

AUDIPRESS 2000 – THE NEW DEAL OF THE ITALIAN READERSHIP SURVEY

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1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past ten years, the Italian media press market has been effected by three important facts :

- changes in publications offered
- new demands from readers
- people have started to move from the city to the country.

The most important changes concern:

- the turnover of titles, especially for monthlies
- selling promotions that include combined offerings of titles
- the publishers change of focus to local news , mainly for newspapers.

2. OBJECTIVES

In this environment, the readership research is expected to furnish more frequent and up-to-date data to the users of readership data (e.g. media planners) and more efficient information for optimal publication planning.

From the publishers' point of view, it's interesting to emphasise the specificity of readers' targets and the strength of the relationship between the media press and the readers of media press , resulting in high appreciation of the information provided .

3. HISTORY

The most recent history of the Italian national media press surveys is based on the following stages:

1990-1997 paper questionnaire, personal interviews including reading questions not equally detailed for all categories (weak and strong reading questions rotated for the different title categories), moving average yearly reporting, based on merged data files

1997-1999 paper questionnaire , personal interviews with strong reading questions for all title categories, separate reporting for each wave (seasonal results) , based on original data from questionnaires.

4. PROBLEMS

The biggest problem was the **sample**.

Audipress had a sample of 44,000 interviews per year. These interviews were divided into two periods. The first 22,000 interviews were done in Autumn (12 weeks from October to December 20th). The second 22,000 interviews were done in Spring (12 weeks from February to April).

This distribution of the sample was intended to measure the seasonality of readership. This distribution of the sample was intended to measure the seasonality of readership. In Italy, people read more during the Autumn months than they do in Spring.

Graph A demonstrates that the interviews done were not distributed equally. In the planning stage we planned to conduct 1,833 interviews per week. In reality the graph shows that the interviews done were distributed unevenly, with a peak in 9th and 10th weeks.

In addition, **Graph B** reflects that, depending on the day of the week, the distribution of interviews fluctuated from a peak on Wednesdays to a large drop on Sundays.

Moreover, the sample of 22,000 individuals was distributed, proportionately, into 18,000 individuals, reflecting the Italian population. The remaining 4,000 were used to reinforce the major cities of Milan, Turin, Rome, Naples, etc. This sample distribution created a distortion in readership results (see introduction).

Graph C shows that the Rome sample doesn't reflect the correct proportion of population. In fact the sampling points represented on **Graph C** correspond to 1053 interviews instead of 825 interviews, corresponding to the correct proportion of the universal sample of Rome; this demonstrates a similar distortion of the readership results.

Other problems found in recent years were mainly in the following areas:

- a) the **questionnaire** took too much time (on the average it took more than 40 minutes with peaks of 1 and a half hours)
- b) there was an increase in the **drop of interviews**, apparently linked to the time required by the interview; drops have high concentrations in big cities (a recent analysis shows a 84% rate of substitution for ordinary addresses in some large cities); **Table D** shows the different drops of interviews, depending on geography and town size.
- c) the users of readership data asked for **more frequent reporting** of readership figures, guaranteeing the reliability of the results through a sample size comparable with the previous one.

Taking into account the above problems, the proposed solution focuses on these points:

1. A better distribution of the sample.
2. Reducing the length of the questionnaire.
3. Decreasing the number of "drops".
4. More frequent reporting.

5. NEW DEAL

At the end of a long decision process, the Audipress Technical Committee, following indications in the market, decided to launch the New Deal, adopting two main solutions:

- ❖ CAPI interviews
- ❖ Two visits: one for newspapers, newspaper supplements and weeklies one for monthlies

both category groups described above are rotated within the questionnaire.

6. SURVEY STRUCTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

SAMPLE SIZE

The internal structure of the sample can be summarised as follows:

Total sample:	40,500 interviews per year
Wave samples:	13,500 interviews per wave
Wave No. :	3 per year, spread over 12 weeks (for a grand total of 36 weeks)
Samples per week:	1,125 interviews

6.1 SAMPLE DESIGN

The sample is based on a geo-demographic stratification scheme.

All provinces are sub-stratified by town size.

Special provinces for disproportional sampling required by the presence of local newspapers.

6.2 REFERENCE UNIVERSE

The survey will give figures concerning readership of the Italian adult population aged 14 years and over.

6.3 QUESTIONNAIRE

The main sections included in the questionnaire are the following:

⇒Readership section

- Title categories : dailies , daily supplements, weeklies, monthlies
- frequency
- recency
- quality of reading (how many times , how many pages)

⇒Other media interests

Radio, TV, Cinema ,Internet

⇒Relationship between reader and his “main” title

autonomy , dependence, emotionality, rationality

⇒Life Styles

Eurisko, CCA International

⇒Main socio- demographics

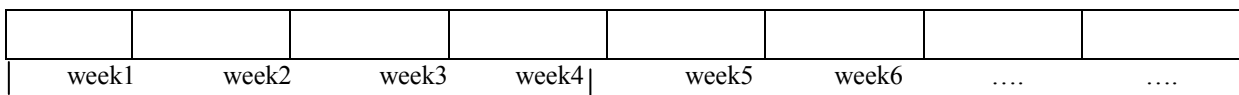
traditional
new definition of the person responsible for buying in the family.

7. EXPECTED IMPROVEMENTS

- Obviously the questionnaire length, for each interviewing session, decreases because the questionnaire is split into two visits.
- We expect to reduce the number of drops because time spent for each visit is actually less than the old visits and the second visit will be planned in the week following the first visit, according to the interviewee’s needs.
- With this new methodology, after the first year, every month it will be possible to report results based on moving average data . In fact more flexibility is offered by the new management of the survey because :
 - the survey runs over time without interruption
 - the questionnaires’ data files flow is continuous
 - the universe representation is guaranteed by internal representative sub-samples appropriately allocated over the survey’s time plan.

SCHEME E

1125 interviews per week



1 conventional month

=

representative sample

The above scheme seems to optimize the sample distribution over time respecting the minimal number of weekly interviews which will obviously increase step-by-step (compare the scheme with **Graph A**).

For the moment the total survey covers 36 weeks , excluding the month of August and Christmas and Easter periods.

8. WHERE WE ARE TODAY

Maybe someone, somewhere in Italy is working for the new survey !

The fieldwork will start in November 1999 and we will publish preliminary results in May / June 2000 , based on a two-wave sample of 27,000 interviews. The official publication of the results will take place in September / October 2000, based on a three-wave sample of 40,500 interviews.

The fieldwork will be carried out by Demoskopea, Infratest Burke and Ipsos Explorer.

The sample design procedure was developed by Alís, Demoskopea, Infratest Burke and Ipsos Explorer

The data processing will be done by Alís.

While we expect to check / verify the future results of the first analyses which should solve the three problems mentioned at section 4, we can give a quick overview of the general rules of the sample design.

We plan to use :

- 36,000 interviews for proportional sampling
- 4,500 interviews for achieving the minimal sample size believed to be suitable for reading results at the provincial level, applying three combined criteria (inside the city, outside the city, in provinces with local newspapers) .

The following scheme (**Scheme F**) shows the results of applying previous rules.

SCHEME F

	RESULTS OF DISPROPORTIONAL SAMPLING		
Rules ⇒	“inside the city”	“outside the city”	“provincial newspapers”
Interviews	28%	44%	28%