Here once more are the masthead cards of the newspapers and magazines you opened or read. Could you please tell me for each periodical, how much of the last issue you picked up you read or looked at. Please distribute the masthead cards onto this paper in the following way: If you read all or almost all of the newspaper or magazine, put the card onto the first column, if about three quarter of the periodical, the second column etc. If you cannot remember, put the card aside.

categories:

A	B	C	D	E	cannot
all or	about	about	about	less than	remember
almost	three	half	one	one	(card put
all	quarter		quarter	quarter	aside)

* MMA = Institut Media-Market-Analysen, Dr. Eva-Maria Hess, Frankfurt/Main.

The third question, designed to assess the validity of the estimates in questions 1 or 2 respectively, was:

(3) Now I want to page through *Zeitmagazin* with you, and I want to ask you to tell me for every double page that I open whether you looked at it or not.

RESUMÉ

The results from the three independent samples and a fourth sample split between the two versions are:

(1) The estimates from the *Zeit/MMA* version compared with the results of the double page traffic (= 100) gives an attention value index of 101.

(2) The estimates from the IfD version compared with the results of the double page traffic (= 100) gives an attention value index of 67.

The experiments show how the differences between the two estimates came about: The reasons are different definitions of reading and the different answer categories. The definitions differ in the way that the respondent

read or looked at a page/double page spread *thoroughly* or

read or looked at *some* of that page/spread.

For the chance of an advertisement being noticed, which is the measure of interest, only the definition "read or looked at something" can be of any concern. The first step is always the investigation of the chance of an advertisement being looked at. Additional very interesting information, the intensity of looking at or reading the advertisement, is another step.

The version used by *Zeit/MMA* yielded different results for these two aspects — 'looked at, at all' and 'looked at thoroughly': equally, results seem capable of distinguishing between two or more magazines, if there are different ways of reading these magazines.

Details

First we examine the validity of the average results of four samples, which was tested by investigating the double page traffic of *Zeitmagazin* only. The definition of looking at the magazine at all is used here for the estimates as well as for page traffic.

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average of Zeit-experiments

Zeitmagazin (n = 1,106)			
attention according to			
	double page traffic	Zeit/MMA-version	IfD-version
	82.0%	83.2%	55.7%
Index	100	101	67

The same two methods as those for Zeitmagazin were applied to two other magazines to obtain their attention values, but verification by double page traffic could not be done. The interview was carried out with multiple readers (of Zeitmagazin and others): all four samples consisted of readers of Zeitmagazin

average of Zeit/MMA-experiments

attention according to				
	n	double page traffic	Zeit/MMA version	IfD-version
Zeitmagazin	1,106	82.0%	83.2%	55.7%
Magazine A	685	-	85.3%	52.3%
Magazine B	652	-	82.3%	52.8%

The level of the results is much the same for all magazines; some results are almost identical. The Zeit/MMA version yields results around 80 percent, the IfD version around 52-55 percent. As reported above, the verification of Zeitmagazin yielded an index of 101 for the Zeit/MMA version and an index of 67 for the IfD version. Thus we come to the conclusion that investigation of the double page traffic of magazines A and B (which is planned for later experiments) will yield equal results.

It remains to be checked how the results of magazine A and B correspond with the IfD-publication AWA 82:

attention-value from Zeit experiments compared with AWA 82

	Zeit/MMA experiments		AWA 82
	Zeit/MMA version	IfD version	IfD version
Magazine A	85.3%	59.3%	48.4%
Magazine B	82.3%	52.8%	51.6%

All versions utilise the maximum readership (at least one out of twelve issues); the AWA covers the entire maximum readership, the Zeit/MMA-experiment only the part of multiple readers of Zeitmagazin and magazine A or magazine B respectively. Nevertheless, the results for magazine B of 52.8% in the IfD version of the Zeit/MMA experiment and of 51.6% in the AWA differ by only about one percent. On top of that, all four values have the same dimensions of around 50 percent.

RESULTS

The same methods yield the same results.

The extent to which this thesis is true for the Zeit/MMA experiment can be seen in the following table showing the results of the separate tests: the structure of the entire experiment can also be seen from **Table 1**. This table shows the results from which the weighted averages, shown in **Table 1**, were calculated. Although the data base is limited, there were only small variations, as can be shown by validation from the double page traffic:

test issue of Zeitmagazin	double page traffic	Zeit/MMA experiment	
		Zeit/MMA version	IfD version
45/82	81.6% = 100	96	-
46/82	83.8% = 100	-	65
12/83 _A	83.8% = 100	101	-
12/83 _B	82.1% = 100	-	69
13/83	81.0% = 100	-	70
16/83	81.5% = 100	105	-

On the other hand, comparing the figures for "read thoroughly or looked at carefully" of the Zeit/MMA version and the attention value of the IfD version yields the following results (in chronological order of the test):

test copy Zeitmagazin	Zeit/MMA version	IfD version
	read thoroughly or looked at carefully	looked at at all
45/82	47.3%	-
46/82	-	54.3%
12/83 split	46.5%	56.9%
13/83	-	56.6%
16/83	50.7%	-

As can be seen immediately, the IfD figures tend towards the figures for "read thoroughly or looked at carefully". Evidently "reading thoroughly or looking at carefully" determines the reading about which the respondents answer the question. The IfD version yields figures about 10% higher than the Zeit/MMA version, which can be expected for the validation check because the respondents claimed to have noticed more of the content (approximately 80%) at least partly.

CONCLUSION

If it is required to get estimates of the volume and intensity of reading, the Zeit/MMA version as described

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TABLE 1
Zeit/MMA — experiments

<i>Issues of Zeitmagazin</i> <i>(week/year)</i>	45/82	46/82	12/83 <i>split</i>	13/83	16/83	average <i>(weighted)</i>
Zeit/MMA version data base	188	-	95	-	301	584
estimate of: "read thoroughly or looked at carefully"	47.3%	-	46.5%	-	50.7%	48.9%
estimate of: "opened at all"	78.6%	-	84.4%	-	85.7%	83.2%
total data base	201	-	97	-	315	613
double page traffic	81.6%	-	83.8%	-	81.5%	81.9%
IfD version data base	-	205	95	188	-	488
estimation	-	54.3%	56.9%	56.6%	-	55.7%
total data base	-	205	96	192	-	493
double page traffic	-	83.8%	80.3%	81.0%	-	82.0%

in this paper should be given preference. A valid value as far as the volume of reading is concerned will be one of the results. But conclusions can also be drawn regarding the intensity of reading of on the one hand the editorial and on the other hand the advertisements. Both were specifically included in the questions used in the *Zeit/MMA* version. As far as intensity of reading is concerned, a suitable instrument for verification would

be a reading-noting test marking those parts in the editorial and the advertisements which have been read thoroughly or carefully studied.

Meanwhile the *Zeit/MMA* version should be used, and the results can be taken as weighting factors if different magazines are being compared for various purposes.