

**Rolf Speetzen**  
Axel Springer Verlag AG  
Hamburg, West Germany

**Wilfried Wenzel**  
Axel Springer Verlag AG  
Hamburg, West Germany

## 7.5 Matching mind with matter

This paper presents an analysis of the relationship between the emotional image of the range of subjects covered by magazines and the emotional world of their readers, in order to position the magazines on an emotional basis.

We have currently considerable information on the effect of various forms of communication through magazines. What has not been explained until now, however, is the root cause for the quality of reading at the various levels of data available. How does the reader 'see' and evaluate, purely by feeling, that which is laid before him?

The following study addresses this point. It questions the reasons for different degrees of reading quality, the matching of mind with matter. As it deals with the world of emotions of readers, its results are of general interest — for magazine publishers as well as for those in creative brand management.

To read is to feel. To read is to experience life, whether good or bad. It is a tangible activity. Whether it stimulates or relaxes, it appeals to the senses. Pictures are the perfect catalyst. Pictures irritate or amuse, are touching or stimulating.

Magazine reading also releases a variety of emotions. The objective of this research is to identify these emotions, the emotional quality of the reading process, to broaden our level of knowledge of readers and magazines by the dimension of the emotional factor.

Emotions are formed by life's experience, and by the variety of life as portrayed by magazines and the realities of life as perceived by the reader. The reader reaction is a product of the emotions generated. It marks the emotional atmosphere between a magazine and its reader.

The reader's feelings, therefore, can be the most significant factor in determining the effects of the editorial content and the advertising, in evaluating the worth of the title as an advertising medium. This basic hypothesis for the work to be carried out was divided into six areas for investigation.

### THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

(1) Which emotions do various aspects of life arouse in the whole population?

(2) Which emotional aspects of life do various magazines portray, as seen by the reader?

(3) How are the magazines positioned according to the emotional quality of their reflection of life?

(4) How are the magazines positioned according to the spread of life's aspects in their contents?

(5) How are the magazines positioned dimensionally on the basis of two axes: emotional appeal and the spread of their contents?

(6) What is the effect of this positioning, as shown by matching mind with matter, on the reader loyalty and the reading/noting intensity of the magazines?

Each of these sections show that emotions can be measured. How they can be recorded can now be demonstrated.

How can one study emotions? How can the variety of life be defined? How can the realities of life be reduced to a statement? How can one establish comparable data for both these planes?

Our key to this question is the picture: We showed pictures to 5,000 people. Pictures alone, without words, were the key signposts to achieving the answers to our questions.

Following the basic principle that 'pictures speak louder than words' in a largely-illustrated magazine environment, we selected pictures as the triggers to explore the emotions they generate. This enabled us not only to establish how the magazines are positioned, but also to determine the realities of life (the emotional world) of the reader.

As with polarity-profile methods, the respondents to the pictures should react by their feelings and not with their thoughts. They were asked to steer their own reactions into two dimensions:

(1) How does the picture affect me?

(2) In which magazine would I expect to see this picture?

Each picture was sorted according to these criteria. The photographic quality was not at issue, merely its contents and the aspect of life it illustrated.

### RESEARCH DATA (Abridged)

Universe: All 40.7 million German-speaking residents in private households aged between 14-69 years, in the Federal Republic of Germany and West Berlin

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- Sample: 5,249 completed valid questionnaires.
- Research Period: January 16 - March 15, 1981.
- Questioning Method: Face-to-face interviews in the respondents' households. The data from the research were established within the framework of a media-marketing study.
- Interview Aids: Mastheads, lists, 47 pictures in postcard format. The picture set was selected from the 146 pictures developed by our CONCEPTE study.
- Survey Characteristics: - Readership values for 36 consumer magazines, analogous to those of the AG.MA  
- Non-verbal description of magazines with the help of a picture set  
- Personal reaction to a picture set of 47 illustrations  
- Demography

To deal with the first dimension (how does this picture affect me?) the 47 pictures were presented in a random sequence, one after the other, by the interviewer. The respondent could grade each picture on a 7-point scale. The responses ranged from: *it is pleasant, attractive through banal, boring, says nothing to attractive, can't bear it.*

For doubtful reactions, there was also room to answer: *twin effects, it both repels and attracts.*

There were also intermediate gradings between each position marking.

The results from this phase allowed the first question to be answered: "Which emotions do various aspects of life arouse in the whole population?"

One thing became clear: pictures which reflect peace and relaxation, harmony and untroubled happiness were given a more than pleasant rating. Such pictures often have also a trusted and familiar character. On the other hand, there are other qualities concerned with less agreeable aspects of life such as fear and alienation.

We can thus firmly establish that there are major differences between pictures in terms of their emotional statements and value of understanding, which is hardly surprising in view of the differences between the pictures themselves. And the value can be established

numerically.

What cannot be determined, however, is a simple communication formula. Hence, whatever effect the sender of the message wants, the choice remains to be made, whether to go with or against the current.

From this thinking come the decisions on the structure of the editorial concept, and the profile of the contents, and the advertising which the magazine carries.

To come to terms with it or to provoke rejection of it is a strategic decision. For this reason, we did not apply a positive value to such reactions as 'pleasant' or a disapproving negative value to the term 'repellent'. They are merely cornerstone values in a reaction scale, to give an understanding of the opinion of the German people.

Thus we have achieved the first objective of our project. We can evaluate the emotions, and the various aspects of life in precise terms for the population of Germany — that is, the potential readership of magazines.

Now to solve the second point: "In which magazine would I expect to find such a picture?" In this phase of the study, we allowed the respondents to attribute each of the 47 pictures to the journals they read (maximum readership). This gives an association between pictures and magazines: in simple terms: "When you see this picture, which magazine comes to mind?"

In arriving at these results, the second objective of the study can be attained: which emotional aspects of life do the various magazines portray, as seen by the readers?

It may be helpful here to give a thumbnail sketch of the best-known German magazines.

*Hörzu*, with its paid circulation of 4 million copies per week, is the largest-selling magazine in Europe. It is a family-orientated TV/radio programme magazine. While a number of very different pictures were attributed to *Hörzu*, they all had one thing in common: security, pleasure in beautiful things, and relaxation in leisure time. These were shown in the eight pictures with the most references.

*Der Spiegel* is Germany's leading news magazine. For this title the most rated picture illustrated a British Airways Captain. That picture, and some others, showed a clear preference signal for 'social status', in marked contrast to other associations connected with the foreign world of the powerful and the rich. This reflects the particular editorial approach of *Der Spiegel* of critical treatment of controversial issues of the day, getting under the skin of the reader, and provoking thought, in a disturbing way. This influenced the ranking order of the

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**TABLE 1**  
Levels of attraction — ranking

1.	Tina	6.3	22.	Journal für die Frau	16.8
2.	Funk Uhr	6.5	23.	Schöner Wohnen	17.0
3.	Bild und Funk	7.9	24.	ADAC Motorwelt	17.9
4.	Das Neue Blatt	9.3	25.	Auto Motor Sport	18.0
5.	Gong	10.1	26.	Brigitte	19.8
6.	Meine Familie & Ich	10.4	27.	Playboy	20.8
7.	Hörzu	10.8	28.	Burda Moden	21.1
8.	Fernsehwoche	11.1	29.	Neue Mode	21.6
9.	TV Hören und Sehen	11.5	30.	Neue Revue	23.0
10.	Eltern	12.6	31.	Quick	23.3
11.	Bravo	12.9	32.	Essen & Trinken	23.5
	Meine Geschichte	12.9	33.	Bild am Sonntag	24.3
13.	Bunte	13.3	34.	Stern	25.0
	Neue Post	13.3	35.	Capital	29.3
15.	Die Aktuelle	13.9	36.	Der Spiegel	32.4
16.	Freundin	14.3			
17.	Das Beste	15.1			
	Für Sie	15.1			
19.	Frau im Spiegel	15.4			
20.	Petra	15.6			
21.	Kicker	15.8			

Average (based on 36 magazines) 16.3

pictures against this publication.

*Stern* is Germany's largest illustrated magazine. The pictures associated with *Stern* reflected a wide variety of aspects of life. However, most of them, even if only by implication, displayed masculine attitudes. These dominating aspects, which are actually experienced to a lesser degree in a normal environment, exhibit the exotic side of the world, high social prestige or leisure activities.

These results, however, are only the starting point for further analysis. The awareness of the ranking order of the pictures is not enough in itself though certainly with the attribution of eight pictures one can get an approximation of the character of the magazines, and some of the differences between the publications.

Some magazines display a broad-brush approach to aspects of life, others seem to be relatively narrow in their treatment. For some magazines, the dominating pictures show a high identification value, for others they provoke very mixed feelings.

This vague impression can be focussed into a precise structure in the next steps of the investigation. Firstly, we will talk about the level of attraction of the pictures

attributed to certain magazines.

Examples in achieving the third objective: How are the magazines positioned according to the emotional quality of their reflection of life?

The pictures selected by the readers, as placed in their order, have to be allocated a level of attraction. *Tina*, for example, is a major women's weekly magazine. The eight most frequently nominated pictures show relatively favourable pole positions in the personal preference scales of the *Tina* readership, on average a 6.3 rating. *Tina* was predominantly chosen for pictures which were rated at another point of the interview as: "This picture has a pleasant touch, it is attractive". In the case of *Der Spiegel*, the aspects of life portrayed are further removed from the emotional preferences of its readers. The pictures most frequently associated with *Der Spiegel* have an average pole position of only 32.4 in the preference scale of the readership.

The levels of attraction of the pictures attributed to certain magazines by their actual readers are shown in **Table 1**, those on the left being above average and those on the right below

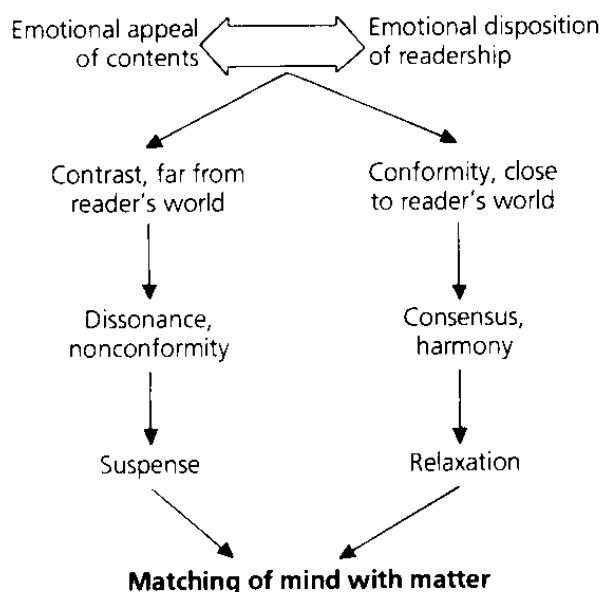
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The best match between the emotional preferences of the readers and the emotional portrayal in the contents is shown in *Tina*, as we have already seen. Other women's magazines are also to be found in the above-average position, such as the German edition of *Family Circle*. Next to these titles the TV/radio programme magazines come through strongly: they are all in the upper section of the field. On the other side, the greatest gaps between the magazine contents and their readers are shown in the illustrated magazines and the news magazines, as well as in the subject-oriented women's such as *Essen & Trinken*.

The evaluation of the emotional quality of aspects of life from 'pleasant' to 'not pleasant' are initially only unvalued descriptions of feelings. Here comes the question: how do we assign a level of attraction to the editorial strategy of the magazine?

Let us first assume that the basic emotional conditioning of our public can be shown as a river. In this context, each magazine has to make a decision on its concept somewhere between two very different strategies (**Figure 1**)

**FIGURE 1**



One can go with the current, matching the emotional appeal of the contents with the emotional disposition of the readership, bringing the editorial balance and mix into the emotional world of its readers.

In this way the atmosphere is achieved through consensus and harmony, with a deliberate trend towards entertainment and relaxation in its articles.

On the other hand, one can go against the mainstream — by confronting the reader's emotional preferences. This material is 'another world' for the reader, giving a particular point of contact and suspense between the reader and the magazine. The attitude of the reader is aroused by attention-getting articles to produce suspense.

Taking these two extremes, we can mark out the first coordinate required to position the magazines according to the emotional quality of the aspects they portray.

The magazine titles whose contents portray life outside that of the readers' immediate world, are often those which arouse attention, and they are going against the stream. On the other hand are the magazines which identify themselves with their readers, and seek to generate relaxed reading. This is the first coordinate level.

The fourth objective was "How are the magazines positioned according to the spread of life's aspects in their contents?" The second co-ordinate, and with it the second principal objective of the research, is concerned with the spread of the magazines' contents. That is to say, having determined how near or far the editorial is to the actual world and emotions of the readership, we now have to establish how broad is the spread of the magazines as seen by the readers? Is there a wide variety, or is the subject matter confined to one dimension? We had to arrange our 47 pictures into subject groups according to the specific nature of each illustration.

Using a factor analysis process, we took the aspects of life represented by the 47 pictures, and sorted them into a manageable matrix of 10 basic dimensions. This was based on the respondents' statements on the attraction of the pictures. The separate dimensions were then allocated to the pictures according to their character. The appropriateness of a picture to a given dimension was indicated by a weighting factor, with a maximum value of 1.0, which indicates that a picture is ideally suited to portray the dimension of life in the table. A weighting factor of 0 shows that the illustration has no element of that dimension in its contents.

This gave a choice of pictures which, with the highest loading, would show one dimension of life's aspects. But arranging the various categories into dimensions has only an organisational value. The pictures speak for themselves.

Thus we not only had 10 separate dimensions, but, at the same time, could determine the emphasis of each

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magazine according to these areas of identification.

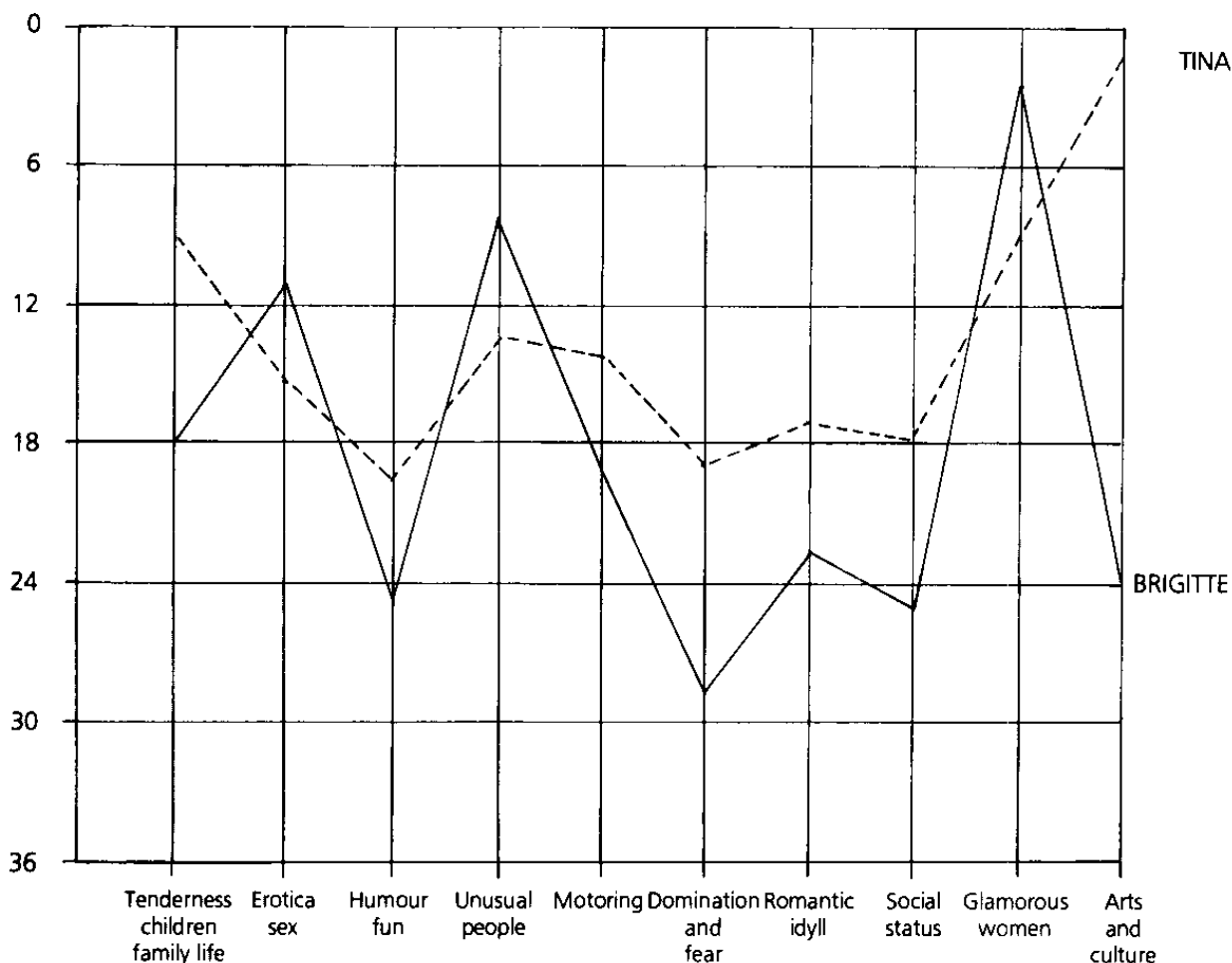
The value given to the journals represented the average frequency of the allocation of a picture to a magazine title by the respondents. In the following we were not so much interested in the nature of the dimensions associated with a magazine as in the *Numbers* of the dimensions.

- Dimension 1: Tenderness, children, family life
- Dimension 2: Erotica, sex
- Dimension 3: Humour, fun
- Dimension 4: Unusual people
- Dimension 5: Motoring

- Dimension 6: Domination and fear
- Dimension 7: Romantic idyll
- Dimension 8: Social status
- Dimension 9: Glamorous and extravagant women
- Dimension 10: Arts and culture

Beside the separate allocations, the magazine titles can also be compared and ranked within each of these subject dimensions. **Figure 2** illustrates the curves for two women's magazines, *Tina* and *Brigitte*. *Brigitte* reflects relatively few subject areas, but is particularly strong in the dimensions 2, 4 and 9. The 9th dimension is typical for all the classic German women's magazines.

**FIGURE 2**  
Comparison: Basic dimensions of Brigitte and Tina



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The profile for *Tina*, however, shows particular strength in dimension 10. In other respects, it matches the *Brigitte* profile very closely. Thus we can say that *Tina* has a wider scope of subjects.

The comparison between *Stern* and *Auto, Motor und Sport* (Figure 3) shows extreme variation between the two journals. *Stern* is a multi-dimensional publication, covering a wide range of subjects, while *Auto, Motor und Sport* is confined to one subject only.

Such curves can be developed for each title. Some are credited with only one or less of the choice of dimensions, others were noted in six or eight of these areas. While there is some interest in comparing the profiles of the individual magazines, our main objective in this section of the research was only to establish the

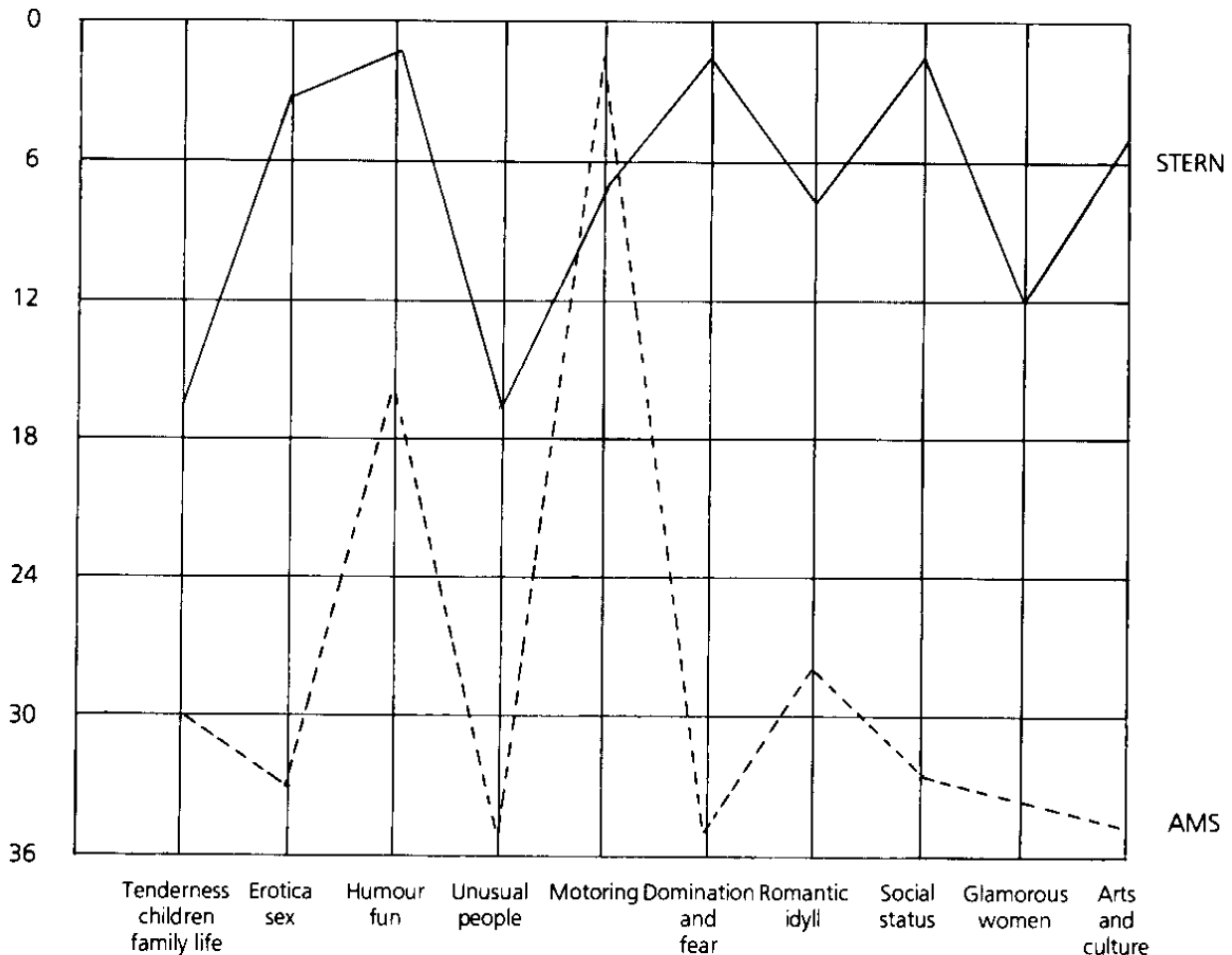
range and variety of aspects of life as portrayed in their contents.

A unit of measure for the scope of magazine coverage in the titles under review was obtained by averaging the ranking orders through all 10 dimensions. The results are shown in Table 2, the average for all 36 magazines being 18.5.

Once we had the results, we sorted the 36 magazines included in the research into groups lying above and below the average value. The smaller the value, therefore, the more dimensions which could be attributed to its contents. Conversely, the larger values indicated that these titles tended to be unidimensional in character.

The readers demonstrated that the illustrated

**FIGURE 3**  
Comparison: Basic dimensions of Stern and Auto Motor Sport



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**TABLE 2**  
Average ranking of magazines in 10 dimensions

1.	Stern	7.2	18.	Neue Post	18.9
2.	Gong	8.2	19.	Playboy	19.4
3.	Fernsehwoche	9.3	20.	Freundin	20.0
4.	Bunte	9.7	21.	Für Sie	20.7
5.	Bild am Sonntag	9.8		Das Neue Blatt	20.7
6.	Funk Uhr	10.2	23.	Das Beste	20.9
7.	TV Hören und Sehen	11.0	24.	Capital	21.9
8.	Bild und Funk	11.4	25.	Die Aktuelle	22.6
	Hörzu	11.4		Petra	22.6
10.	Quick	12.2	27.	Meine Geschichte	25.0
11.	Journal für die Frau	12.3	28.	Meine Familie & ich	25.3
12.	Tina	13.4	29.	Eltern	25.4
13.	Neue Revue	14.0	30.	Neue Mode	25.7
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16.	Bravo	17.0	33.	Auto Motor Sport	27.8
17.	Brigitte	18.2	34.	Schöner Wohnen	28.5
			35.	Kicker	29.5
			36.	Essen & Trinken	31.7

Average based on 36 magazines: 18.5

magazines and the TV/radio programme magazines were close leaders in the multidimensional field.

Because of the variety of aspects covered, the women's magazines were broadly spread all over this spectrum. The men's magazines, and the specialist journals, fell into the unidimensional sector.

It is of course possible (and this can be established by a content analysis) that these magazines which have been labelled as unidimensional do not deal solely with a single thematic area. What comes through strongly in our research is the situation that the subject area embraces such a broad field that, in the view of the readers and its positioning, it is fully established as unidimensional in character.

But what is overlooked is that the television-orientated matter covers an enormous width, from Amazons to Arkansas and from Zombies to Zarathustra, with a variety of aspects and emotions. As a result, the editorial content of the programme journals is virtually unlimited in concept. The variety of the programmes is reflected in their descriptions and articles, to give a variety of themes and subject treatments within any given issue. The other half of these journals, not directly linked to the broadcast programmes, makes these publications just as varied as the illustrated magazines.

In the next stage, the two co-ordinates 'variety' and 'emotional quality' were taken together in order to give the magazine its dimensional positioning. That gives us the element we require to position any of the magazines in relation to the axes. Now we come to the conclusions we can draw from the positioning exercise.

Our fifth objective was "How are the magazines positioned dimensionally on the basis of two axes — emotional appeal and the spread of their contents?"

The whole is more than the sum of its parts. Both axes open up for us a new look at four basic orientations in the editorial concepts.

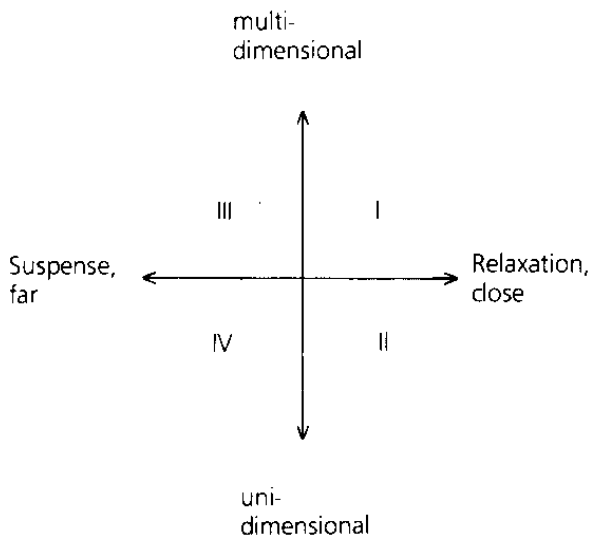
In **Figure 4**, Quadrant I shows the magazine with ranges of subjects giving a selection which match harmoniously with the emotional world of their readers. In addition, their treatments cover a multidimensional range. Both show clearly that the major trend of the editorial is towards entertainment and relaxation.

The titles in Quadrant II, while still matching closely the emotional level and expectation of the readership, nevertheless tend to concentrate their editorial matter towards a unidimensional product.

In Quadrant III the publications tend towards controversy, arousing the reader and creating a mood of tension, while presenting a multidimensional range of

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FIGURE 4



subject material. The reader finds a broad selection of reports which differ from the reader's daily life and experience.

In Quadrant IV lie those titles where the editorial is quite specific and, in part, is heavily concentrated on coverage of affairs outside the emotional world of the reader.

The positioning of all 36 titles according to the coordinate system is shown in **Figure 5**.

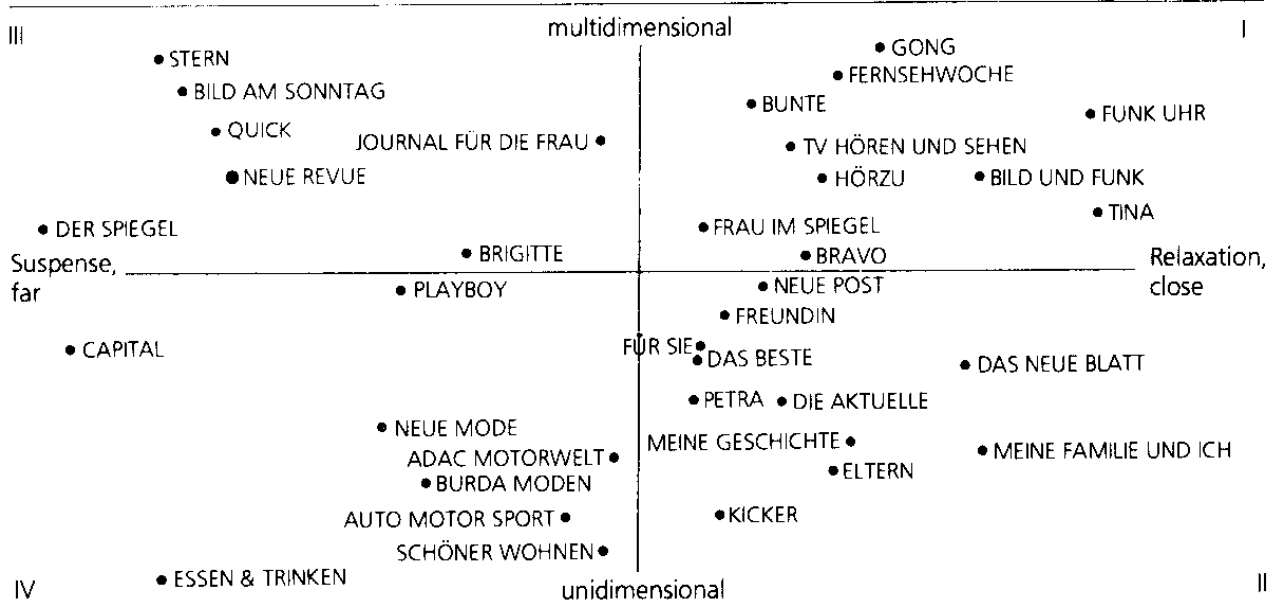
It was to be expected that, in positioning the magazines as perceived by the readers, different conceptual trends would show, and also that those which come into the same category would be plotted close to each other. These expectations would appear to have been fulfilled at first sight to anybody familiar with the German magazine market. The TV/radio programme magazines lie fairly closely together in Quadrant I, while in Quadrant II there are the illustrated magazines. *Bunte* is an exception because, despite its role as an illustrated, its broader range places it nearer the programme papers. It is also of interest that *Bild am Sonntag*, one of the two German national Sunday newspapers, is positioned exactly between the illustrateds and the programme magazines, despite its different appearance and publication day. The different offerings of the women's magazines ensure that they are spread over all quadrants. Even the four so-called 'classic' women's magazines are not in the same quadrant.

Each of the four quadrants can be taken as representing a particular 'climatic atmosphere', a special matching of mind with matter. The next stage seeks to explore this factor as an influence on the loyalty towards a magazine, and to bring this to light.

Our sixth objective was "What is the effect of this positioning, by matching mind with matter, on the reader loyalty and the reading/noting intensity with regard to the magazines?"

This question was investigated with the aid of, among other things, the Affinity Index produced by Gruner+Jahr on the use of and attitudes towards

FIGURE 5





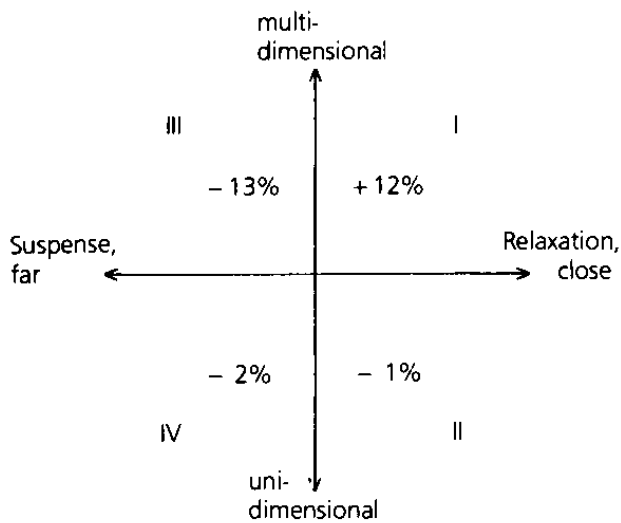
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magazines. The statements in this work define how intensively the magazines are read and how close is the bond between journal and reader for the individual titles. Data on reading frequency bring the picture into sharper focus. For each statement the four quadrants were taken separately. A value was calculated for each quadrant — as an average value for all the magazines lying within the quadrant (see **Figure 6**).

**FIGURE 6**

**Statement 1: "This magazine has never disappointed me"**

Average agreement 52% (Index = 100)



This statement of loyalty is a good reflection of the measure of agreement between the choice of subjects offered by the magazines and the subjective attitude of the reader. Those magazines which offer a broad range but, nevertheless, remain in tune with the emotional world of the readership and the readers' lives, seldom disappoint them. Facing them are the other multidimensional magazines which have the function of stimulating and arousing their readers, confronting them with other aspects of the world.

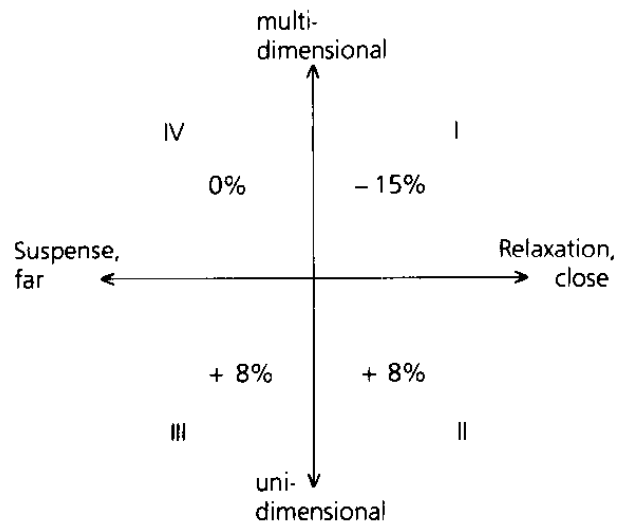
Disappointment notwithstanding, as **Figure 7** shows, the readers of those stimulating and controversial magazines are not prepared to give up reading those journals featuring multidimensional subjects. This seems to be the case with the monothematic magazines, the editorial contents making no difference. As a reason, the question of boredom comes through the thematic ghetto.

The most positive response, even on the statement

**FIGURE 7**

**Statement 2: "I could easily do without this magazine"**

Average agreement 40% (Index = 100)



concerning regularity of readership (**Figure 8**) again related to the titles in Quadrant I — relaxation and multidimensional character. It is no surprise to learn that the intensity of the bond between a magazine and its readers is always particularly strong if this title can lay valid claim to a large number of regular readers. Those multidimensional publications, geared to relaxation and with a relaxed approach, have an above average share of core readers.

Titles which have a relatively narrow orientation, concentrating on fewer subjects, are read sporadically and bought more on impulse; their share of regular readers lies below the average.

The proportion of readers who always read the latest issue (**Figure 9**) is particularly high for those journals with a relaxed treatment of a wide variety of topics. On the other hand, readers of monothematic titles are often content with older back numbers.

The reading/noting intensity (**Figure 10**) is more comprehensive for those journals which put themselves as closely as possible to the life styles of their readers, by their editorial philosophy. Where the editorial balance and mix does not necessarily correspond with the emotional needs of their readers one can expect that not all the articles will be read.

The further criteria which come into play for determining the attitude of the reader and the use of the magazines do not come within the framework of this presentation. They can be seen, however, in the full

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German report. All these criteria show that editorial policy clearly influences readers' attitudes. One can only surmise on the reason for the intermediate process in the exercise of this influence. We call it Matching Mind with Matter.

The positioning of the magazine in the emotional world of the readership is critical to determine the mood a journal generates, to establish how the publication is used by its reader, and to gauge the reading/noting intensity.

The new method of this study overcomes the difficulties of establishing the position of the magazines, by having their readers describe them directly through pictures, instead of describing through abstract conceptions of polarity profiles. The study reveals the emotional significance of these pictures and gives us two axes to plot the various titles:

**Axis 1:** Emotional gap, controversy, outside the readers' world versus emotional affinity, relaxation, close to the readers' world.

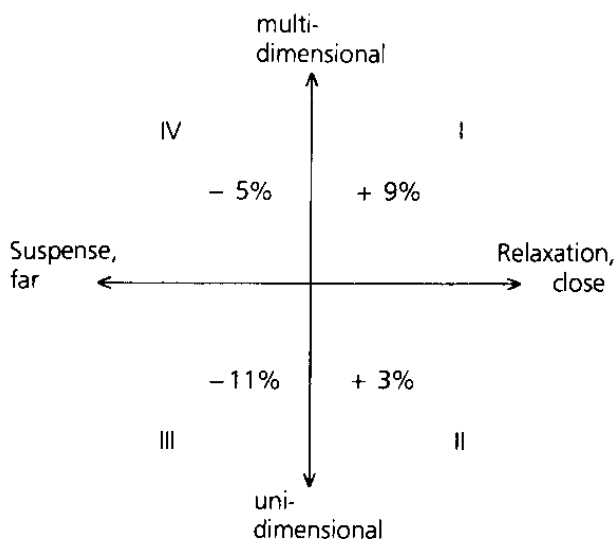
**Axis 2:** Variety of subject matter offered by the editorial, versus unidimensional editorial product.

Each magazine was plotted according to these two axes. A particularly good aura for the magazine, and therewith the bond between the reader and the journal, was attributable for those in the zone defined by a high

**FIGURE 8**

**Statement 3: "Regular reading"**

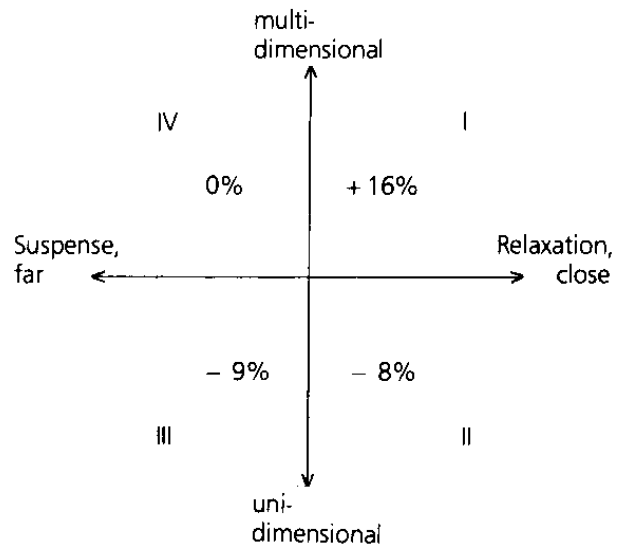
Average share of core readers: 57% (Index = 100)



**FIGURE 9**

**Statement 4: "Issue date — always read the latest issue"**

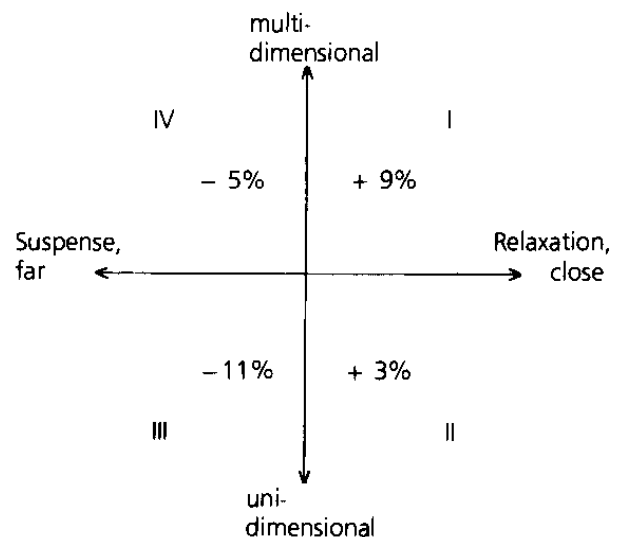
Average readership share 76% (Index = 100)



**FIGURE 10**

**Statement 5: "In this magazine I normally read all the articles"**

Average agreement 57% (Index = 100)



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level of emotional affinity, relaxation function, close to the readers' world; and by a wide variety of subject matter offered in the product.

This concept of the affinity to the emotional world of the readers leads to elimination of the creation of controversy and tension in the reader through articles dealing with those matters outside his daily life.

The other world represents the unusual, the unknown and also the area of unexplained dangers, catastrophe, crime, tragedy, and sensationalism.

Contrarily, affinity to the emotional world of the reader means that the magazine concentrates on matters close to the heart, subjects with which the reader can identify, leading to consensus, harmony and entertainment.

It was a particular surprise to discover that in the

matter of subject variety, the TV/radio programme magazines in Germany in no way lie behind the illustrated magazines, as perceived by the readers. This surprising variety in their content has for many years not been recognised. This new positioning shows that these programme-orientated publications have put themselves closer to their readers' circumstances — with a lack of interest in the big show stars.

We can now say that the TV/radio programme magazines have to be considered in the same context as the illustrated magazines — not indeed as 'classic' illustrateds, with exotic spreads, but as publications which portray the real world of the readership. That is not particularly exciting — but it is enormously important for the reader and for Matching Mind with Matter.