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9.5 Press versus TV: readers are better consumers than are TV viewers

SUMMARY

In the past few years we have seen a profound transformation of the media scenario in our country.

Advertisers reacted accordingly, and we therefore observed a considerable increase of advertising expenditure in television, particularly in the commercial networks.

Comparisons between print media and television even led to a situation of uncertainty because of the instability of the media market, no settlement of which is foreseen for the near future.

In this particularly delicate stage of the Italian economy, publishers — and also advertisers — are seeking clarity and objectivity of judgement, from which arose this collateral research activity within the ISPI (the Italian Survey of the Periodical Press Readership, similar to the British NRS). In the ISPI, as has been well known for many years, magazine publishers are involved in the accurate study of the behaviour of the reading public, who are also consumers of products, goods and services. Why, have we been wondering, are advertisers so interested in television? It is true that the audience has increased in the past few years, thanks to the variety of offers by television, but how much?

Is the rate of expenditure in television justified, if even now contacts provided by the periodical press are so much greater than those of all television networks (commercial and state)? Do those who watch television consume more than those who read periodicals?

Have we been measuring what correlation there is between the use of advertised products and exposure to the media? ISPI has now done it and this paper presents the first such attempt by publishers in my country.

BACKGROUND

On July 15, 1976, the constitutional court, by Sentence 202, officially sanctioned the end of the radio and television monopoly, previously assigned to RAI, and legitimated the institution of a number of independent radio and television stations — more precisely "the installation and effectiveness of Stations for over-the-air radio and television broadcasts, with a capacity not to exceed the local area". No other rules were subsequently laid down, and despite government pledges to regulate the subject, the legislative silence has now lasted for seven years.

Thus advertisers discovered new and unexpected possibilities of communication which had previously been blocked by RAI, and the advertising market now sees on private TV medium and small firms which had before never had a budget.

Within a very short time a great number of small television stations invaded the country — 68 in 1976, 244 in 1977, 434 in 1978 — to a total of about 600 in 1981.

At first the phenomenon seemed to be only local; but quite soon it proved otherwise. The economic necessities of private TV stations are not sufficiently met by local advertising, so that there is a need to expand, reorganize, to work on costs and structures.

The private television operating field expands from local to regional, becomes interregional, and subsequently national. It is the beginning of a concentration process which bears new national'circuits' (networks), veritable duplications of RAI networks, which embody or cover most of the small stations.

A few figures are enough to explain the extent of the phenomenon. In 1977 expenditure on advertising in private television was 14 billion liras. In 1980 it reached some 144 billion; in 1981 it exceeded the total amount of advertising expenditure on RAI TV (255 billion vs. 218 billion) and in 1982 it reached 465 billion. For 1983 the forecast is of 555 billions. From the first reports until today the money spent on private media has multiplied 39 times.

The increase in public television does not follow the same tendency, and the growing discrepancy has enlarged remarkably since the end of 1981. Also the shares the two media take of total advertising has undergone some transformation: while in 1980 RAI's advertising was 12.1% of the total and private televisions 11.7%, in 1981 we recorded respectively 13.8% and 16.1%, while the 1983 projection shows RAI at a share of 15% and private networks at 23.2%.

The press succeeded in holding its market share during the five year period 1975-1980, but from 1980 a continuous shift of advertiser's choices from one medium to the other becomes more and more evident.

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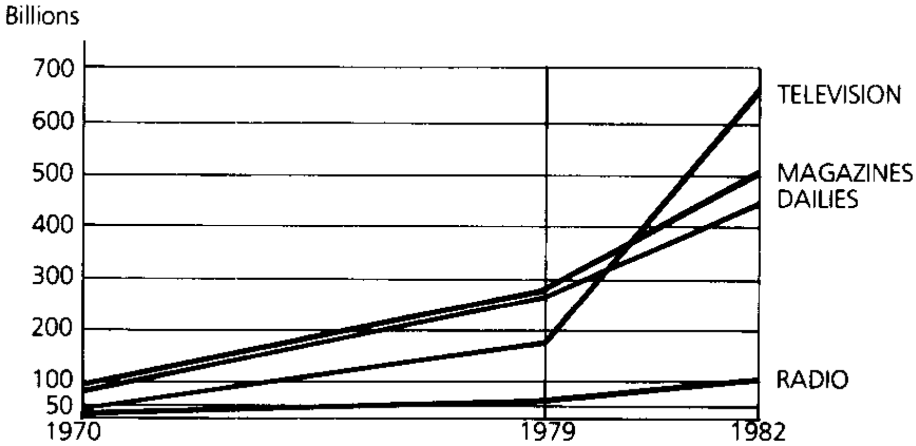
FIGURE 1
Advertising expenditure by media

(Billions of Liras)



PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

If we confine our attention to trends of advertising expenditure in the main media (Press, TV and Radio), as illustrated in **Figure 1,** the publishers' fears become evident. Last year TV did better than either magazines or dailies, and the future of advertising revenues for magazines appears irreversibly grey (as it happened in other countries where TV advertising has a long history and no restrictions).

But are the levels of expenditure in TV justified in Italy, where magazines still create far more contacts than

TABLE 1
Media contacts provided by magazines and television

Magazines (ISPI): last period readers
TV (ISTEL): average day viewers

	1979	*1980*	*1981*			*1982*	
	Year	Year		Year			Year
			Spring		Autumn	Spring	
	000	000	000	000	000	000	000
Magazines*	93.168	90.382		99.821			103.197
Television:							
RAI 1			26.403		29.839	29.788	
RAI 2			15.355		16.031	17.788	
RAI 3			879		1.240	1.275	
Private			18.026		25.651	28.482	
Total			60.633		72.761	77.333	

Includes only those titles which were covered in 1979. The figure for 1982 including new titles is shown in* **Table 2.

all television networks, as **Tables 1** and **2** show? Can research evaluate the strength of this medium in reaching heavy consumers?

An answer was found in the Media and Marketing Survey sponsored by ISPI publishers last year.

TABLE 2
Media contacts provided by magazines and television 1982.

(Thousands)
Magazines (ISPI 1982): last period readers
TV (ISTEL Spring 1982): average day viewers

Magazines:	weekly	75.563	
	monthly	46.304	
	TOTAL		121.867
Private TV:	networks	28.449	
	circuits	2.618	
	other stations	5.734	
	TOTAL		36.801

MEDIA AND MARKETING SURVEY: FIRST STEP TO QUALIFY READERSHIP VERSUS TV AUDIENCE

The purpose of the 'Media and Marketing' survey was to contribute in a positive way to the solution of this specific problem. The results of this study are now generally available and provide the base for strategic selection of the most suitable advertising media to reach the consumers of 125 products, goods and services who had previously been analysed by ISPI in 1979. (A media-products survey does not exist in Italy except these two attempts). What was the objective of this new survey?

In 1979, when the market situation of media was different from the present one (commercial/private television was only local), ISPI periodicals reached only that part of the population in which consumption of all categories of the surveyed products was mostly concentrated. What happened in 1982 when media availibility was substantially transformed? In this paper I summarise what we have learned from 'Media and Marketing — the consumers of 125 products'.

First of all it should be remembered that the study was conducted by the same research agencies of ISPI (ABACUS, DOXA, MAKROTEST) on a sample of 2,052 individuals representing the total population, and with the same method of sample selection as that used by the ISPI.

The questionnaire used was identical to the one of ISPI CONSUMI '79 so that a direct comparison is therefore possible on the variations that have taken place over time, in the penetration of consumption, bearing in mind that it is for different seasons — February in 1979 and June in 1982.

What 'Media and Marketing' has demonstrated

The question to which we wanted to find an answer is as follows: "what is the link between consumers and advertising media?". In other words, which medium reaches the most important consumers?

If we group the population according to the different intensity of exposure to the two main media, television and periodical press, it is possible to obtain the three groups of individuals we refer as A, B, and C. In group A we include those who are 'mainly readers of periodicals', in group B those who are both readers of periodicals and television viewers.

As can be seen from what follows , what we have done is, briefly, by cross-tabulating the consumption rates of the 125 products by the individuals belonging to each group, to discover that group A has the highest penetration in 67 products, group B in 53 products, and group C in only 5 products. This means that those who *read* consume more than those who mainly watch television and are average weak readers.

At this point someone could object that the products selected had a low market penetration, or were intended for the upper classes. This also has been checked, and results were again favourable to the press.

The conclusions we can draw are therefore of two kinds:

QUANTITATIVE
We advise advertisers that periodicals permit them to maximise consumer coverage and thereby reduce the price per contact.

QUALITATIVE
Those who include periodicals in their schedule influence those individuals with a greater tendency to consumption, obtaining a lesser dilution of the message.

THE SURVEY

Media and marketing: the consumers of 125 products

Media and Marketing survey — ISPI; conducted by ABACUS — DOXA — MAKROTEST in June/July 1982 on a sample of 2,052 individuals; with reference to the total population and with the same method of sample selection used by ISPI. (In the summer of 1982 a representative part of the same individuals interviewed for ISPI in the autumn of 1981 had been reinterviewed).

Selection of the sub-sample

9,263 interviewees in 360 towns	Random sample	Sample M. & M. 2,052 interviewees in 208 towns *Below* 250,000 INHABITANTS: - 1 town over 2 ISPI sample points - 45% among the ISPI interviewees *Over* 250,000 INHABITANTS: - all towns - 22.5% among ISPI interviewees

The questionnaire

Identical to the one utilized for 'ISPI CONSUMI '79'

Data surveyed for 125 products: for repetitive consumption and purchase products; time of last consumption and/or: frequency of consumption during the last month.

For infrequent consumption and purchase products; purchase during the last year or: use during the last year.

Data published in the volume for 125 products

Penetration		Social-demographic parameters
	according to	
Composition		Exposure to mass media

Comparison among penetrations in sub-groups exposed with different intensity of exposure to press and TV.

The 125 products and services (No. of products in brackets)

For repetitive purchase or consumption:
- Perfumery products (9)
- Cosmetics (9)
- Shaving products (7)
- Retail outlets (8)
- Soft drinks, beer, alcohol and aperitifs (14)
- Food products (23)
- Household products (7)

For infrequent purchase or consumption:
- Clothing (9)
- Accessories (10)
- Leisure-time activities (15)
- Insurance (3)
- Automobiles and motorcycles (2)
- Leisure durables (9)

The definition of consumers

For repetitive purchase or consumption products; average and heavy consumers.

For infrequent purchase or consumption products; buyers or users in the last 12 months.

The definitions of exposure to print media

READERS OF PERIODICALS
(Readers of at least 1 periodical 'in the last period')

READERS OF WEEKLY MAGAZINES
(Readers of at least 1 weekly magazine 'in the last 6 days')

READERS OF MONTHLY MAGAZINES
(Readers of at least 1 monthly magazine 'in the last 30 days')

HEAVY READERS OF PERIODICALS
(High frequency readers of at least two periodicals)

READERS OF DAILY NEWSPAPERS
('Yesterday' readers of at least one newspaper).

The definitions of exposure to TV and radio

TV VIEWERS
('Yesterday' TV viewers, at least once)

TV-RAI VIEWERS
('Yesterday' viewers of at least one RAI channel — state TV)

COMMERCIAL TV VIEWERS
('Yesterday' viewers of at least one commercial broadcast)

HEAVY TV VIEWERS
('Yesterday' TV viewers for over 2½ hours)

ANALOGOUS DEFINTION FOR RADIO

Exposure to mass media

For all mass media, except for cinema, the exposure information in the latest period is produced for the total consumer population considered.

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For the same total consumer populations we also can obtain the relevant classification according to the 'Media-Imperatives' groups we have called A, B, and C, built up according to the exposure frequency to the periodical press and to television.

Different exposure frequency of periodical press and television

From the computer tape we can obtain a cross-tabulation between periodical readers and television viewers, according to the exposure frequencies for each defined total consumer population.

We can obtain a distribution of the consumers into three exposure categories:

(a) heavy readers: viewers
(b) average readers/viewers
(c) non-readers/viewers

in all possible combinations.

This type of analysis emphasises the contribution of each single cell to the formation of the 'Media-Imperatives' groups for the defined total consumer population.

Comparison of the penetration in compliance with the intensity of exposure to periodicals press and television

In order to subdivide the whole adult population into sub-groups differently exposed to the two media, we started with a double entry cross-tabulation indicating the crossing of the various 'exposed' categories, as in **Table 3.**

TABLE 3

Total population, in thousands

	TV VIEWERS			*Total*
		Average		*population*
READERS OF PERIODICALS	*Heavy viewers*	*& weak viewers*	*Non-viewers*	
Heavy readers	5,387	7,021	1,626	14,034
Average and weak readers	5,022	8,652	2,048	15,722
Non-readers	2,630	8,086	4,266	14,982
Total population	13,039	23,759	7,940	44,738

Following this cross-tabulation, the adult population can be classified in the following *groups:*

		000	*%*
(A)	*Mainly periodical readers* Heavy periodical readers who are also average/weak non-TV-viewers Average/weak periodical readers who are also non-TV-viewers	10,695	23.9
(B)	*Periodical readers and TV viewers* Heavy periodical readers who are also heavy TV viewers Average/weak periodical readers who are also average/weak TV viewers	14,039	31.4
(C)	*Mainly TV viewers* Heavy TV viewers who are also average/weak periodical readers or non-readers average/weak TV viewers who are also non periodical readers	15,738	35.2
	Total population of non-periodical and non-TV-viewers	4,266	9.5
		44,738	100.0

Main results

For a summarised and immediately readable comparison between the two media, the penetration of the products and the services considered by the survey have been analysed according to the different exposure-intensity groups A, B, and C, (as previously described).

It may be noted that in group A, mainly readers of periodicals, we find the highest penetration in 67 of the 125 products or services; in group B, periodicals readers and television viewers, we find the highest penetration in 53 of the products or services; in group C, mainly TV viewers, we find the highest penetration in 5 of the products or services.

Table 4 shows the numbers of products with the highest penetration.

TABLE 4
Number of products or services with the highest penetration in the single groups

	Total	*Group A*	*Group B*	*Group C*
Perfumery products	9	3	5	1
Cosmetics	9	7	2	-
Shaving products	7	3	1	3
Clothing	9	6	3	-
Accessories*	10	7	3	-
Recreational and spare-time activities	15	12	3	-
Retail outlets	8	4	4	-
Insurances	3	1	2	-
Automobiles and motorbikes	2	1	1	-
Soft-drinks and beer	5	3	2	-
Alcoholics and aperitifs	9	2	7	-
Alimentary products	23	5	18	1
Home products	7	5	2	-
Leisure durables	9	9	-	-
TOTAL	125	67	53	5

**Jewellery, watches, lighters, cameras and films, records, etc.*