

5.2 The value of media exposures

INTRODUCTION

This paper is aimed at casting some light on the differences between media exposures and the exposures to the message. Most so-called multi-media analyses do not distinguish between carrier and advertising contact chances.

If media decisions are made with the assistance of such coverage data, they are based on the hitherto unproven assumption that every exposure through different media or different journals results in equal chances of advertisement exposure. Therefore all these methods deal with reaching target groups which can be defined by demographic, psychographic or consumption criteria. They only show what percentage of these groups can be reached through different media or different titles. They do not account for the factor of 'good' or 'bad' carrier exposures.

While the media owners play the numbers game, with the volume of readers claimed for their titles, the straight fact is that there are readers and readers. Much is made of the quality of the individuals who buy or subscribe to a given title, but little work has been done in the quality of reading. Of course, it is important that a journal reaches the right target audience, but it is even more important that the journal's advertisements and editorial have an impact on the readers.

For example, a reader is classified as 'reader per issue', if he claimed that he has handled a particular magazine in its publishing interval, either to read it or to leaf through it.

The media analyses also make no distinction between the reader who glances at a magazine, and the one who gives it an intensive one- or two-hour study. The significance for media planning is that, from the start, there is an unknown factor which must not be under-rated – the chances of exposure to an advertisement and the chances of an impact of the advertisement are greater for the intensive rather than the casual reader.

To account for this factor, media research has changed direction in Germany in the last few years. Not only the research of our publishing company, but also the research done by our competitors. Quite a few investigations have shown that there are methods of measuring 'good' or 'bad' exposures to carriers of advertising, with valid distinctions drawn between the two, to guide media planning.

In the case of print media, particularly magazines,

such relevant dimensions include: reading time; where reading takes place; how obtained; and, repeat exposure.

By drawing such criteria into the media planning process, light is cast on two planes. At one level, it can be established that magazines with the same coverage can have different patterns of advertisement effectiveness, according to the degree of impression by the qualifying characteristics. At another level, the number of qualifying exposures in the target audience can be described more accurately, as the casual users can be eliminated from the total coverage on the grounds that they are not typical.

Usually it is an extremely laborious activity to provide such data. The multi-media analyses cannot establish the criteria. The costs of 'ad page exposure' – and 'reading time' – investigations are prohibitive. Therefore we had to look for other means to acquire the data. In the study *Quality of reader*, sponsored by Hörzu, we used a simple method. A first step was to establish all relevant criteria in a comprehensive study. In a second step comparable substitute bench marks were found within the data. The substitute bench marks can be established more easily within the media analyses. And using the qualified coverage data the media planning process is directed towards the probability impact.

READERSHIP DEFINITION AND ADVERTISING EFFECTIVENESS

Media analyses claim casual encounters with the media as full value exposures to advertising. Even casual leafing of a magazine is counted as exposure to the publication. For media planning this has three undesirable consequences:

Over-rating of the strength of advertising in the vehicle

The 'lightly defined' coverages of the titles are, in part, significantly higher than their 'qualified' coverages suggesting an unreal intensive usage and effectiveness for the advertising. The 'lightly defined' coverages therefore suggest, through the media analyses, an advertising strength which cannot be justified.

Distorted calculations of value for money

The planning figures using 'lightly defined' coverages do not make any distinction between intensive exposures with a probability of effectiveness and casual exposures with no or hardly any effect.

These figures are based on the false assumption that

5.2

The value of media exposures

casual exposures are equal to intensive exposures. This leads to distorted calculations of value for money, and to schedules which fall short of the best combination.

Buried target audience strong points

'Lightly defined' coverages conceal the strengths of the target audiences of magazines. The typical and intensive readers are buried in the total figure, which also embraces the casual and untypical readers.

From these considerations, it is vital to develop criteria for the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of a specific title with distinctions between those proportions of the coverage. The media research programme to establish reader quality, sponsored by *Hörzu*, was exactly in this vein.

The basis of the study was to establish the distinction and the relationship of advertisement exposure and effectiveness, to give a qualified definition of the readership.

METHOD

The results were based on data from around 7000 people from 3000 households, representing the population of West Germany including West Berlin in the 14–69 years age group.

The survey was divided into three stages:

- (1) oral: lead-in interview.
- (2) written: self-recording or uninfluenced reading behaviour for six weeks. Usage phase from identically prepared *Hörzu* and *Stern* test copies and blank original copies: reading time; exposure to double page spreads; how obtained (bought, found); and, where read (at home, outside).
- (3) oral: closing interview to determine the communication effectiveness. Measurements of contents recall: copies read without influence; prepared test copies.

It starts with an oral lead-in interview, to establish the media data and to verify further participation in the investigation.

This was considered to be extremely important, for the individual had to record the total reading for the next six weeks: at home with journals brought in, together with all the magazines at home, and for all reading outside the home. A pocket diary was produced to record each reading episode, the place and duration of reading and where the reading matter was obtained. In addition, the test individual was required to mark the journal on exposure to a double page spread.

During this six-week self-recording phase, identically prepared copies of *Hörzu* and *Stern* were introduced into the test household.

In an oral closing interview, the recall was established of the contents of the original copies of the journals which were read without influence, published during the preceding six weeks, and also from the prepared copies.

In this way it was possible to obtain information on the readership of various titles. More importantly, it could be established which concrete usage pattern resulted in advertising impact.

Of the 7519 people at the lead-in interview, 91% took part in the self-recording phase, and 87% completed this stage to qualify for the closing interview. With this surprisingly high participation percentage, it can be assumed that the results of the investigation are truly representative.

READING TIME AND COMMUNICATION IMPACT

Carrying the problem further, we must determine if the casual reader, buried in the current media analyses, registers any impact from the communication of the advertising. Further, whether this impact is improved within longer reading times. Only the use of new journals, unknown to the participants in advance, can give the answer.

For this reason *Hörzu* and *Stern* were prepared so that each had six completely new and unseen advertisement and editorial pages. The prepared copies were introduced on the first day of sale into the test household, which had to include at least one person relevant to the maximum readership of that title. The test person could not detect which pages had been specially prepared.

The communication effect was measured for both the editorial content and the advertisements. At the closing interview small elements of the editorial test pages were presented to the participant to elicit a response of 'certain', 'perhaps', or 'never' seen them. For the advertisements, a number of degrees of impact were used: recall of the trade mark; awareness of the type of product or offer, tested by headline extracts; rating of the subjective exposures frequency with the advertisement; and, recall of the advertising message, tested by elements of the advertisement text.

If one sets the level of awareness of the test participant against the self-recorded reading times, then it can be shown that the impact of the communication increases with longer reading times. The following illustrations show this finding for the stronger measure of impact labelled 'awareness of the type of product'.

Further, the following important individual findings refer to the editorial contents and to the advertisement pages at different degrees of impact:

- (a) reading times of less than 20 minutes give practically

5.2 The value of media exposures

no communication impact.

(b) after a reading time of 20–45 minutes, the impact of the communication is only half as great, or thereabouts, as after reading times in excess of 60 minutes.

(c) participants who state that they have read in a TV guide magazine only the programme section have a consistent awareness level which represents about 30 minutes reading of a journal. That is, these participants have clearly and often marked double page spreads carrying advertisements and noted the contents, and there cannot be any other explanation for this impact level.

(d) it is shown that the connection between reading times and the communication impact shows no difference which can be interpreted between such different titles as *Stern* and *Hörzu*. This is a very important by-product finding. This shows that under identical reading conditions and reading times the same impact figures can

be anticipated.

However, the analysis of the relationship between the communication impacts and self-recorded exposures to double page spreads carrying advertisements brings analogous findings on all points, even though they were not carried further here.

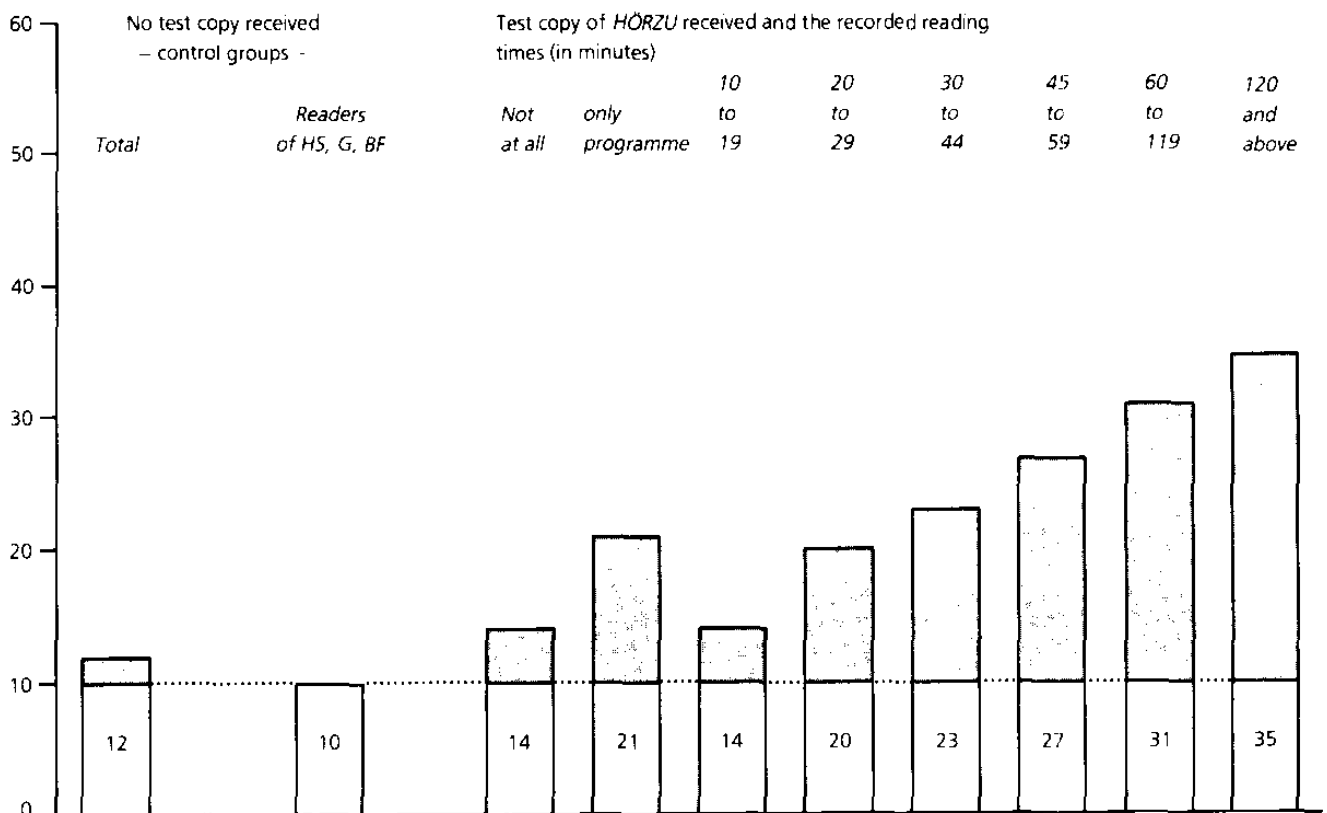
The results from the prepared copies give a media planning figure. Where there are two magazines with identical coverages, a higher advertisement impact can be predicted for the journal which offers more readers with longer reading times.

AVERAGE READING TIMES FOR 35 MAGAZINES

It is unfortunate that the reading times per title have not been established in the national readership analysis, nor can they be set. This leads to the question whether

FIGURE 1
HÖRZU

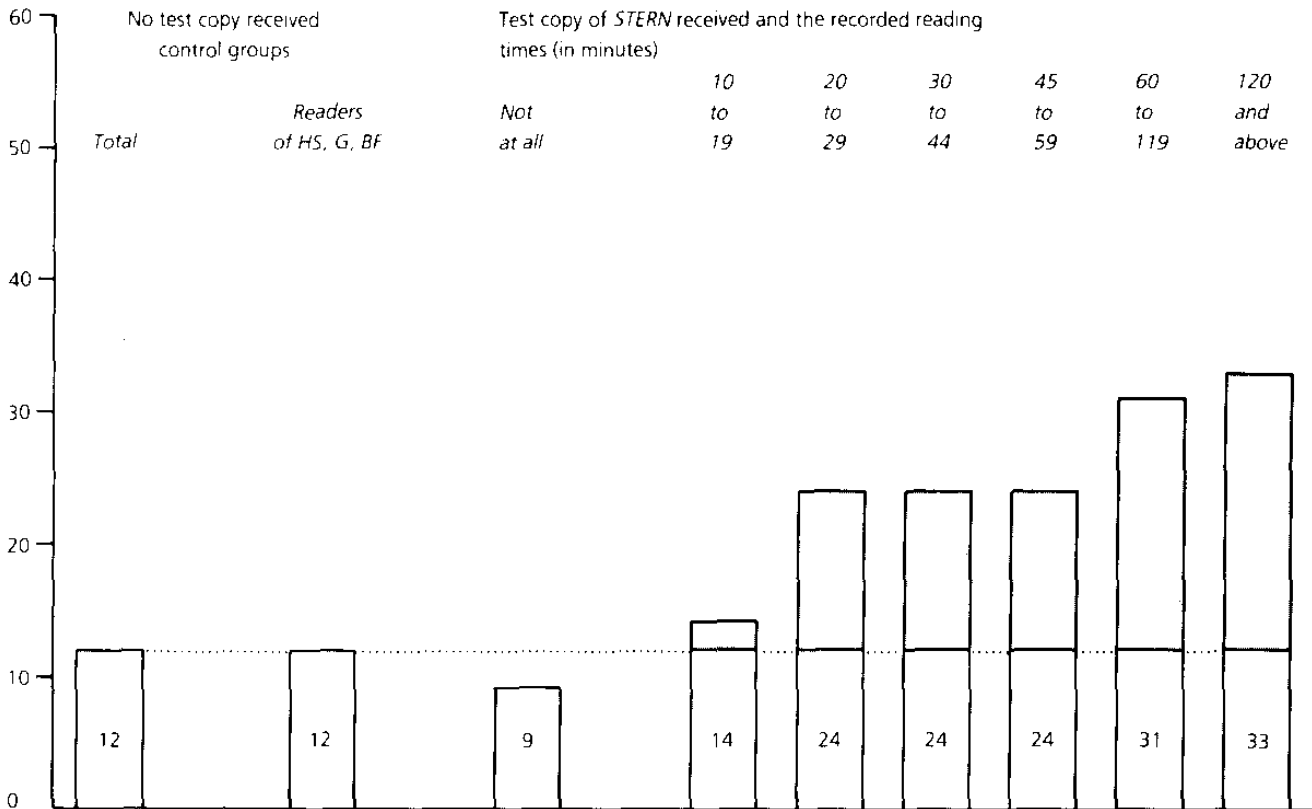
Average value of all advertisements %



5.2 The value of media exposures

FIGURE 2
STERN

Average value of all advertisements %



comparable substitute benchmarks can be found for reading times.

The evaluation of the written reader records, for the magazines with the largest coverages and also for some smaller special interest journals (a total of 35), is based on a total of 92,133 readers' entries. This gives the substitute benchmarks for *place of reading* and *how obtained*.

Tables 1 and 2 show how the reading times differ at home and outside, and with the various types of journal acquisition.

The indications of the differences in places of reading for the individual titles were excellent.

The differences between the individual titles were, at first sight, amazingly close. They are plausible, however, if one realises how the editorial has been presented and that large journals can accommodate lavish layouts.

For the journals read at home, nearly all scored reading times above 60 minutes, which must exceed the limit above which the advertising has an impact on the

reader. The reading times for journals read outside, however, are so short that there is hardly any impact exerted by the advertisements in these publications.

COMMUNICATION IMPACT WITH UNPREPARED COPIES

One can be satisfied with the analogous conclusions from the tests of prepared test copies. The investigation into *Quality of reader* goes a step further and the findings can be tested against unprepared copies on two counts:

(a) even when the copies were prepared with the greatest care, 'prepared' did not mean undetectable changes in the view of some experts.

(b) the at-home reading figures for the prepared journals are questionable on transfer to an outside reading situation because the reading time figures on various places of reading refer to totally different usages.

TABLE 1
Reading times (Reading time at home and outside)

Reading time per reader and per copy (in minutes)

	<i>All observed issues</i>	<i>Issues read at home</i>	<i>Issues read outside</i>
Bunte	59	75	30
Neue Revue	60	79	32
Quick	59	79	30
Stern	78	92	38
Bild am Sonntag	64	67	46
Bild und Funk	54	58	(20)
Fernsehwoche	55	57	28
Funk Uhr	58	61	20
Gong	61	64	25
Hörzu	69	71	23
TV Hören & Sehen	66	69	26
Frau im Spiegel	52	67	32
Heim und Welt	68	71	51
Das Neue Blatt	62	71	34
Neue Post	58	72	28
Tina	67	79	33
Brigitte	72	92	40
Freundin	56	73	35
Für Sie	70	93	35
Meine Geschichte	85	105	46
Burda Moden	79	94	37
Neue Mode	83	98	45
Petra	60	91	35
Ratgeber	86	97	—
Eltern	67	84	35
Bravo	66	73	37
Der Spiegel	98	115	43
Das Beste	97	111	60
Capital	96	(126)	(34)
DM	56	(84)	(34)
Kicker Sportmagazin	61	76	38
Auto Motor und Sport	83	104	40
Hobby	59	65	(45)
ADAC Motorwelt	69	77	34
Schöner Wohnen	71	89	39

TABLE 1b
Without recorded reading as only participation in the programme section

Reading time per reader and per copy (in minutes)

	<i>All observed issues</i>	<i>Issues read at home</i>	<i>Issues read outside</i>
Bild und Funk	57	60	(23)
Fernsehwoche	53	54	33
Funk Uhr	53	55	22
Gong	58	61	28
Hörzu	67	69	25
TV Hören & Sehen	63	66	28

5.2 The value of media exposures

TABLE 2
Average reading times (reading at home and outside for journals acquired from several sources)

	Reading time per reader and issue (in minutes)	
	Journals read at home	Journals read outside
Household subscription	71	—
Bought oneself	97	—
Bought by another	63	—
Given, borrowed*	68	—
Found†	—	30
Magazine sharing club	52	30

* Excluding magazine sharing club.

† Mainly copies found by chance.

The impact of the communication on unprepared copies was tested by using four issues of the titles *Stern*, *Quick*, and *Neue Revue*. Topical illustrated magazines were chosen because they incorporated a general readership spectrum, as opposed to women's magazines, and because they are the sort of journals which are as likely to be read at home as outside. TV programme guide magazines are more likely to be read at home.

The measurement of the impact was developed in an analogue form similar to the prepared test copies. The investigation covered 20 tear sheet pages of editorial matter and five advertisements, namely the advertise-

ments each of Commerzbank, Gail, Pola, BKV and IZG.

It is clear that it is difficult to measure the impact of advertisements, since it is virtually impossible to provide completely fresh material. In this study, only the Pola advertisement was completely new and absolutely fresh for the readers. In fact, the brand Pola was created especially for this survey. For this purpose the research department of the Axel Springer Publishing Company had to establish a new import company for Swiss wrist watches and to create an advertising campaign for the new brand. The advertisements were placed in our competitors' journals. In addition to Pola it was possible to assess the reactions to BKV and Gail advertisements, but the IZG, and particularly the Commerzbank advertisements had been so widely published that they could have been seen anywhere to instil recall.

Despite these drawbacks, the impact scale on the unprepared copies produced surprisingly straightforward findings (see **Table 3**).

The outside reader had absolutely no awareness of the contents of the advertisements. They have the same low awareness as the control groups who stated that they had never seen the issue with the advertisements. In addition, the brand name awareness hardly increased with the outside readers. It is only with the subjective frequency of exposure, the weakest of the indices, that there is a slight increase with the section of reading outside the home.

Tables 3 and **4** show the differences in reading time and explain these differences according to the place of reading.

Reading times of less than 30 minutes incur practically no effective recall of the information contained

TABLE 3
Impact scores by place of reading (average values for all the advertisements in original copies under investigation)

	Non-readers of the issue control group			
	People who do not belong to maximum readership of the title %	Readers of other issues of the title %	Readers of the issue who recorded the place of reading At home %	Readers of the issue who recorded the place of reading Outside %
Aware of trade mark	16	17	36	19
Relevant response to advertising message	15	17	25	15
Advertisement seen only once or more often	28	28	50	32

5.2 The value of media exposures

TABLE 4
Impact scores by reading time (average values for all the advertisements in original copies under investigation)

	Non-readers of the issue – control group		Readers of the issue who recorded the reading time (in minutes)			
	People who do not belong to maximum readership of the title %	Readers of other issues of the title %	Up to 29 %	30 to 59 %	60 to 119 %	120 and above %
Aware of trade mark	16	17	14	17	32	34
Relevant response to advertising message	15	17	13	16	25	33
Advertisement seen only once or more often	28	28	29	40	43	68

in the advertisements in the original copies. As the outside reader comes under this threshold for advertising impact for each issue, there is no appreciable communication effect when read away from home.

This also applies to copies which were found by chance or picked up at random, including the majority of magazine sharing club copies (in the investigation, six out of ten magazine sharing club copies were read outside the home setting).

INFERENCE FOR MEDIA PLANNING

The objective of the investigation into *Quality of reader* was the search for a qualified coverage which was oriented towards the probability of impact.

It can be shown that the impact of the communication increases with reading times, and that the effect of exposure to an advertisement is practically worthless with reading times of less than 30 minutes.

It can further be shown that there are useful substitute bench marks for reading times, which are not normally established from the media analyses, namely place of reading and how the journal was acquired. Using these points, it is possible to insert the *Quality of reader* directly into the planning process.

Therefore, for example, if each reader and each magazine is weighted by the method of journal acquisition, then there is a strong indicator for intensity of use and the probabilities for advertisement impact.

To allow for a potential encounter by a target

individual with a given magazine, in media planning, the method of journal acquisition can be extracted from the target reader. Corresponding programmes for priority rating and evaluation have been developed simultaneously with the *Quality of reader* study and are now available.

The identification of the qualified coverage depends strongly on the target group definition in the planning. On average, in the most useful target groups, the coverages of the magazines were pruned by about the 10–25% which had no likelihood of being impressed by the advertising.

As a rule, each magazine has its rating diminished by the proportion of its readership which takes it to read away from home. This includes the journals which are found, or picked up at random, and which appear in the lists of magazine sharing clubs.

On the other hand, the placing of those journals read at home is improved, such as journals bought for home reading, subscription magazines and those which are lent by one to another. These titles are more or less strong for each target group.

It is clear that not only are the results for *Quality of reader*, but also their identification in the priority ranking of titles, new or surprising. It behoves the media planner to consider the exposure quality of the journals, and while this has been known ever since media planning was first introduced, now for the first time the exposure quality as a probability of advertisement impact has been measured and is usable for quantitative media planning.