

Magazine Readership and Images

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In the recent years there has been much debate over the methods used in Australia and overseas to measure readership.

The debate is over the "recency-frequency" method of measuring readership and the "through-the-book" method. In simple terms, our method, which is based on "through-the-book", obtains lower readership figures, for monthly publications and for weekly magazines with small circulations.

Publishers who use the inflated figures produced by the recency-frequency method should stop doing that practice.

On the 21st of April my father, Roy Morgan, will present a paper on "Improving Media Research" to an ESOMAR Seminar in Stockholm. His paper describes in detail the reasons why we use our methods to measure readership. In April, a copy of that paper will be mailed to all attending this conference.

In our **continuous** Australia-wide Readership Survey, we interview about 26,000 people each year. Each month two **different** cross-sections, each of about 1,100 people, are interviewed. For dailies, weeklies and monthlies, **different** economical and quick methods of questioning are used to produce **comparable** figures for average issue readership. The resultant figures approximate those from through-the-book surveys of specific issues, which cost \$4,000,000 a year to conduct in U.S.A.

When designing our questions, we gave particular attention to minimising or eliminating the ill-effects of **elastic memories, prestige and replication.**

Our aim (which we have attained) was to produce realistic and fair figures of average issue readership. The figures provide a sound basis for calculating reach and frequency for media schedules.

To calculate reach and frequency of different publications, we conducted in 1972 a re-interview survey to measure "second issue" reach, and calculate Casualness, or Turnover rates, for each publication. Recently, we repeated our re-interview survey, and next month we will issue new Casualness figures, for use in conjunction with our readership survey, to calculate reach and frequency. A preliminary look at figures shows some significant changes.

The purpose of this paper is to describe some results we obtained recently on the public's attitude to the major women's, homemaker and general magazines.

Before presenting that attitudinal data, I feel this conference would be an ideal place to present some experimental research we conducted last year and in 1979, to show that our method of measuring readership of weekly and monthly magazines gives approximately the same result as we would obtain if we used the through-the-book method with specific issues. For many years this has been a contentious issue among some media and agency people. We hope the results of our experiments will put the issue to rest.

Black-and-White Front Covers

To confirm experiments in 1971, that showing people reduced black-and-white front covers obtained reliable figures for **monthly** magazines, we conducted a series of experiments in 1979, using the Reader's Digest. Different but comparable Australia-wide cross-sections of at least 1,135 men and women aged 14 and over were interviewed. Respondents were shown one or more of the following:

- (a) The actual front cover of a Reader's Digest,
- (b) A photograph in black-and-white of the front cover of a Reader's Digest, the same size as the actual cover, and the same size as the reduced black-and-white covers used for the other magazines surveyed, or
- (c) A specific issue of the Reader's Digest.

Here are the results:

<u>Table 1</u>		Sample Base	<u>Australia-wide</u>		
			Total	Men	Women
			%	%	%
July Issue: (Surveyed Sept. 1979)	Actual cover	(1,152)	16.4	15.4	17.3
	Specific Issue	(1,152)	14.8	13.9	15.7
August Issue: (Surveyed Oct. 1979)	Actual cover	(2,475)	14.9	14.2	15.7
	Photographed cover (Black & White)	(2,344)	14.4	13.0	15.8
	Specific Issue	(1,201)	12.8	11.7	13.9
September Issue: (Surveyed Nov. 1979)	Actual cover	(1,135)	16.0	17.4	14.7
	Photographed cover (Black & White)	(1,296)	15.5	15.5	15.5
October Issue: (Surveyed Dec. 1979)	Photographed cover (Black & White)	(2,147)	16.4	17.1	15.9

Those results confirmed that by using black-and-white covers, we obtain figures close to those from the much more expensive through-the-book method with specific issues. The table also shows that using actual covers of Reader's Digest produced about the same figures as from using either specific issues or black-and-white photographed covers, of the same size as the actual covers, and the same size as the reduced covers we use for other magazines.

At about the same time, a McNair Anderson readership survey, using the recency-frequency question "Read any issue in the last month" with mast-heads on separate cards, reported that the Reader's Digest's readership was 26.1% (27.1% of men and 24.9% of women).

That 26.1% is about twice the figures of 12.8% and 14.8% from using specific issues, as in the table. Compared with that ridiculous difference, the difference of 1% or 2% in our table is insignificant.

Readership of Specific Issues of Weekly Publications

Figures in Cols. 1-3 of the next table are from showing reduced black-and-white front covers of specific issues of 9 weekly magazines and one fortnightly magazine, to about 1,100 men and women throughout Australia last November. That, of course, is how we always interview on monthlies, with 10-12 week-old issues.

Figures in Cols. 4 and 5 are from our regular Readership Survey, in which we show lists of weekly magazines, and question people on their reading of any issue in the last 7 days.

There are differences between Col. 3 and Cols. 4 & 5 for women's magazines because they do not attain their maximum reach in 5 weeks. In 1971, we showed that Women's Weekly, New Idea and Woman's Day reached their maximum reach in 6 weeks. Today, it is probably longer, because of the higher quality of those publications.

Each 1% in Cols. 1-3 comes from only 11 cases, so chance deviations could be much greater than the differences between those columns.

<u>Weekly Magazines</u>	<u>Specific issue (Reduced B & W)</u>			<u>Read in last 7 days</u> <u>(Using a list)</u>	
	<u>3 weeks old</u>	<u>4 weeks old</u>	<u>5 weeks old</u>	<u>Oct.</u>	<u>Nov.</u>
	(1,178)	(1,212)	(1,136)	(2,314)	(2,294)
	%	%	%	%	%
Womens:					
Women's Weekly	22.6	24.4	26.9	28.8	31.4
New Idea	14.7	16.8	18.0	20.8	19.6
Woman's Day	10.0	11.0	11.7	16.6	16.5
Business:					
Bulletin	5.5	6.1	7.9	6.3	5.7
Time	5.0	6.0	5.4	6.6	6.1
Newsweek	3.0	2.8	3.7	3.5	3.6
Business Review	0.5	0.9	1.4	2.7	1.3
Australian Business (fortnightly)	1.4	1.8	1.9 *		
Others:					
Australasian Post	7.9	6.5	9.0	9.5	10.5
People	4.2	4.1	6.6	5.1	6.3

* Specific readership of a 10 week-old issue of Australian Business was 2.5, and for an 11 week-old issue it was 1.6.

Comparison of Cols. 1-3 with Cols. 4 & 5 shows that with weekly magazines the recent reading question with a list of titles - not show-cards for each title - gives almost the same results as reduced black-and-white front covers, if allowance is made for incomplete reach in 5 weeks. We decided, therefore, to continue to use (for weekly magazines) the recent reading question with a list. This year we will repeat the experiment reported in Cols. 1 - 3, using issues 5, 6 and 7 weeks old, to determine when maximum reach is obtained for weekly publications.

Readership versus Circulation

Over the years we have found that readership and circulation usually roughly correlate. However, when a publication has a dramatic increase in circulation, readership usually increases at a slower rate. Conversely, if a publication loses readership quickly, it usually follows that circulation falls, but not straight away.

Where Magazines Are Read

In an experimental survey last year, we asked readers of the major weekly and one fortnightly magazines where they read them. The next table shows that about 80% of people read the major women's magazines in their home, while big proportions read the general and business magazines at their place of work:

<u>Table 3</u>	Women's	New	Woman's	TV							
	Weekly	Idea	Day	Week	Bulletin	Time	Newsweek	Aust. Business	Business Review	Aust. Post	People
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
At home	80	83	84	85	50	59	50	41	49	69	67
At friends	5	4	3	6	3	6	6	7	6	7	10
On train, bus, tram	2	3	1	1	2	1	2	-	-	1	-
At work	9	7	8	6	33	24	35	47	36	18	18
In reception area	3	2	3	2	7	7	5	3	6	4	4
Somewhere else	1	1	1	*	5	3	2	2	3	1	1

* Less than 1%

Frequency of Reading Specific Issues

Respondents were also asked the number of times they read specific issues of each of the magazines in the table. The frequency of reading **each issue** of Women's Weekly and New Idea was about the same, with 46% saying they read their copies only once, 20% twice and 34% three or more times. 52% said they read their copies of Woman's Day only once, 17% twice and 31% three or more times.

Of Bulletin, Time and Newsweek readers, about 51% said they read their copies only once, while about 15% said twice and 34% three or more times.

Of readers of TV Week, 35% said they read their copies only once, 16% said twice and 49% said three or more times.

In summary, about a third of the readers of the women's and business weeklies, and half of the readers of TV Week, pick up and read their copies at least three times.

Image of Magazines

In August and September last, we surveyed the images of the major weekly and monthly women's, homemaker and general magazines. We interviewed an Australia-wide cross-section of 1,692 men and women aged 14 and over. They were told a series of image dimensions, and asked which of the magazines listed on a card were described by each of those dimensions.

Women's Weekly	House & Garden	TV Week
New Idea	Better Homes & Gardens	Cleo
Woman's Day	Your Garden	Vogue Australia
Reader's Digest	Home Beautiful	Cosmopolitan
Family Circle	Home Journal	Dolly
Good Housekeeping	Belle	Mode Australia
Vital	Vogue Living	

Magazines People Like to Read

The next table shows big differences between men's and women's preferences for most of the magazines surveyed.

Table 4

	<u>All People</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
Sample size	(1,692)	(845)	(847)
	%	%	%
Women's Weekly	36	15	57
Reader's Digest	27	25	28
New Idea	25	7	44
House & Garden	21	16	25
Woman's Day	18	4	33
Better Homes & Gardens	18	15	21
Family Circle	17	4	30
Home Beautiful	16	12	21
TV Week	15	16	14
Your Garden	12	10	14
Cleo	9	4	14
Vogue	7	1	13
Home Journal	7	5	9
Cosmopolitan	6	3	9
Dolly	4	1	6

Analysis by the age of women readers shows big differences between the preferences of the age groups for all of the magazines.

Table 5

	<u>Ages of Women</u>				
	<u>All women</u>	<u>14 - 24 years</u>	<u>25 - 34 years</u>	<u>35 - 49 years</u>	<u>50 years & over</u>
Sample size	(847)	(139)	(207)	(221)	(280)
	%	%	%	%	
Women's Weekly	57	66	58	56	53
New Idea	44	39	44	40	49
Woman's Day	33	33	34	28	35
Family Circle	30	30	39	33	19
Reader's Digest	28	19	31	35	25
House & Garden	25	17	26	29	25
Better Homes & Gardens	21	15	26	27	17
Home Beautiful	21	23	21	24	15
TV Week	14	38	14	9	7
Your Garden	14	5	12	16	17
Cleo	14	43	13	10	3
Vogue	13	22	12	14	8
Home Journal	9	7	13	9	8
Cosmopolitan	9	29	10	5	1
Dolly	6	30	3	2	1

Magazines Spend a Lot of Time Reading

Table 6

	<u>All People</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
Sample size	(1,692)	(845)	(847)
	%	%	%
Reader's Digest	17	17	16
Women's Weekly	15	4	25
New Idea	10	2	19
House & Garden	7	6	9
Family Circle	7	1	12
Woman's Day	6	1	12

Analysis by the age of women readers shows that of women aged 14 - 24 years, 31% spend a lot of time reading Women's Weekly, followed by 26% who said Cleo, 19% Cosmopolitan and 18% Dolly.

Magazines Found Reliable and Dependable

Table 7

	<u>All People</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
Sample size	(1,692)	(845)	(847)
	%	%	%
Reader's Digest	18	18	17
Women's Weekly	18	8	27
New Idea	11	2	19
House & Garden	7	7	7
Family Circle	7	2	12

Analysis by the age of women readers shows that of women aged 25 - 34 years, 21% said the Women's Weekly was reliable and dependable, 20% said New Idea, 19% Reader's Digest, and 18% Family Circle.

Magazines Which Have Interesting Articles and Features

Table 8

	<u>All People</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
Sample size	(1,692)	(845)	(847)
	%	%	%
Women's Weekly	22	8	36
Reader's Digest	21	23	20
New Idea	15	3	27
House & Garden	14	12	15
Home Beautiful	11	9	13
Family Circle	10	3	18

Analysis by the age of women readers shows that each publication appeals to different age groups.

Table 9

	<u>All Women</u>	<u>Ages of Women</u>			
		<u>14 - 24 years</u>	<u>25 - 34 years</u>	<u>35 - 49 years</u>	<u>50 years & over</u>
Sample size	(847)	(139)	(207)	(221)	(280)
	%	%	%	%	%
Women's Weekly	36	44	31	36	35
New Idea	27	18	24	29	34
Reader's Digest	20	14	24	26	14
Family Circle	18	16	23	21	12
Woman's Day	17	21	18	11	19
House & Garden	15	11	15	17	16
Home Beautiful	13	15	13	15	10
Cleo	9	29	10	5	2
Cosmopolitan	6	17	8	3	2
Dolly	4	23	1	1	*

* Less than 10%.

Magazines With Up-to-date Reports and Articles

Table 10

	<u>All People</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
Sample size	(1,692)	(845)	(847)
	%	%	%
Women's Weekly	23	12	35
Reader's Digest	16	15	17
New Idea	11	3	19
Woman's Day	9	3	15

Magazines Which Are Informative

Table 11

	<u>All People</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Women aged 14-25</u>
Sample size	(1,692)	(845)	(847)	(139)
	%	%	%	%
Reader's Digest	25	24	25	23
Women's Weekly	19	9	29	37
House & Garden	13	12	13	10
New Idea	12	4	19	15
Better Homes & Garden	11	10	12	11
Family Circle	10	4	17	15
Woman's Day	7	3	11	11
TV Week	6	7	6	13
Cleo	5	3	7	19
Cosmopolitan	3	2	5	9
Dolly	2	1	3	10

Analysis by the age of women readers shows big differences. For instance, of women aged under 25 years, 37% said Women's Weekly was informative, 23% said Reader's Digest, 19% Cleo, 15% Family Circle and New Idea, 13% TV Week, 11% Woman's Day and Family Circle, 10% Dolly and House & Garden, and 9% Cosmopolitan.

Magazines Which Have Good Pictures and Illustrations

Table 12

	<u>All People</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
Sample size	(1,692)	(845)	(847)
	%	%	%
Women's Weekly	26	14	38
House & Garden	15	14	16
Home Beautiful	14	11	17
Better Homes & Gardens	13	13	14
Family Circle	11	4	17
New Idea	9	3	15
Woman's Day	9	4	13

Which Are Prestige Magazines

Table 13

	<u>All People</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
Sample size	(1,692)	(845)	(847)
	%	%	%
Vogue Australia	16	10	22
Vogue Living	14	8	19
Belle	7	6	8
Home Beautiful	7	4	9
Cosmopolitan	6	6	7
Women's Weekly	6	3	8
Reader's Digest	6	7	4
Cleo	5	4	6

Advice In Homemaker Magazines

Table 14

	<u>Magazines Good For</u>				<u>Average Issue Readership Apr-Sept '81</u>
	<u>Hints around the garden</u>	<u>Improving inside your home</u>	<u>Improving outside your home</u>	<u>Young married people</u>	
	%	%	%	%	%
House & Garden	32	15	27	13	6
Better Homes & Gardens	24	20	24	13	6
Your Garden	23	1	12	5	4
Home Beautiful	6	30	14	12	6
Home Journal	3	14	7	7	3
Vogue Living	1	6	3	3	4

When interpreting the opinions listed in the above table, readership, of course, must be taken into account.