Sigurd Bennike
Dansk Media Komite
Copenhagen, Denmark

6.4 FUSION - AN OVERVIEW BY AN OUTSIDE OBSERVER

BACKGROUND

Though this problem is yet not urgent for the present writer, it will be - even in a small country like Denmark.

There are two basic reasons for this:

The amount of information will increase considerably. This statement is, of course, general, due to the information society we have to face in the coming years. It is however still more valid in terms of media information.

Many new media will appear, and we will have more information about the use of these media, partly because of the need for exact timing of their consumption.

To this it should be added (or, rather, multiplied) that all the data on the new media must be combined and compared with each other as well as with new data on the old media.

Media planners have for some years been rather sophisticated in their work, as fast-increasing advertising costs force them to be still more selective. This has no meaning if the selection is not right - the definitions of target groups have to be narrow and precise.

We in media research have to set up more and more information on groups and individuals, and the single informant cannot give us all the information needed.

In other words we have, in our data files, to set up some 'artificial' individuals or groups, as it is impossible to find *single source data* in sufficient volume.

FUSION MAY BE LOOKED AT FROM MANY DIFFERENT ANGLES

Development within media research and planning has shown very clearly that there is an immense need for information on product use, on attitudes towards products, firms, etc. and on behaviour in relevant areas.

I personally feel that today the self-completed questionnaire for our TGI is already too big, even it is smaller than the BMRB pattern. In relation to new products or attitudes (eg to pollution) I feel that the non-response is especially marked among groups which are relevant to these topics.

In consequence we have, for example, to ask some people about certain print media and others on other print or perhaps electronic media. Looking at product use, attitudes, etc, we may have to ask one woman about home painting and another about her use of nail enamel - even though in both cases she has to use the same solvent to remove it.

From these two examples it may be recognised that the problem has many aspects.

As far as media research and media planning are concerned we may state that there are two main angles:

(a) The media aspect, where we emphasise the relations between different media;

(b) The TGI aspect, where we attach more importance to product use, attitudes and behaviour.

It will, however, easily be understood that fusion may be done in innumerable ways within both.

HOW TO DO FUSION - MAIN LINES AND PROBLEMS

The word 'marriage' is used both in France ('marriage') and in Germany ('Ehe') and this expression conceals to some extent the nature of the problem.

You may look on the problem in this way: you add information on person A to information on person B and thereby

make a couple C, but it is not a household you have made - C is a single person, and as a general rule A and B will be of the same sex.

In other cases we meet the expressions 'donor' and 'recipient' and these words are valid too. However we all know how careful one has to be if an injection is necessary.

Furthermore, if it is decided that information from A and B should be amalgamated, who shall be the donor and who the recipient?

The next question might be, shall the recipient have only one donor or more than one? And in the latter case, which information from the various donors in question?

Or, on the other hand, should a donor be used for multiple recipients? Some people are more common than others, and the most common might be used several times, but in this case one misses the special aspects which may be of great importance in media planning.

Please note, when studying the French and German papers, that in France they mostly (but not wholly) look on the phenomenon as a group question, whereas the Germans tackle the problem on an individual basis.

The German paper, furthermore, illustrates two very different points of view, even though they are both on an individual basis.

What should be kept in mind is that not only will the established figures be presented in printed reports, but that they will also be available for

individual calculations, and in these it might be very difficult (if perhaps not impossible) to find a person who at the same time is a heavy user of nail polish and repairs her/his motor bike her-/himself.

At the same time we have to remember that some of the new media will move from broadcast to narrowcast.

There are possibilities of bad or wrong figures in many ways through fusion which cannot take into account all aspects of the problem.

THE VALIDITY OF FIGURES ESTABLISHED BY FUSION

It should be clear from the discussion above that the validity of the resulting figures may be measured in many different ways.

Different statistical tools might be brought into use, such as cluster analysis for grouping the different information, or correlation analysis to see if the new data give the same relations as the old ones before fusion. X^2 — or perhaps t-tests may be used for comparing original and resulting figures, but these may be used on many different figures, and the results of the tests can very easily clash with each other.

However, we have to find solutions, and I use the plural deliberately, as I do not think there is one solution. One fusion technique may be the best one from one particular point of view, and this means that we still have discrepancies, for all that they are at a higher level.