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7.2 Qualitative data on readership: Psychographics as a marketing and media planning tool

INTRODUCTION

After discussion of audience measurement, of methodologies, and of the way the readership data are put to use by media planners, we must consider the need of qualitative data on readership. In fact the socio-demographic data that describe the profile of the individual publications are, very often, insufficient discriminators, and many advertisers and agencies ask publishers for 'qualitative' data which will better define the target groups they are interested in.

PSYCHOGRAPHICS

I report here on qualitative research which has been conducted on a large sample of the Italian population by the EURISKO Research Institute since 1976.

Publishers and media planners use this annual survey: publishers, for editorial and marketing purposes; planners, to check on their media schedules, for target focusing.

It is also used by creative people to get an insight on the values and attitudes of the people the advertising is meant to influence.

The survey is called *Psychographia*, and aims at describing the Italian population through the use of mental and behaviour variables, selected systematically, in addition to the usual socio-demographic variables. Psychography and life-style are equivalent denominations, within certain limits. For this type of research, psychography has made it possible to collect a lot of analytical information, two planes of reality being considered at the same time: the values which Italians believe in; the behaviour through which they express themselves.

In general the variables selected were the following.

Plane of values
78 simple variables grouped into 26 Likert type scales (social trends).

Plane of behaviour
144 simple variables, combined in 11 lifestyles and six alimentary styles.

Apart from that, for the classification of individuals,

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31 socio-demographic and 'exposure to media' variables were used.

The research was conducted with a sample of 5000 cases, representative of Italian individuals, male and female, between 15 and 65 years of age. The universe in question amounts to 36 million individuals. The data were collected in 250 sample points by 275 interviewers.

The items of input were dealt with using traditional bivariate and multivariate treatments (R-factor analysis, cluster analysis). Factor analysis was used in order to give a synthetic understanding of the values in which Italians believe, and for the weighting of behaviour variables. Cluster analysis made it possible to create groups of individuals having homogeneous behaviour, in general.

To give an idea of the 11 lifestyle groups that describe the population (and within that population, equally the readers of particular publications) this is a synthetic description of the 11 groups (with, in parentheses, the size of the groups as a percentage of the Italian population).

Group 1 – Wealth and prestige (5.9%)
Active people, who play a responsible role in the business, production and social sectors of the country. Their lifestyle, rich and prestigious, expresses the multi-faceted aspects of their cultural, social and economic status.

Group 2 – Smartness and beauty (6.5%)
A prevailingly young style, where elegance and beauty take precedence in all social relationships, expressing itself in hedonistic and seductive strategies.

Group 3 – Sports and fun (8.5%)
Again a young style, where physical action and body expression are important. They engage in the active sports and leisure activities, whether on an individual or a group basis, that channel hedonistic ideas best.

Group 4 – Role and position (7.8%)
Secure in their job or position, their lifestyle is derived from a sum of certainty and comforts: leisure time and hobbies, intellectual curiosity, participation in civic and social groups, with a touch (why not?) of political unrest.

Group 5 – Business and trade (11.0%)
Worry, projects, new ventures, journeys and business relations, typify the lifestyle of these people, who day-by-day build their career and their earnings, often away from home.

Group 6 – Household and fantasy (14.8%)

A conflicting and irresolute lifestyle where the concern for personal beauty and elegance has to be subordinated to family care and the running of the household. Compensation is often found in escapist reading, and in listening to the radio.

Group 7 – Factory and home (9.0%)

A lifestyle forced by a subordinate job requiring fixed hours and/or working shifts. Only a limited amount of time is left for affections, interests and activities that, anyway, centre around the family, the house, little repair jobs, the car. Summing up: factory workers.

Group 8 – Neighbours and church (5.5%)

Practising Catholics having the parish church as a socialising point. Traditional people, who in their sober lifestyle combine the defence of traditional values with the fulfilment of new socio-cultural needs.

Group 9 – Non conformist (9.2%)

This is the style of intellectual and politically committed young people: students and university graduates, often not yet employed but not poor. Critical consumers. Heavy users of communication media.

Group 10 – Consumer poverty (6.9%)

People with modest income, modest education, often uprooted from tradition, who long to achieve a degree of free and secure prosperity. Their aspirations tend to a paradoxical lifestyle which is consumeristic but at the same time lacks a modern outlook.

Group 11 – Archaic poverty (14.9%)

A style that has its roots in immovable peasant poverty, narrowminded and shrewd, yet concealed and borne with dignity and without public protest, in isolation and unsociability.

APPLICATIONS OF PSYCHOGRAPHIC DATA

Compared to the more sophisticated specialised media surveys, *Psychographia* does not have the objective of going into the same depth of details for each individual advertising vehicle. Its objective is to describe the consumer multidimensionally, by using simultaneously several measures such as values, behavioural orientation, consumption, use and exposure to media, and socio-demographic characteristics; these aspects can be dealt with either analytically or for a more synthetic purpose.

TABLE 1
ISPI 1978 – 'last period readers by sex and age' (percentage of total readers)

		Sex		Age					
	Total readers ('000)	Men %	Women %	15–24 %	25–34 %	35–44 %	45–54 %	55-64 %	64+ %
Amica	1860	18.9	81.1	28.0	25.9	20.7	13.7	7.5	4.3
Annabella	1790	20.1	79.9	23.5	22.8	21.9	15.8	10.1	5.9
Gioia	1346	13.2	86.8	33.1	19.1	15.8	16.7	9.0	6.3
Grazia	1891	19.4	80.6	27.1	19.4	19.2	16.4	10.2	7.7

TABLE 2
ISPI 1978 – Last period readers by socio-professional status (percentage of total readers)

	Total readers ('000)	Upper and upper middle %	Middle %	Lower middle %	Lower %	Total %
Amica	1860	30.5	52.4	16.0	1.1	100
Annabella	1790	26.3	53.6	18.0	2.1	100
Gioia	1346	24.6	54.8	19.2	1.4	100
Grazia	1891	33.8	50.7	14.3	1.2	100

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TABLE 3
ISPI 1978 – Readers of women's magazines by lifestyle (percentage composition and concentration index*)

Life style groups	Total population %	Amica %	Amica CI	Annabella %	Annabella CI	Gioia %	Gioia CI	Grazia %	Grazia CI
1 Wealth and prestige	5.9	16.4	278	16.5	280	9.5	161	17.7	300
2 Smartness and beauty	6.5	25.0	385	22.3	343	19.5	300	21.5	331
3 Sports and fun	8.5	1.6	19	1.8	21	1.8	21	4.4	52
4 Role and position	7.8	4.9	63	7.5	96	6.1	78	4.1	53
5 Business and trade	11.0	4.4	40	3.5	32	6.9	63	2.0	18
6 Household and fantasy	14.8	28.2	190	34.2	231	29.0	196	28.6	193
7 Factory and home	9.0	2.7	30	1.4	15	1.4	15	4.2	47
8 Neighbours and church	5.5	2.0	36	4.1	74	7.3	132	4.1	74
9 Non-conformist	9.2	9.1	99	3.7	40	8.7	95	8.3	90
10 Consumer poverty	6.9	3.1	45	1.3	19	4.3	62	1.6	23
11 Archaic poverty	14.9	2.5	17	3.9	26	5.6	38	3.5	23
	100	100		100		100		100	

* *Concentration index is the ratio of readers in each lifestyle group compared to the size of that group in the total population.*

For magazines, I have used these data to get a better picture (description, profile) of the readers of the publications of our publishing group, and thus supply each chief editor with valuable advice for formulating the editorial strategy vis-a-vis competing titles.

Taking for instance women's weeklies (which are big advertising business in Italy), it was only through the use of psychographic data that one was able to show and identify the differences between readers of various publications that were not apparent from the data supplied by the general readership survey (ISPI).

In fact the socio-demographic profile of the 'last period' readers for four women's weeklies (*Amica, Annabella, Gioia, Grazia*) are very similar (see **Tables 1** and **2**).

Sociodemographic data discriminate very little for these weeklies. But let us see the profiles by lifestyle for the readers of the weeklies, as shown by PSY 1978 of EURISKO (**Table 3**).

Examination of the above data makes it possible to discover many 'qualitative' differences among the readers of the four magazines which were not sufficiently evident with the ISPI data. If one knows what the various style groups contain, what is behind each group in terms of

values, behaviour, consumption, expectation, etc, a publisher can fine-tune a publication according to the strategy line which is most suitable to editorial and marketing goals, in terms of content, image, target, etc.

This we did, involving the editorial and marketing staff of our publications. But media planners also benefit from psychographic analyses of readers. Knowing the psychography of the consumer of the product to whom the advertising should be aimed, it is easy to select (through the concentration indexes of **Table 3**) the magazine which contains more of the product's consumers. For instance, if the product to be advertised is addressed to housewives characterised by lifestyle no 6 (Household and Fantasy) *Annabella* is better matched.

To conclude, psychographics have shown themselves to be a much more discriminating tool than socio-demographics and they are a valuable supplement to the regular readership survey data (ISPI). Italian publishers and advertisers are in agreement on such a view, for the application of psychographics has broadened and improved the marketing, editorial and advertising decisions which have to be taken every day on both sides of the advertising fence.