

# YOUNG READERSHIP

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## Abstract

Young people are almost 50% of the population in many countries. As part of our General Media Study, we have been following the path of this population for some years. Our goal is to answer the following research questions:

- What are the readership trends among very young readers?
- What drives these trends?
- What is the incidence and influence of fads on newspaper and magazine readership.
- Is it possible to influence a trend?

We have carried out a continuous five year survey analysis among children of both sexes in the cities of Mexico, Guadalajara and Monterrey. Interviews were face-to-face, in the presence of a parent or tutor. Each year, 2000 children participated from each city, or 6000 interviews per year, for a total of 60,000 interviews. In addition to the questions stated, we considered information on sex, age and personality as key variables and the existence of a profile for assiduous readers of newspapers and magazines.

Some commercial strategies are suggested.

## Introduction

It has been a challenge to carry out face-to-face interviews with young people under 18 years of age.

The problems faced when surveying 6 to 12 year-olds are very different from those for ages 13 to 18, these being much greater from ages 6 to 12.

At the age of six years, a child is considered to have begun his elementary school cycle, has a limited vocabulary, slow or inefficient reading, and problems of attention over long periods.

The AMAI code of ethics establishes the need to include a parent or tutor, resulting in advantages and disadvantages which we will mention as we go along.

The rate of response is very different depending on whether we consider the provinces (Guadalajara and/or Monterrey) or Mexico City. In the provinces, an interview takes place in 8 out of every 10 doors which open, while in Mexico City an average of 15 homes must be contacted to achieve an interview. This number increases considerably as the socio-economic level improves, even reaching a ratio of 30 to 1.

Differences also exist by gender, it is easier to interview a boy than a girl - generally speaking, the ratio is 2 boys for every girl, but this can become 3 to 1 when the girl comes from a high social level. This is completely inverted in the EGM, where women are usually much more cooperative than the men (2 to 1).

Turning to another aspect, we encounter another small problem on making the survey, this being abandonment or rupture of the interview. This occurs seldom, approximately once in every 20 interviews, and the interruption is generally made by the adult.

On the application itself, the EGM Kids questionnaire (6 to 12 years) differs from that, for conducting face-to-face interviews with adolescents - ages 13 to 18. To facilitate application, the EGM Kids questionnaire is predominantly graphic, and although the EGM variables are measured (13 to 65), this is done in another way, for example the notion of time is completely different. So without any doubt the most difficult moment of the interview is remembering the previous 24 hours, since instead of asking *Did you read this .....yesterday?* it has been necessary to review each activity, helping to remember: for instance, if the day of the interview is Monday, we know he did not go to school the previous day, he is also asked what he ate, or who he was with. Did he read something? Or watched television? Or listened to the radio? And so on successively. In many cases the presence of an adult is very advantageous, since he knows the sequence of the child's activities.

We have found that a spontaneous response is obtained more easily from a child than from an adult, and their level of memory for some events or campaigns - read, seen or heard - which they enjoy or which are in vogue is, at times, surprising. But sometimes this is imaginary, and easily corrected by the adult; however, we question the child again and do not take the reply of the adult into consideration.

Graphic aids have been very important in this population, especially among children from 6 to 12 years, since it allows visually selecting what they have been reading, for example, on asking the question: *"Which of these magazines have you read or glanced through in the last 30 days"* the person interviewed is shown all the logotypes of the magazines, permitting the media read to be easily identified.

The section where the presence of an adult is a considerable disadvantage, is in speaking of psychographics, that is, when the child responds to the questions which facilitate a knowledge of his personality, such as:

	A lot	A little	Not at all
I like to go shopping with my parents	3	2	1
I ask my parents permission before I do anything	3	2	1
I obey my parents	3	2	1
I am shy	3	2	1
I like to feel handsome/pretty – beautiful	3	2	1

In some cases one is unable to reach the desired depth, yet the study permits identifying the habits of young readers with respect to magazine and newspaper readership, in the main cities of the country.

**Methodology**

Interviews take place face-to-face, at home, and are prepared at the same time as EGM.

The selection procedure is carried out by stages:

- a) Selection of the metropolitan area to be studied: this took place once in accordance with two criteria: population and geographic dispersal. Although the EGM is applied in 27 cities, the EGM Kids is only implemented in 3 cities: Mexico City, Guadalajara and Monterrey, therefore we will only consider the results for these 3 cities. .
- b) Selection of the AGEBS or basic geostatistical area of the metropolitan area studied, in accordance with two criteria: average socio-economic level of the AGEB and geographical distribution within the metropolitan area.
- c) Selection of Sample Point. The AGEBS are printed before going out in the field, blocks are numbered and selected according to a table of random numbers. A sample point is formed by 4 adjacent blocks.
- d) Selection of Home: The geographical point where the tour of the block begins, together with selection of the first home within the block, is given by the last digit of the questionnaire to be applied. The jump to the next home depends on the socio-economic level of the AGEB.
- e) Selection of Person interviewed in the home: all members of the home should be listed, beginning with the age range under study (6 to 12=EGM Kids or 13 to 64= EGM), by means of a random number table and the last verifier of the questionnaire chooses the person to be interviewed. If at home, a visit will be made. Otherwise he/she will be replaced in this same block by another person of the same sex, age range, level and type of dwelling as the candidate originally selected.

**Sample**

A sample has been gathered of 61,604 young readers over a period of 4.7 years: note that the EGM Kids did not begin in 1998 as in the case of the EGM, but three years later, in 2002.

The general results will be presented in this study, separating populations according to age:

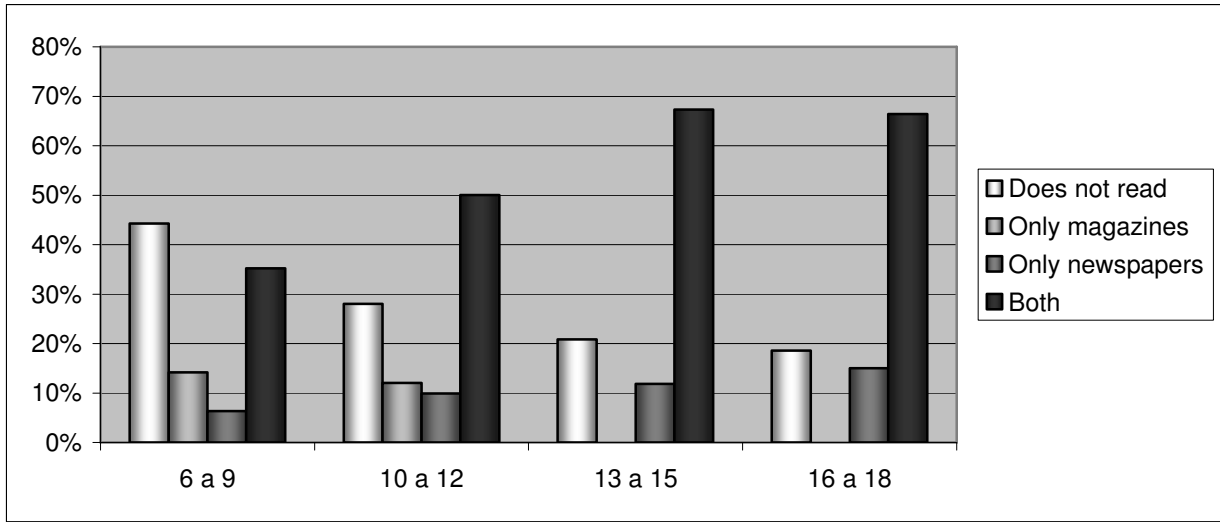
6- 9 years	16,989
10-12 years	13,218
13-15 years	12,011
16-18 years	19,386

We are aware that this is only one of many approximations to the study. But a priority had to be set in order to show what, in our opinion, is most interesting.

This sample is very robust, having an error of precision of 0.52 percentage points at a confidence interval of 95%, with a relative error of only .08%. If we estimate incidents of 5%, the precision error reduces to 0.18 percentage points, but the relative error will increase to 3.5%.

**Results**

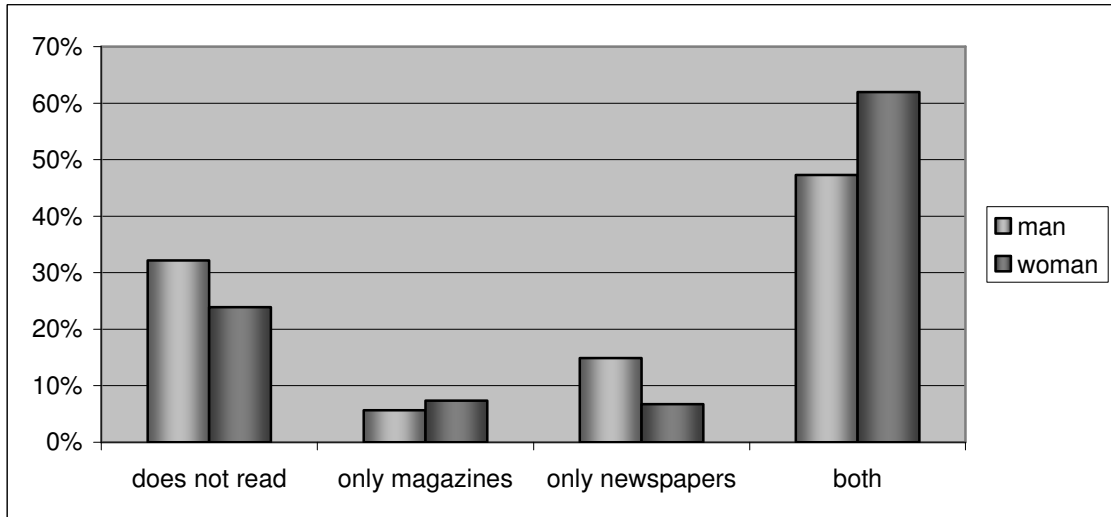
On average, 72% of the children and young people between 6 and 18 years are readers. Initially only 56% are readers, but this proportion increases in direct relation to age.



Non-readers fall from 44% for ages 6 to 12, to 18% for ages 16 to 18 that is we find an inverse behaviour as concerns age. Around 28% of these children will not be readers during this period of their life.

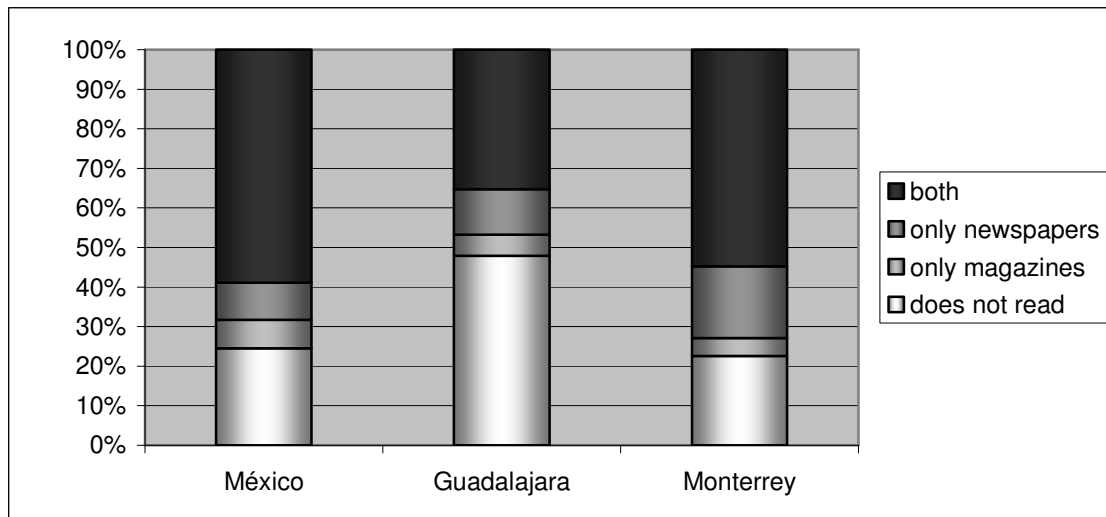
The exclusive magazine reading presents itself only at a young age (6 to 12 years), on the other hand, the reading of solely newspapers increases gradually with age.

The reading habit is not similar by gender. Girls read more (76%) than boys (68%).

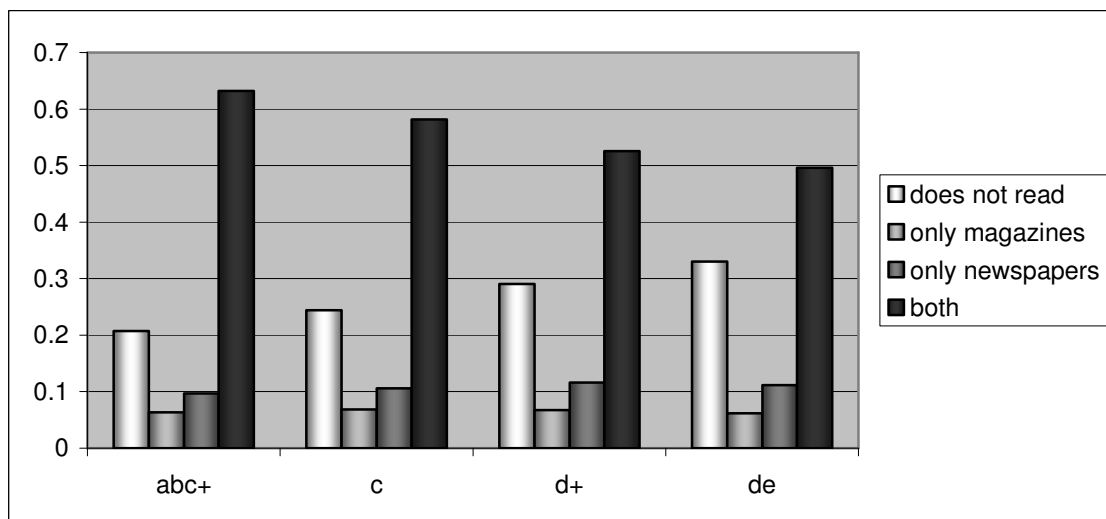


Women read significantly more magazines and newspapers, or only magazines. But for every two boys who read only newspapers (not magazines), there is only one girl. Girls have access to magazines due to the influence of adult women (mother) in their home, since generally speaking this vehicle is used more by women (incidence 54%) than men (incidence 46%), while the opposite happens with newspapers, the incidence in adult women being 56% and in men 76%.

Reading is similar among the child population within the cities of Mexico and Monterrey, around 75%, while in the city of Guadalajara reading falls to 52% and the incidence of newspapers and magazines descends simultaneously to a significant degree. Guadalajara is an eminently commercial city with a level of education slightly lower than the other two cities, 8.5 years of study on average among the adult population, while Monterrey (8.8 years) is eminently industrial and Mexico is mixed (9.2 years).



The incidence of reading increases through socio-economic level, and also with age, cases studied involving practically only magazines and only newspapers and being stable. But reading in both these media is seriously affected as the socio-economic level falls.



Giving a twist to our presentation, we find that the title to be read is strongly interrelated.

There are eleven predominant types of reading topics among young readers, not necessarily excluding the same reader, and the same reader may even read more than one title of each type. These types of reading topics are:

1. Premium Newspapers: El Universal, Reforma, etc.
2. Popular Newspapers: Esto, Prensa, Ovaciones, etc.
3. Sports vehicle: Record, Soy águila, Marcador, Señor Fútbol, etc.
4. Teen Gossip Magazines: Tú, Por ti (Bravo), Eres, 15-20, etc.
5. Children’s magazines: Barbie, Princesas, Winnie Pooh, etc
6. Local Monterrey and Guadalajara newspapers: El Norte, El Sol Regiomontano, El Informador, El Siglo, El ocho columnas, etc.
7. Electronic Magazines: Play Station, Club Nintendo, etc.
8. Economic Vehicles: Proceso, Financiero, Economista and Día Siete.
9. Automobile Magazines: Chevymania, Mustang, Tuning Car, etc.
10. Jet set Gossip Magazines: TV y Novelas, TV Notas, Teleguía, etc.
11. Magazines for Investigation: Nat Geo (Spanish), Muy Interesante and Selecciones.

28% of young people do not read, 34% read only one of these subjects, 24% read two and 13% read more than two. The highest incidences are held by premium newspapers (22%), teen gossip magazines (20%), jet set gossip magazine (21%) and Children’s magazines (16%).

These themes in turn can be classified in vehicles which are looked (over 70% images), vehicles which are read and looked (50% images) and vehicles which are read (30% images).

Incidence and classification are as follows:

	Incidence	Clasification
1. Premium Newspapers	22%	Read and Look
2. Popular Newspapers	11%	Look
3. Spots Vehicle	4%	Read and Look
4. Teens Gossip	20%	Look
5. Childrens Magazines	16%	Look
6. Local newspapers(Guad Mty)	13%	Read and Look
7. Electronic	9%	Read and Look
8. Economics	2%	Read
9. Automóviles	2%	Read and Look
10. Jet Set Gossip	21%	Look
11. Investigation	4%	Read

The reader profile is very varied, for example sports and electronic subjects are predominantly masculine, while the feminine are gossip both for teens and for jet set.

There are also great differences by reason of age: for the older generation, economic, automobiles and investigation predominate. For children, Children's magazines and electronics.

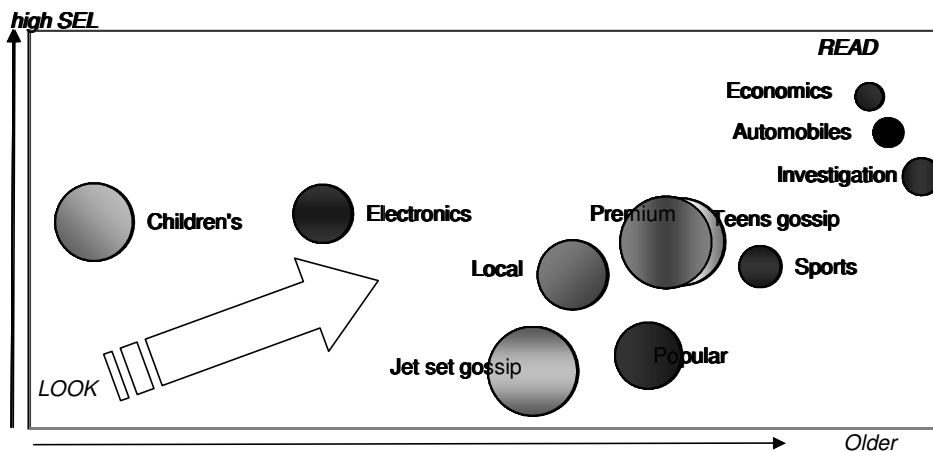
	Sex		Age			
	Man	Woman	6 - 9 years	10-12 years	13-15 years	16-18 years
1 Premium newspapers	52%	48%	12%	18%	24%	46%
2 Popular newspapers	56%	44%	12%	20%	25%	43%
3 Sports	79%	21%	6%	11%	34%	49%
4 Teen Gossip	15%	85%	9%	18%	30%	43%
5 Children's	40%	60%	54%	33%	8%	6%
6 Local newspapers	52%	48%	19%	20%	22%	39%
7 Electronics	87%	13%	31%	35%	17%	17%
8 Economics	54%	46%	4%	6%	22%	67%
9 Automobiles	89%	11%	2%	2%	33%	63%
10 Jet Set Gossip	34%	66%	18%	26%	23%	33%
11 Investigation	59%	41%	1%	2%	29%	68%

We should remember that more reading is done as the socio-economic level increases. And the most popular subjects at the higher levels are Automobiles, Investigation, Economics, Electronics, and Children's magazines. On a lower level, personality gossip (Jet Set) predominates.

In the cities newspaper distribution is very clear. The newspapers are read at their city, the Economics, Automobiles and Investigation are stronger in Mexico City. Among the most uniform subjects in all the cities are Children’s magazines, teen gossip and personalities (Jet Set) gossip.

	Level	Level			City			
		abc+	c	d+	de	México	Guadalajara	Monterrey
1	Premium newspapers	20%	26%	21%	33%	100%	0%	0%
2	Popular newspapers	13%	24%	25%	38%	98%	2%	0%
3	Sports	18%	25%	23%	33%	81%	5%	13%
4	Teen Gossip	19%	28%	22%	32%	76%	11%	13%
5	Children	20%	28%	21%	31%	77%	10%	13%
6	Local newspapers	16%	28%	23%	33%	0%	37%	63%
7	Electronics	20%	29%	21%	30%	78%	9%	14%
8	Economics	28%	28%	20%	25%	93%	6%	1%
9	Automobiles	26%	28%	18%	28%	85%	8%	8%
10	Jet Set Gossip	13%	24%	23%	40%	74%	11%	15%
11	Investigation	23%	29%	19%	29%	87%	6%	7%

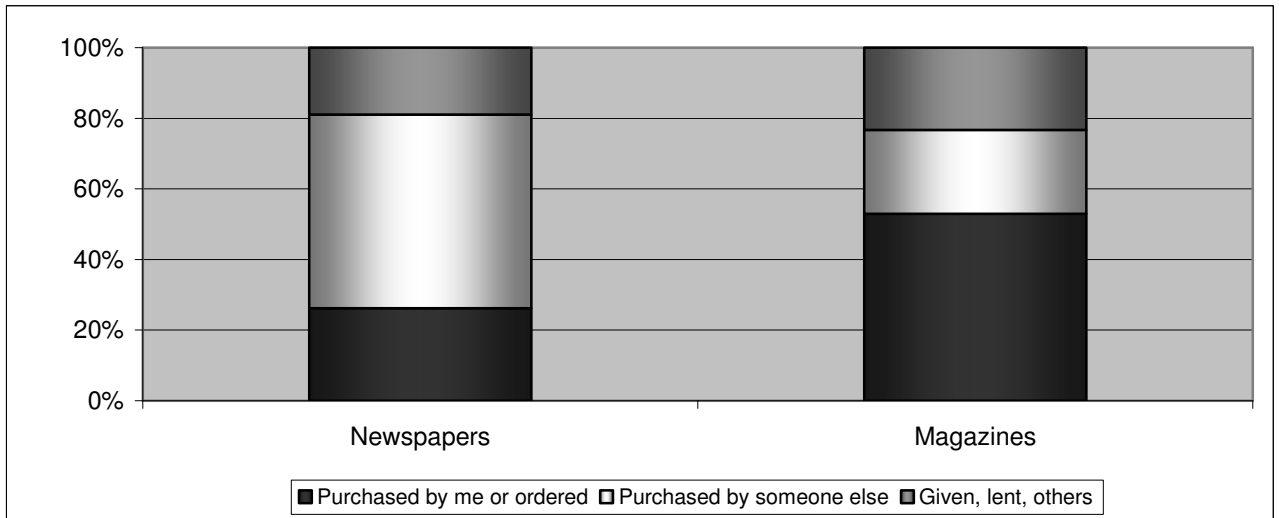
By means of a quick synopsis we can illustrate the world of youthful reading, between 6 and 18 years, by consulting the following chart, where ages and socio-economic levels are inter-crossed and dimension provided according to the incidence of each subject. Interactions are not given in order to facilitate reading.



The high levels and older young people have a higher proportion of readers, and really READ, that is the vehicles preferred are at least 30% images. While on the lower levels and among younger people, the reading rate is lower and the subject matter involved is generally LOOKED, that is, more than 70% images.

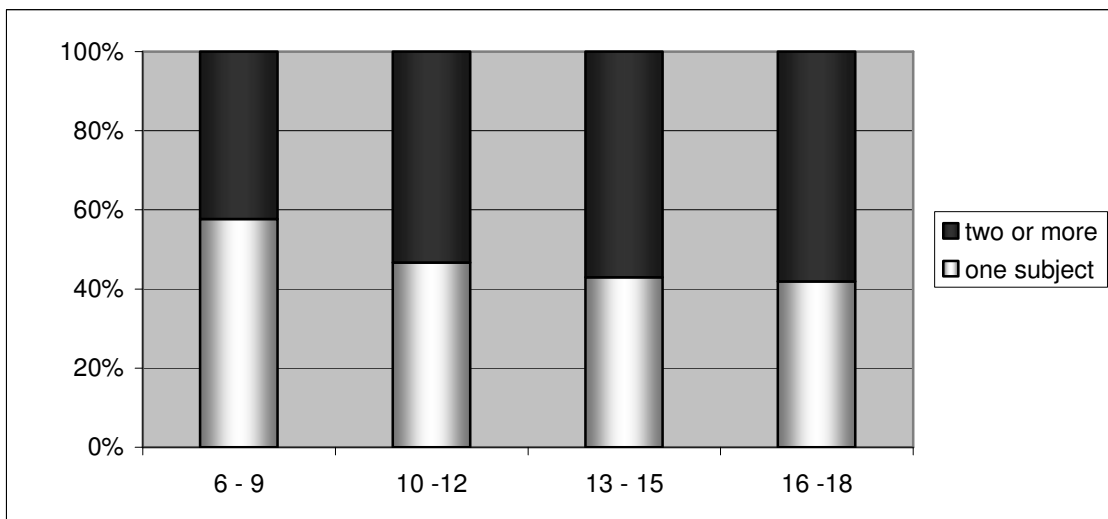
The dynamics by gender are very different; the most feminine subjects are presented in violet-pink, and the masculine in green-blue, mixed subjects in yellow. In this way we can see that gossip subjects are mainly feminine, and automobiles, electronics, sports and popular newspapers mainly masculine.

There is also the fact that magazine reading is more active, in the sense that it is asked for by the reader or readers or personally purchased, while newspaper reading is more passive since it is channelled through third parties.



It should be noted that: girls more actively imitate persons of the feminine gender, while boys are more likely to learn from the masculine image.

We should remember that 48% of readers read only one subject, 52% read two or more. This is also related to age; the older they are, the more interaction there is between subjects.



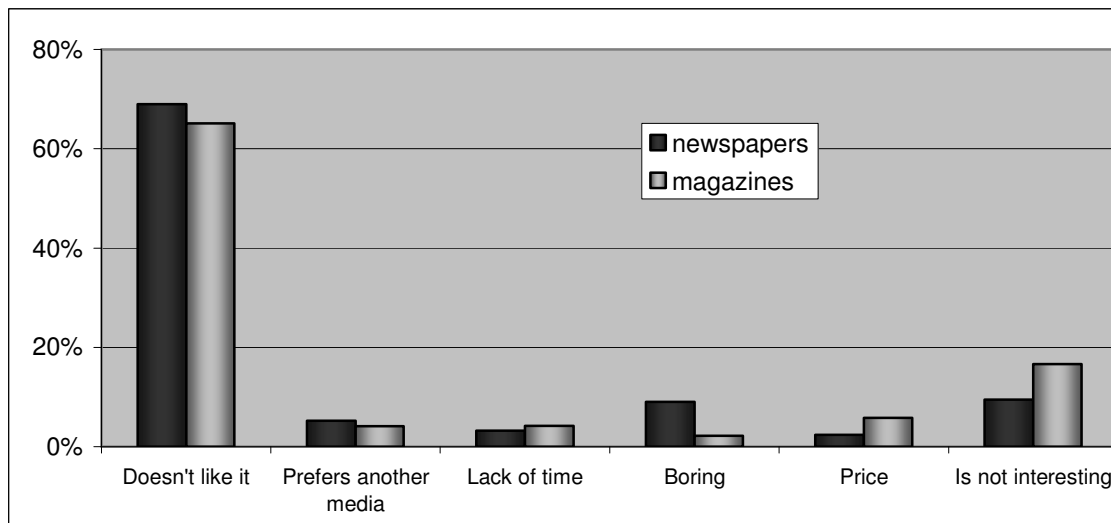
In addition to age, this is also influenced by the type of vehicle; newspapers interact more between themselves than magazines, especially premium newspapers which interact above all with the readers of economic, automobile, investigation and sports publications. The exceptions here are local newspapers, since their readers seldom include another subject other than jet set gossip.

Some commercial strategies can be oriented to “supporting” one media with another, that is to take advantage of the feminine taste for magazines in order to broaden reading matter and promote newspapers. And, in the opposite sense, among children, use the newspaper to foster the reading of magazines and diversify the subject matter. It is known that reading begins mainly through Children’s magazines, and should be related to other topics, in order to broaden his repertoire.

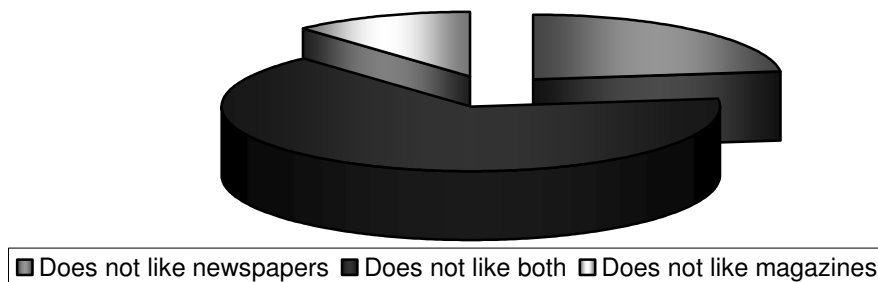
We could continue discussing the subject indefinitely, for instance reading intensity. In an average month, each child (6 to 18 years) reads 1.37 different titles. For those who read only newspapers this number of titles falls to 1.22, while in the case of those reading magazines and newspapers it increases to 1.42 different titles.

But time is running out.....

However, we do not want to leave without first mentioning some of reasons WHY some children between the ages of 6 and 18 years do not read. The reasons for rejection are similar for both media (newspapers and magazines). It should be noted that this response is spontaneous; more than 60% of those questioned simply reply: “I don’t like it”.



If we look at the reason “I don’t like it” only among the non-readers of either of the two media (28%), we find that the majority do not like either, followed by newspapers, while single magazines have a lower rejection level for this reason.



For the time being we are working on examining the “I d not like” reasons of these vehicles in more depth.

Many thanks!

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**Acknowledgements**  
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