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4.2 Comparison between interview and diary data on newspaper readership

In Brazil the publishing pattern for newspapers presents some features which complicate the life of the media researcher. Not all newspapers are published every day of the week; some predominantly geared to the business community do not have a Sunday edition, while others which publish Tuesday through Sunday do not have a Monday edition. (The pattern of publication for the daily papers in the Sao Paulo area is shown in **Table 1.**

For this reason, the form of questioning used on most readership surveys is the following:

"I would like you to look at this list of newspapers considering only those which come out on Mondays.Could you tell me if you read or looked at any of these in the last three months either at home or outside the home?

If yes - Which? - Any other?"

"I would like you to look at this list of newspapers considering only those which come out from Tuesday to Saturday. Could you tell me if you read or looked at any of these in the last two weeks either at home or outside the home?

If yes - Which? - Any other?"

"Looking again at this list of newspapers did you read or look at in the last three months the Sunday edition of any of these newspapers at home or out of the home?

If yes - Which? - Any other?"

I should emphasise that separate lists of newspapers are shown for each of the three groups above, ie, one list for Monday, another for Tuesday to Saturday and another for Sunday. It is a moot point whether the respondent actually understands the difference between these questions because although the cards actually contain different newspapers the names are the same.

For each publication looked at within the publishing segment, the following questions are asked:

"You told me which publications you read or looked at. Now I would like you to tell me how long ago was the last time you read or looked at each one."

"Finally I would like you to tell me with what frequency you normally read each of the publications you mentioned. Would you say you usually read

all the issues

nearly all the issues

a little more than half the issues

TABLE 1
Publication days of daily(?) newspapers

Sao Paulo Brazil

A Gazeta Esportiva	Daily	Monday to Sunday
Diário do Comércio	Daily	Monday to Friday
Diário Popular	Daily	Monday to Sunday
Diário do Grande ABC	Diary	Tuesday to Sunday
Folha de Sao Paulo	Daily	Monday to Sunday*
Folha da Tarde	Daily	Monday to Saturday
Jornal da Tarde	Daily	Monday to Saturday
Notícias Populares	Daily	Monday to Sunday
Popular da Tarde	Daily	Monday to Sunday
DCI-Diário Com. Indústria	Daily	Monday to Friday
Gazeta Mercantil	Daily	Tuesday to Saturday
O Estado de Sao Paulo	Daily	Tuesday to Sunday

*An interesting variation for this newspaper is that those who have a subscription to it only receive it delivered Tuesday to Sunday, ie do not have it delivered on Mondays.

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half the issues
a little less than half
or almost none?
So, of 10 issues how many issues would you say you usually read"

This method of questioning has been used by Marplan for some ten years, having been evolved in the early seventies from a cruder form of questioning
"Did you read a newspaper last Monday?"
"Did you read a newspaper last Sunday?"
"Did you read a newspaper last Saturday?"
and of Tuesdays to Fridays - "did you read a newspaper yesterday?"

People are classified as readers if
(a) for Sunday editions and Monday editions, they have read within the last seven days
(b) for Tuesday to Saturday editions for interviews carried out on Wednesday through Saturdays they have read yesterday; for interviews carried out on Tuesday, they have read the previous Monday or the previous Saturday; for interviews carried out on Mondays they have read on the previous Saturday.

The data on frequency are not published in the normal reports but are used in the data bank for simulations and in schedule evaluations and schedule optimisations.

The form of questioning owes much to the standard form of readership questioning used in the UK for example, *but* has been applied as if the Monday and Sunday titles were weeklies and the Tuesday to Saturday titles dailies. Of this more below.

During recent years a number of newspapers in Brazil have raised doubts about the variations in readership shown between Sundays, Mondays and other weekdays, as compared with the variations in circulation. For this reason, when in 1982 an individual pocket diary of radio listening was being run as part of a multimedia study in Sao Paulo it was decided to take the opportunity of including newspaper readership in the diary on an experimental basis, and to make comparisons with the interview data obtained on readership of newspapers.

The multimedia study concerned consists of
(a) household diary of TV viewing with recording of the individuals watching
(b) individual interviews using standard recall questions as indicated above on newspapers and also magazines
(c) individual pocket diaries combining radio listening and newspaper readership.

On the left-hand page of the pocket diary the individual records the time he or she listened to radio, whether it was AM or FM and the name of the station (in Sao Paulo there are 29 radio stations). At the foot of the page there is a block to mark if the individual has not listened at all to the radio that day.

On the right-hand page newspaper reading is recorded with 15 precoded newspaper titles plus a space for individual district newspapers. On the diary the individual recorded each day for each title he or she had read that day, and if read today whether or not it was that day's edition. At the foot of the page was a block which the informant ticked if he or she had not read any newspaper that day.

(The methodology of the diary in this respect is based on the diaries used in the studies in the United Kingdom carried out by Marplan Limited for London Weekend Television in 1973 and 1976 and reported on by Sue Stoessl at ESOMAR in 1977).

The study was carried out using two separate panels, each reporting for two complete weeks. One panel in April consisted of 1213 individuals and the second in May of 1626. 63% of the households over the 2 months combined contacted collaborated effectively (3 in 4 had agreed to do so) and over 90% of the individuals in those households yielded complete individual data. (It is not the intention of this paper to discuss methods of ensuring collaboration in Brazil and their success or otherwise. Let it simply be noted that diary panel research of any kind is much younger in Brazil than in USA or Europe. TV diary panels were begun in 1975 and household consumer diary panels were launched in the late seventies).

The same respondents also completed an interview on readership at the end of the study.

THE RESULTS

General Reading Habits
At first sight the data on general reading habits generated by the two methods appeared very similar

	Read Newspapers
Recall interview	61%
Diary	60%

It should be stressed that these numbers are each produced by analysis, not by direct questions. The first is generated by taking all those who had looked at any edition of a newspaper within its publication period and the second by the negative way of taking all those who throughout the two weeks they were keeping the diary said for each day that they had not read any paper that day and subtracting them from the total.

However an examination of the diary data for the two separate weeks kept revealed some interesting data and some divergences. If the first week's diary only was considered the figure for readers fell to 52% compared with 60% for the two weeks. If the second week's data

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only were considered the corresponding figure was 51%. If reading any paper in any day is taken the level from the diary data varied between 24% and 33% on the April diaries and between 28% and 35% on the May diaries.

This implies that, in Brazil at least, the newspaper reading public is not constant from day to day but considerable movement in and out of it takes place both from day to day and from week to week. Data for the two samples in separate months are shown in **Table 2.**

Cornish, in New Orleans, in his paper on Replicated and Parallel readership, said: "For newspapers, the great majority of all readership occurs on the day of issue only, and "(my italics)" *most readers are regular.* The potential for model bias is therefore quite limited."

The assumptions Cornish made are ones which probably hold good for readership in the United Kingdom but apparently may not hold true in other countries.

Reading of individual titles

In **Tables 3, 4** and **5** a comparison is made of the results from the personal interview data (interviews conducted *after* the two weeks of diary completion) with the diary data both for read any issue and read today's issue.

There is a general tendency for the diary data for read today's issue to be lower than the interview data and this is more marked in the case of the Monday data **(Table 3)** and in the case of the Sunday data **(Table 5)**.

The Tuesday to Saturday data seem to be closer between two sets of averaged data but there still exists the same tendency for the diary data to be below the interview data.

Before attempting to draw any conclusions from the data, it is worth setting down some of the considerations which have to be taken into account in this comparison.

(1) The data are drawn from the same set of individuals, who have given responses. In theory the diary completion might be expected to condition them, since it took place before the interview, and one might expect that the diary would be closer to the interview because of this.

(2) The interview data are not in respect of exactly the same time period as the diary but slightly later. The diary data do show considerable movements from week to week in and out of newspaper reading and therefore the answers to the interview may well be different from the diary of a week before. Nonetheless one would have expected the movements in and out to cancel each other out from the evidence of the comparison betwen weeks shown in **Table 2.**

(3) Having made these two reservations, it is also necessary to state again that the data shown applies to Brazil and to Sao Paulo, ie are data relating to a country where, even though it has made vast improvements in recent years, the literacy level is below that to be found in Europe or the United States.

Certain other things should be noted here. In **Table 3** (Mondays) there are no figures against *Estado de Sao Paulo,* because on the cards that we show for newspapers which come out on Monday we do not put a paper which does not come out on Monday and therefore in the interview data get no answer,but in the diary data we actually got 3% saying they had read on Monday although none of them had said they had read Monday's issue. This was consistent, and also consistent with other things we know about because the Sunday edition weighs about 2 kilos and is very largely devoted to classified advertising. It is the kind of paper which people do keep and read the next day. There are two other papers in **Table 3** where the 'read today' and 'read today's issue' data show some differences. There were

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TABLE 2
General readership - diary data

(Base)	TOTAL (2939) %	APRIL (1213) %	MAY (1626) %
Read Any Newspaper - Week 1	52	48	55
Read Any Newspaper - Week 2	51	50	51
Read Any Newspaper - (Week 1 or 2)	60	58	61

TABLE 3
Readership — Mondays

		INTERVIEW DATA %	DIARY DATA READ TODAY %	READ TODAY'S ISSUE %
GAZETA	April	5	3	3
ESPORTIVA	May	6	3	3
DIÁRIO	April	6	2	2
POPULAR	May	4	2	2
FOLHA DE	April	10	6	5
SAO PAULO	May	10	7	6
FOLHA DA	April	8	5	4
TARDE	May	9	7	6
JORNAL DA	April	9	6	6
TARDE	May	8	6	6
NOTÍCIAS	April	7	4	4
POPULARES	May	5	3	3
O ESTADO DE	April	(NOT	3	-
SAO PAULO	May	ASKED)	3	-

TABLE 4
Readership — Tuesdays to Saturdays

		INTERVIEW DATA %	DIARY DATA (AVERAGE OF FIVE DAYS) READ TODAY %	READ TODAY'S ISSUE %
GAZETA	April	3	3	2
ESPORTIVA	May	2	3	2
DIÁRIO	April	3	2	2
POPULAR	May	2	2	2
FOLHA DE	April	9	6	6
SAO PAULO	May	9	9	9
FOLHA DA	April	5	4	4
TARDE	May	8	6	6
JORNAL DA	April	7	5	5
TARDE	May	5	5	4
NOTÍCIAS	April	5	3	3
POPULARES	May	3	3	3
O ESTADO DE	April	5	4	3
SAO PAULO	May	3	4	4

TABLE 5
Readership — Sundays

		INTERVIEW DATA %	DIARY DATA READ TODAY %	DIARY DATA READ TODAY'S ISSUE %
GAZETA	April	2	3	2
ESPORTIVA	May	3	3	2
DIÁRIO	April	3	2	2
POPULAR	May	2	2	2
FOLHA DE	April	10	8	7
SAO PAULO	May	12	11	10
FOLHA DA	April	(NOT	1	-
TARDE	May	ASKED)	2	*
JORNAL DA	April	(NOT	1	-
TARDE	May	ASKED)	1	*
NOTÍCIAS	April	4	2	2
POPULARES	May	2	3	2
O ESTADO DE	April	21	13	13
SAO PAULO	May	21	14	13

more people who had read the *Folha de Sao Paulo* on Monday who were not talking about reading Monday's issue, and that is because it also has a very big Sunday issue. The *Folha da Tarde* is an even more interesting example because the 'reading today' on Monday was bigger than the 'read today's issue', so if they had read another issue it could only have been Saturday or before — in other words readership 2 days old. If we look at these data in general the interview data right down the column gives a higher figure than the 'read today' and a substantially higher figure in many instances than the read today's issue.

In the Tuesday-to-Saturday data (**Table 4**), the interview data is as we collect in the interview, and the diary is averaged over the 5 days. There is still a tendency for the interview data to be higher than the diary data, but there are two other things. The *Gazeta Esportiva* is a paper exclusively devoted to sport, some people could be reading other days' issues because in Brazil there is a tendency to have football games on Wednesday or Thursday and people could well keep the edition to relive the glory or misery, but there was again a difference between 'reading today' and 'reading today's issue'. When we come to Sundays (**Table 5**) we are into a

slightly different thing, the inverse of what was the case for Mondays. On Sundays we do not ask about the *Folha da Tarde* or the *Jornal da Tarde* because they do not come out then, but for both of them we encountered some readership, which could have been on Saturday, from the diary. The *Folha de Sao Paulo* and *O Estado de Sao Paulo* are both very serious and far to the right of the *Daily Telegraph* but the *Folha* was the one which most complained about the fact that although it sells far more copies on a Sunday the readership data does not show much difference. On the other hand the *Estado Sao Paulo*, which has always sold substantially more on Sunday, shows very high differences between the interview and the 'read today' or the 'read today's issue. Thus we have in each of these cases substantial differences, but where we have data coming up on the diary which apparently is illogical, it is to us logical in the light of the way the Brazilians read their papers.

If we look now at the individual variations by day to day (**Table 6**) (I know the numbers are small but we are talking about variations on samples of 1200 and 1600 which are reasonably large) we are considering variations from day to day which are in fact part of the

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TABLE 6
Readership variations Tuesday to Saturday by individual day

		(DIARY DATA-READ TODAY'S ISSUE)				
		Tuesday %	Wednesday %	Thursday %	Friday %	Saturday %
GAZETA	April	2	2	3	3	2
ESPORTIVA	May	2	2	3	2	2
DIÁRIO	April	1	2	3	2	2
POPULAR	May	2	2	2	2	2
FOLHA DE	April	6	6	6	7	6
SAO PAULO	May	8	9	10	9	8
FOLHA DA	April	4	4	4	4	3
TARDE	May	6	6	7	7	5
JORNAL DA	April	5	5	6	6	5
TARDE	May	4	4	5	5	4
NOTÍCIAS	April	3	3	3	3	3
POPULARES	May	3	3	4	3	3
O ESTADO DE	April	3	3	4	3	3
SAO PAULO	May	4	4	5	4	4

marketing policy of some of these papers, because there are tendencies to produce supplements for certain things on certain days. In fact the *Jornal da Tarde* has introduced a special supplement about cars on one day every fortnight and they have published data to show how much more they sell on that day when they included the supplement, so it is a deliberate marketing policy to have variations from day to day.

We also did one other analysis which was to take from the diary data the people who had read *any* issue at all in the 2 weeks of the survey and the people who had read *every* issue in the 2 weeks of the survey: if you look down the April and May data in the first two columns of **Table 7** you will see that there are numbers but in the 'read every edition' columns there are hardly any numbers at all.One of the papers in Rio de Janeiro working on a slightly different kind of panel data, Nielsen panel data on household purchasing of newspapers (purchasing of newspapers is not reading, but is something) has found a similar sort of pattern among its readers: a very small hardcore of people who bought 7 out of 7 and a huge body of sporadic readers, data apparently similar to the kind of thing we are

encountering which also suggests that the European model does not apply in Brazil.

CONCLUSIONS

The first conclusion to be drawn is that the levels of newspaper reading shown by the conventional recall technique (as currently applied in Brazil) are somewhat inflated.

What is not clear is why this tendency exists. It may in part be linked with the second conclusion we have drawn from the diary data — namely that newspaper reading in Brazil is not as regular as it appears to be in other countries and, for some titles, does not all take place on the day of issue.

It may be that when this sort of situation prevails the recall techniques which have been imported (and adapted) may need to be modified further. The diary panel experiment is being repeated in Sao Paulo in mid 1983 and later in the year will also be mounted in Rio de Janeiro. After studying this further data hopefully the way ahead may seem a little clearer.

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TABLE 7
Readership — diary data

	READ ANY ISSUE IN THE TWO WEEKS OF THE SURVEY		READ EVERY ISSUE IN THE TWO WEEKS OF THE SURVEY	
	%		%	
GAZETA ESPORTIVA	April 11	May 12	April *	May *
DIÁRIO POPULAR	12	11	*	*
FOLHA DE SAO PAULO	23	25	1	2
FOLHA DA TARDE	16	21	*	*
JORNAL DA TARDE	16	16	*	*
NOTÍCIAS POPULARES	10	11	1	*
O ESTADO DE SAO PAULO	24	24	*	*