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9.6 How people are involved in TV and magazine advertising

The survey described in this paper was conducted by SOFRES on behalf of *L' Express*, the most widely-read of all French news magazines. Its first public presentation was given to the French Advertising Research Institute (IREP) in December 1982.

THE SURVEY BACKGROUND

People in advertising are nowadays increasingly concerned to investigate the nature of the impact made by each of the mass media vehicles.

In this context, numerous attempts have been made to compare press and television advertising. From the whole range of these attempts, both in France and elsewhere, it emerges that the TV medium — although possessing unquestioned powers of communication — is not the be-all and end-all of the advertising business. In some areas, such as the creation of a brand image and the proper conveyance of product characteristics, there are good reasons to believe that the printed magazines can do somewhat better than TV, and that they have at any rate their own specific contribution to make.

Nevertheless, such investigations as were conducted in France had only limited objectives and significance, while those reported from other countries give only slight and scattered enlightenment concerning the specific impacts of French TV and magazine advertisements respectively. Consequently, there was an unfulfilled need in this area.

In view of this situation, *L' Express* asked SOFRES to carry out a survey designed to demonstrate how these two media can be functionally differentiated; and how the different natures of their advertising impact can be described. The objective was not to support an adversarial argument, but rather to clarify their specific differences and point to whatever complementary combinations which might exist between the two.

When approaching an assignment of this kind, it was possible to envisage various types of surveys, the most promising line being probably that of carrying on from the work done by Guy Consterdine for Times Newspapers Ltd of London.

His survey consisted in an attempt to make an inventory and typology of all the conscious reactions of the individual coming in contact with either a printed or TV advertisement. In possession of the findings of such a study, we could have drawn up profiles of reader/viewer

response to advertisements carried by the two media respectively.

But, however attractive at first sight, this study appeared to us to have three limitations: it takes so broad a view as to appear to be on a somewhat theoretical level, which detracts from its operational impact; it requires the deployment of sophisticated tools, ie. linguistic coding techniques, which makes it a rather *ad hoc* approach unsuited to easy repetition for each case as it arises; it is a limited approach, referring only to the conscious reactions of individuals exposed to advertisements, whereas there are good reasons to believe that there can sometimes be a subliminal effect.

For these three reasons, we decided to devise a fresh approach, possibly less ambitious than the above, but which has what we consider to be four advantages: it has clear and precise objectives; it reaches simple but fundamental conclusions; it can readily be repeated as need arises; it lends itself to further extension for investigating factors conducive to advertising effectiveness.

The survey thus developed by us follows the same line of thought as in Guy Consterdine and also refers to the work of Herbert E Krugman.

Krugman's approach is a simple one. When comparing TV versus printed advertisements, he makes the following observations:

(a) on *television*, the advertising message is *imposed* on the prospect by the advertiser, who chooses the rhythm and line of argument. The viewer cannot interrupt that line, even if he wants to take more time over a given point put forward — he just takes it all in, as a passive receptacle to it;

(b) in a *press* advertisement, the message is merely *proposed* by the advertiser. It is the reader, in this case, who chooses the time and rhythm of reception and who applies his own line of reasoning to the argument; in other words, he is an active participant in the communication process.

Without dismissing — far from it, in fact — the idea of a subliminal effect of advertising, Krugman applies these observations to his theory that the prospect's relating of himself to the content of the advertisement at the time he encounters it is greater for a printed than for a TV message.

Going on to define the impact power of a given medium in terms of the number of conscious 'product-

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TABLE 1
Pattern of the survey

	SAMPLE GROUPS									TOTAL
	EXPRESS Readers (Print ads)			EXPRESS Readers (TV ads)			Average TV Viewers (TV ads)			
	Male Samples	Female Samples	Mixed Samples	Male Samples	Female Samples	Mixed Samples	Male Samples	Female Samples	Mixed Samples	
Phase 1 Twin Press & TV ads	30	30	35	30	30	35	30	30	35	285
Phase 2 Press only	30	30	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	180
TV only	-	-	-	-	-	-	30	30	30	
Total Interviews	60	60	65	30	30	35	60	60	65	465

connections' it achieves per minute, Krugman suggests — on the basis of small sample data available to him — that magazines are a more 'involving' advertising medium than TV, meaning that the two media are effective in different ways ('product-connections' being the prospect-product relations aroused by an advertisement, and 'involvement' being the degree to which these are provoked).

Our study seeks to show, on the basis of a much larger and more comprehensive survey than Krugman employs, that his hypothesis is effectively valid.

It must be made quite plain that our aim is not here to demonstrate that magazines are a 'better' or 'more effective' advertising medium than TV, but merely to show that the two media probably obey different rules of 'involvement', in the same way that they employ different means of communicating an advertising message.

Consequently, the survey aims were very simple: to count and code the *connections* evoked in the minds of readers or viewers of magazine and TV advertisements respectively.

SURVEY METHODS

Pattern of interviews (see Table 1)

Given that the connections aroused in the minds of readers or viewers when exposed to advertising are of a fugitive nature, it is obvious that they will be more fully and accurately seized in interviews taking place very shortly after the exposure occurs.

Consequently, we decided to expose the sample panels to TV or printed advertisements and then interview them immediately afterwards.

The survey was performed in two phases. In the course of *Phase One*, we investigated the connections generated by TV and printed advertisements taken from twelve recent advertising campaigns, using three different panels: a sample of *I' Express* readers subjected to printed advertisements; a sample of other *I' Express* readers subjected to screened advertisements; a sample of average TV viewers subjected only to the same screened advertisements. In this phase, the products and brands concerned were the same for both printed and screened shots, which were also based on the same copy strategy.

Processing of the responses from the three samples enabled us to distinguish between the effects related to audience characteristics and those related to the media themselves.

In the course of *Phase Two*, we investigated the connections generated by: printed advertisements referring to products and brands typically advertised in *I' Express*, shown to readers of that magazine; TV advertisements referring to products and brands regularly appearing on TV, shown to average TV viewers.

Here again, twelve press campaigns and twelve TV campaigns were employed.

Given that the findings emerging from the two phases were the same, they are here presented in consolidated form.

Since the *I' Express* and TV audiences are mixed, the study covered all-male samples (for men's products), all-female samples (women's products) and mixed samples (neutral products).

The TV advertisements were displayed on video-recorder screens. The printed advertisements were inserted in a dummy magazine known as the 'A.M.O.' developed by Armand Morgenzstern(*); this device

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reveals very precisely the length of time during which each advertisement is under perusal.

Panel participants were recruited in the street. After being subjected to the advertising messages, they were asked: "Can you tell me all the thoughts that passed through your mind while you were looking at the advertisement? All of them, even if you think them unimportant, and even if they are not related to the advertisement itself?"

The interviews were conducted in various places in Paris between June and October 1982. In all, 465 people were interviewed, evenly divided between men and women.

Coding of responses

The very object of the survey — to inventory the connections aroused at the time of coming into contact with an advertising message — means that the system by which those connections are coded is of essential importance. We therefore paid very special attention to this matter.

When it came to analysing the data retrieved — by listening to taped records of all the interviews and studying the notes made by the interviewers as they proceeded — three major difficulties came to light:

(a) how could we distinguish, within each interviewee response, between genuine recollections of impressions generated at the actual time of contact with the advertising message, and rationalised 'fabrications' devised only as the *post-facto* interview took place?

(b) should all the connections be given the same treatment, or should some distinctions be made between them?

(c) within a classification system evolved in response to the last question, how should the connections be differentiated to signify differences of kind?

These three types of question led us to develop the coding system set out in **Table 2**.

Well-defined rationalisations

The connections placed under this heading are those which the interviewee inserted in his response but which were not actually experienced simultaneously with his exposure to the advertising message.

They can be quite satisfactorily identified by reference to several considerations:

(a) The interviewee may himself say that a connection entered his mind only during the interview, and not at

TABLE 2
Coding system applied

D	- WELL-DEFINED RATIONALISATIONS
E	- ILL-DEFINED RATIONALISATIONS
F	- VALUE JUDGEMENTS
	GENERAL CONNECTIONS
	Good Product Identification
G	- Factual
H	- Emotional
	Poor Product Identification
I	- Factual
J	- Emotional
	PRODUCT-CONNECTIONS
	Good Product Identification
K	- Factual
L	- Value judgements
M	- Emotional
	Poor Product Identification
N	- Factual
O	- Value judgements
P	- Emotional

the time of exposure to the message.

(b) Even if the interviewee claims that the connection arose during exposure, it may be placed in this category on one or more of the following grounds: the response is formulated in deduced, logical and premeditated terms; it is formulated mainly in the present, rather than a past, tense; it is formulated following blanks in the response, or after considerable prompting (signifying *post-facto* reflection).

(c) A general psychological assessment of reactions to the survey, as revealed by the interviewee's responses as a whole, points in this direction.

Ill-defined rationalisations

This classification covers a type of connection where it is hard to decide whether it results from a process of rationalisation, or whether it was genuinely generated at the time of exposure to the message.

The response formulation in which we find this type of connection is half-way between the deduced and associative modes; it is often phrased in the present tense, but mixed up with some verbs conjugated in the past tense.

Furthermore, the general psychological assessment of the interview is inconclusive.

Value judgements

These are the expressions of opinions regarding either

(*)Armand Morgenzstern is Research Director at the Publicis agency, and we gratefully acknowledge his assistance with this study.

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advertising in general or a particular advertisement, of a positive or negative nature: this type of judgement is usually arrived at through *post-facto* reflection.

General connections

This covers connections genuinely conceived simultaneously with exposure to the message; they do not refer to the product advertised, but to the advertising framework.

Such connections are revealed by responses employing the associative mode and for the most part phrased in the past tense. We make a distinction between connections which show good identification of the message to which they refer and those which fail to do so: for example, the interviewee may relate the message to an advertising background which actually served for a different message, or different product brand, than the one stated.

For these connections, a further distinction is made between *factual connections* and those which refer to the interviewee's emotional state of mind.

A factual connection refers to a fact, an event, or the life experience of the interviewee, whereas the *emotional connection* has no explicit or declared basis; the latter thus reflects rather a state of mind.

For both emotional and factual connections, we then distinguished between those which properly identified the product and those which failed to do so.

Product connections

These are genuine connections arising simultaneously with exposure to the message: they differ from general connections in that the product itself is included in the response.

As previously, these connections are formulated in associative terms, usually phrased in the past tense.

Here again, we distinguished between those exhibiting a good, versus a bad, identification of the product.

SURVEY FINDINGS

Table 3, which sets forth the total number of connections generated by a Press or TV advertising message, calls for three important observations:

(a) Whether in printed or screened form, advertisements do not leave people indifferent; both forms give rise to the establishment of a large number of connections.

(b) TV commercials generate roughly the same number of connections per individual whether addressed to readers of *I' Express* or to average TV viewers. This tends

to show that TV's ways of handling and presenting advertising messages are a more important factor than the personal characteristics of the individual viewers.

(c) Printed advertisements generate roughly fifty percent more connections per individual and per message than their TV counterparts.

These last two remarks are of primary importance: they prompt us to agree with Krugman's hypothesis, according to which the mode of communication of the message inherent in each of the two media concerned (message 'proposed' by magazines, 'imposed' by TV), determines the mode of reception by the individual (active and passive reception respectively).

Table 4, setting out the numbers of connections per unit of time — here, per second — generated by each of the two media, fully confirms that hypothesis. On this basis, the printed message generates between three and four times more connections than the screened message.

Magazines and TV thus influence in different ways, due simply to their different styles of communication. In terms of the Krugman theory, magazines are more 'involving' than TV.

Table 5, showing the share of total connections generated by each of the two media, also leads us to an important conclusion: press advertisements draw greater attention to the product advertised than do TV commercials. In other words, the printed advertisement gives the leading role to the *product*.

This can be ascribed to the following factors: firstly, the active approach adopted by the reader leads him directly to the main thing, which is the product; conversely, the passive attitude of the viewer allows him to be distracted by the thousand-and-one images composing the film, which are external to the product.

Table 6 shows that, per advertising message and per individual, the magazine generates twice as many product connections as the TV commercial. This result clearly draws attention to the print medium's capacity for creating reader involvement with the products it advertises.

Furthermore, might it not also point to a new way of calculating the cost performance of the media concerned, such as by substituting for the basis of cost per thousand effective readers or viewers that of cost per thousand connections?

Table 7 reveals that, within the total number of connections observed, the print medium arouses far more truly involving ones (the 'emotional' connections) than does TV. All this amounts to saying that, as an advertising medium, the press possesses a significantly greater power of generating involvement than television.

The findings described above refer to all product

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TABLE 3
Overall numbers of connections recorded per advertising message

	EXPRESS Readers (Print ads)			SAMPLE GROUP EXPRESS Readers (TV ads)			Average TV Viewers (TV ads)		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Connections	205	170	375	62	79	141	127	132	259
Individuals	94	88	182	48	45	93	92	92	184
Connections per individual and per message, overall count*	0.546	0.483	0.516	0.323	0.438	0.378	0.345	0.358	0.352

* Each individual was exposed to four advertisements in each experiment.

TABLE 4
Total connections per second of exposure

	EXPRESS Readers (Print ads)			SAMPLE GROUP EXPRESS Readers (TV ads)			Average TV Viewers (TV ads)		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Connections	205	170	375	62	79	141	127	132	259
Individuals	94	88	182	48	45	93	92	92	184
Mean length of exposure (seconds)	10.1	10.3	10.2	25.3	26.7	26.0	28.1	30.9	29.5
Connections per second*	.0540	.0470	.0505	.0128	.0165	.0146	.0123	.0116	.0119
To base 100	107	93	100	25	33	29	25	23	24

* Each individual was exposed to four advertisements in each experiment.

TABLE 5
Product connections related to total connections

	EXPRESS Readers (Print ads)			SAMPLE GROUP EXPRESS Readers (TV ads)			Average TV Viewers (TV ads)		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Total connections	205	170	375	62	79	141	127	132	259
Product connections	114	115	229	33	34	67	64	53	117
Ratio (%)	55.6	67.7	61.1	53.3	43.1	47.5	50.0	40.1	45.2

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TABLE 6
Product connections per message and per individual

	EXPRESS Readers (Print ads)	EXPRESS Readers (TV ads)	Average TV Viewers (TV ads)
Overall numbers	0.315	0.180	0.159

TABLE 7
Product connections broken down by type

	EXPRESS Readers (Print ads)		Average TV Viewers (TV ads)	
	Number	To Base 100	Number	To Base 100
Total Connections	229	100	117	51
- Factual	111	100	60	54
- Value judgements	53	100	43	81
- Emotional	65	100	14	22

categories combined. It can then be asked how the overall results break down by separate categories. It is hard to give a precise answer to this question, since the large number of product types covered in the survey made it impossible to produce a reliable breakdown of this kind. It can, however, be said that the magazine advertisements invariably created more connections than the TV commercials, irrespective of the category of product considered.

At the same time, it must be added that major variations were observed as between some categories — a fact which might be construed as supporting Krugman's theory that the print medium creates the greatest involvement when the product itself is the most involving.

However, a study performed on separate advertisements suggests that, even allowing this latter theory to be valid, there is yet another factor which can have a decisive influence: that of conceptual creativity. It follows from this that, as a catalyst promoting interest in the products it advertises, the print medium is at its best when the creative input to the advertisements takes

maximum advantage of the medium's natural propensity to do so.

SURVEY EXTENSION PROSPECTS

The clear and precise results arising from this survey led us to pursue our efforts by setting up a permanent department which analyses the effects produced by TV commercials and magazine advertisements, and evaluates those effects in terms of *emotional product connections* — reflecting our opinion that advertising best fulfils its selling purpose when it establishes the closest possible association between the product advertised and the life style and attitudes of the target prospects it is attempting to persuade.

This new department will gradually produce additional findings which, fed into a data bank, will contribute to refining those already acquired and to enhancing our knowledge of the ways in which these two media perform.