

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE DIFFERING READERSHIP LEVELS OF WEEKLY MEDIA MEASURED IN BOTH FRENCH PRESS SURVEYS

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Summary

Since 1994 in France, two national readership surveys are conducted for the two media : magazines and newspapers.

In both of them, the same list of 18 weekly magazines are studied.

Analysing the results, we can see differences in audience level. An explanation has to be found in methodological characteristics of these surveys.

The conclusion is that we have to take in account in the sample selection, all variables which can be linked with the propensity to read. And more than demographic characteristics, it must be the degrees of « Mobility » and « Accessibility ».

In 1993, French newspapers and magazines has decided to leave the CESP (Study Center of Advertising Support), which was used to conduct Audience surveys since many years (1957).

This division has been an opportunity for renewing Press surveys. The main change have been the settlement of two different surveys.

- **AEPM :**
On behalf of the APPM (Association of Magazine Press Publishers) and conducted by IPSOS-SOFRES ISL
- **IPSOS Newspapers :**
On behalf of the SPQR and EUROPQN (Regional and National Newspapers associations) and conducted by IPSOS

Those two surveys have been built up according to the specifics of each medium, that is to say, such as the large number of titles and problem of confusion between magazines, the small number of titles with high awareness, and the geographical disparity for newspapers.

The main methodological characteristics are as follows :

AEPM	IPSOS NEWSPAPERS
130 magazines	13 national newspapers 66 regional newspapers
Personal interview Paper questionnaire 45 minutes	Telephone interview CATI system 15 minutes
15, 000 interviews 2, 700 sample points	21, 200 interviews 21, 200 sample points
Quotas by sample point	Random selection of telephone number Quota by region and by day of week 5 calls per household

If those two surveys have been developed to be the most suitable for each medium (magazines and newspapers), some information measured on both of them, show differences in levels of audience. Newspaper supplements are part of the newspaper surveys, and in the same way, we were due to integrate some other weekly magazines, in order to obtain the full competition universe.

Because of this, two categories of magazines are studied in both surveys :

- 8 weekly TV magazines
- 10 weekly magazines (news, woman's)

For those 18 titles, we can compare the frequency question, which has got exactly the same wording, and comes as well after the 12 month filter question.

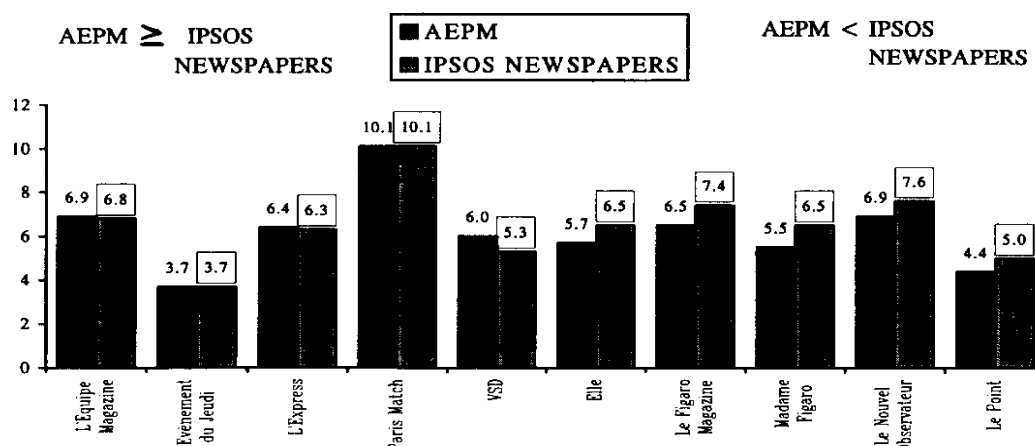
We can see below the levels of regular readers *"at least two times a month"*.

(Regulars)	PRESSE QUOTIDIENNE 94		AEPM 94	
	(000)		(000)	%
General weeklies				
Elle	2965	,5	2619	5,7
L'Equipe Magazine	3123	,8	3199	6,9
L'Evènement du Jeudi	1691	,7	1713	3,7
L'Express	2877	,3	2947	6,4
Le Figaro Magazine	3386	,4	2977 *	6,5 *
Madame Figaro	2997	,5	2494 *	5,5 *
Le Nouvel Observateur	3474	,6	3183	6,9
Paris Match	4632	0,1	4617	10,1
Le Point	2319	,0	2008	4,4
VSD	2451	,3	2763	6,0
TV weeklies				
TV Magazine	13396	9,2	-	-
TV Hebdo	4554	,9	4935	10,7
Télé 7 Jours	11051	4,1	12251	26,7
Télé Star	6933	5,1	8033	17,5
Télé Z	6833	4,9	8133	17,7
Télé Poche	6203	3,5	7469	16,3
Télé Loisirs	5828	2,7	7169	15,6
Télérama	2759	,0	2763	6,0

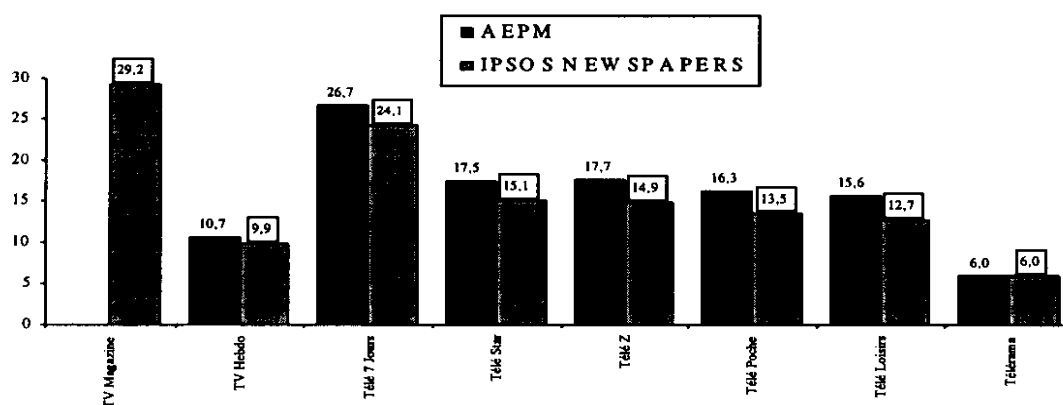
(* Those two titles has'nt been published since 1993)

Analysing those differences, we can see in the results, two types of information :

- 1) The difference of level for weekly magazines between **AEPM** and **IPSOS Newspapers** is not always of the same size, and is not always of the same type. Among the 10 weekly titles, 5 obtain greater audiences in **IPSOS NEWSPAPER**, 4 titles are at the same level, and only one is lower in **IPSOS's** surveys.



- 2) Levels of weekly TV Magazines are always higher in **AEPM** than in **IPSOS Newspapers**, for 10 to 15%, except for **Télérama** which is the only one looking more like a news, than like a TV Magazine.



Titles which are mostly sensitive to variation in audience levels, between those two surveys, are divided in two groups.

- * The first, groups together 5 magazines with a higher readership in **IPSOS Newspapers** Survey than in **AEPM** survey.

Readership structure of these titles, shows a greater presence of specific types of people.

As far as we can compare data in the two surveys, we observe the same number of working people in both upper and lower categories of workers.

The difference in audience levels is to be found among non-working people, mainly students and retired people (of high function).

This population is an important part of the readership of « intellectual » and « up-market » publications. These people are characterised by a higher degree of « Mobility » and a lower degree of « Accessibility » than other non-working people.

- * The second one, is the group of TV magazines, with a higher audience in **AEPM** survey than in **IPSOS Newspapers**. Even if their structures are nearly the same all readers of those titles have a common characteristics, which is their propensity of watching TV.

If this is not a usual quota variable, it is directly linked with the level of reading TV magazines.

Differences in results are due to differences between the two surveys. Three kinds of elements are concerned:

- * Titles list - how many and which one,
- * Face to face or telephone interview,
- * Sample selection.

Concerning the titles list, we know that TV Magazines are not really sensitive to order of rotation in the AEPM survey. They have a very high level of awareness and are not affected by the environment of other titles, what ever they are. If they weren't in that case, the fact of not having all TV titles in IPSOS Newspapers survey would have increase the audience level of those which are studied. In opposite, their levels are lower. So the titles list, is not an element for explanation of differences.

The two other reasons are undoubtedly more concerned, and are very similar for our analysis.

Effectively, « telephone / face to face » or « sample selection » allow the same possibility to contact different kind of people.

The main problem is « who is interviewed ? », the answer is not the same when you use telephone or personal visit, and when you establish rules of sample selection as : hours of interview, recall, random

In France, we use to work with quota system, for different reasons, mainly for propensity of having great volume of information about the population in the INSEE data.

Anyway, even if the quota method is strictly applied, and if two samples seems to be completely paired there is always uncontrolled variables, correlated what we try to mesure.

Those uncontrolled variables can have more or less influence on the results, depending on the level of the response rate.

A personal interview survey without any recall gives an **average response rate at about 10%**. The IPSOS NEWSPAPERS survey, with 5 calls for each telephone number, reach a **34% response rate**.

This difference of response rate level, implicate that the probability to take part of a population unselected in a sample, can be more or less important (90% or 66%).

The personal interview without recall, and with quota selection, oversamples individuals present at home during the fieldwork period.

For the AEPM face to face interview, fieldwork hour specification are given but only for some worker's categories, and nothing is proposed for all others.

In this way, individuals who are more often away from home and perhaps more "active" in their way of life, may be underrepresented.

(" Active " doesn't means activity like the one used for the quota sample establishment).

So, two individuals with the **same social category, same age...**, won't have the **same probability** to be include in a personal survey with only on call. Their probabilities will be in proportion of their presence rate at home during hours of the fieldwork.

In conclusion, we have to take in account in the sample selection, all variables which are highly linked with the propensity to read : that's to say, obviously, demographic characteristics, but also the « **Mobility** » of the interviews, (time outside home per day) and more generally his « **Accessibility** ».

Those two behavioural variables, can affect the availability for interview, in some categories of population. In addition, the variability of response rate among different categories of population could directly bias readership results.