THE POWER OF PASSION - NEW INSIGHTS INTO READER INVOLVEMENT

Hemant Mehta, Bruce Gonsalves, V. Balasubramanium, Sunder Muthuraman, IMRB

Background

'Circulation and Average Issue Readership have been used as the fundamental currencies of Print research for the past Fifty years. These statistics are easily understood and provide a logical basis on which to set advertisement rates. They can however, provide only partial assistance in the effective deployment of advertising budgets. Whilst the research we have provides a very reasonable currency for buying and selling of space, it provides little information to assist a media planner in helping his clients to sell their products.' (Phil Gullen, Admap, 1988).

As in most parts of the world, Average Issue Readership (A.I.R.) is the currency used by the advertising fraternity in India, to measure the readership of print vehicles. AIR, as per its definition, measures the number of people who have read the publication within the issue period. The implicit assumptions behind this concept are:

- Probability of exposure to a publication is equal to probability of being exposed to page/article/ advertisement
- Higher the AIR higher is the visibility or noticeability of the ad

But these assumptions need not necessarily hold true. The Starch Method of Reading & Noting and other studies provide sufficient evidence that the noticeability and recall of a page/article/ad is not only a function of AIR but also depends on a host of other factors which determine the attentiveness (involvement) or *"Passion"* with which the publication is read.

The large scale readership surveys in India, such as the National Readership Survey (NRS) give measures on AIR, the frequency and intensity of reading and Magazine Page Exposure (MPX) for publications and so on. The studies do not capture information on the other factors, which affect readership behaviour.

Hence the need of the hour was to:
1. Develop a measure of **"Passion"** which indicates the reader's attentiveness or involvement with the publication
2. Ensure robustness of the **"Passion Index"** by validating it against some independent variable like Starch Reading & Noting scores
3. Work out the relationship between the **"Passion Index"** and Advertising Impact

In sum, the objective was to make the AIR more sensitive by combining it with a new measure that talks about attentiveness while reading and thus generate an **Effective AIR**. It is with this idea, WPP MCI's Advanced Techniques Group approached the Media & Panel Group of IMRB International to design a research program to study the world beyond AIR.

The IMRB Approach

The research process was conceptualised to happen in 3 stages:
- Developing of a tool (The Passion Index Tool)
- Testing of the tool
- Validation of the tool

The Research Methodology adopted to answer the above issues was a multi-stage approach with one stage feeding into the next. The four distinct stages were as follows

Phase 1: Exploratory Desk Research
Phase 2: Exploratory Qualitative Module
Phase 3: Large Scale Quantitative Module
Phase 4: Advertising Impact Module (Quantitative)

Phase 1: Desk Research

This phase was incorporated into the research process, as this was the first study of its kind in this country. As, we had no experience / learning to fall back on, a review of the existing literature on the topic was undertaken.

This global review indicated that there were other factors, which do affect reading behaviour (which ultimately affect recall of editorial/advertising). Some of the factors that affect 'Attentiveness' with which a publication is read are Buying Behaviour, Consumption Behaviour, Reading Environment, the sync between the reader's and the publication's 'think', affiliation and bonding and so on.

In this phase we also mined the information from large scale databases such as Target Group Index (TGI) to obtain insights into factors (other than demographics e.x culture, language, psychographics and so on) which affect 'Attentiveness' with which a publication is read.

Thus the aim of this phase of the research methodology provided us with
- Reader's attitudes, behaviour & perceptions to the print medium and advertising
- Differences in psychographics(attitudes etc.) which affect choice of publication
- Impact of regional/cultural/language variations on choice of publication

Cues from this module were incorporated as inputs in the subsequent Qualitative and Quantitative (sampling) phases.

Phase 2: Exploratory Qualitative Module

The next step in the research process was to identify all the facets and dimensions which impact greater or lesser attentiveness. These parameters were both **Behavioural** (actual behaviour, body language while reading indicating more or less attention) and **Mental** (varying levels of involvement and attentiveness while reading).

Once the parameters were identified, it was necessary to develop the list of words and phrases which consumers used to reflect the behavioural and mental dimensions of attentitiveness

The method therefore adopted to obtain this kind of data was a combination of household observations and depth interviews.

Thus, the aim of this phase was
- Generate the behavioral, mental and attitudinal parameters which demonstrate the degree of attentiveness while reading
- Generate consumer speak : scales for the parameters

Cues from this module were incorporated as inputs in the subsequent Quantitative phase.

Stage 3: Large Scale Quantitative Module

Six variables that affected 'Attentiveness' to reading were identified at the end of the above two stages. They were **Buying Behaviour, Page Exposure, Attachment/Bonding, Image, Environment and Affinity with Advertising.** The next step in the research process was to employ the findings of the earlier phases to develop a model, which would compute the *"Passion Index".*

Thus, the main objectives of this stage of the research study were to
- Quantify the findings of the qualitative research
- Compute the individual indices for each parameter;
- Establish weights to each of the parameters depending on how much they influence the attentiveness of reading
- Derive a composite score (of the individual parameters) to indicate the quality of reading of a publication
- Generate Effective AIR scores of a selected set of titles
- Demonstrate the relationship between the Effective AIR and Advertising Impact

The Markets

Inorder to develop and test the efficacy of the model, a pilot phase of 100 interviews was conducted in Delhi. The rationale for the selection of this market was that it is one of the key markets for advertisers. Also, Delhi is the heartland of the Hindi-speaking belt in India (the largest zone) and thus findings from this market would provide key insights for the region.

The Publications

The scope of the study included both Newspapers and Magazines. Six Newspapers and eight Magazines were selected as the test publications on two criteria - AIR estimates and revenue from advertising.

The Target Group

The study was restricted to respondents from the two upper socio economic classes viz., SEC A & B segments for two reasons

- most of the advertising is directed at the upper socio economic classes, and
- literacy levels fall as we move down the socio economic spectrum

As, the objective of the study was to analyse the readership behaviour of respondents who read the publications being studied, it was imperative to interview readers of the publication. Therefore the study was restricted to respondents who had read the current or previous issue of the listed publications. In order to ensure this criterion, the respondent who claimed to have read the current / previous issue, had to recall at least one article / advertisement from that issue of the publication, correctly.

Hence, the broad Respondent profile was:
- Literate Adults who are 15+ years of age
- Belonging to SEC A & B households only and are
- Readers of the current / previous issue of one of the publications being studied (and recalls an ad / article correctly)

Sample Selection

The city was divided into blocks and, areas that were predominantly SEC A or B were identified and selected. In each area selected, starting points were identified. Around each starting point, five households were contacted using the Right Hand Rule. In each household a single respondent was interviewed based on the sample requirements

The Interview

The interview was conducted as a 'Face to Face Personal interview using a structured questionnaire. The Information areas covered were split into segments, thus structuring the Quantitative stage into a multi segment data collection module.

Screening Interview

This phase covered the basic classification criteria - Demographics and Readership of publications (normally read, read current / previous issue)

Thus the respondent was selected on the basis of demographic profile (Age, Gender and SEC) and reading behaviour.

Main Interview

The questionnaire for this phase was based on the inputs from the Qualitative and Desk research stages. The information areas that were covered in this phase were:

- Buying Process in terms of source of copy, loyalty, regularity and so on
- Reading Environment in terms of 'noise' levels, attitudes to noise etc.
- Attachment, Affinity, Affiliation and Bonding with the Publication
- Reasons for reading the publication
- Image of the Publication

The correlation to determine the factors affecting the "attentiveness" of reading was based on the information obtained from this phase.

Lifestyle & Attitude Interview

This phase covered the information areas like   - Slice-of-life routine, attitude towards society in general and media in particular, lifestyle in terms of eating out, partying, etc.

The mapping of the reader's lifestyle and a picture of his/her mental make-up was obtained from this phase.

Dimensions of a Variable

The earlier phases indicated that the six variables identified to compute the Passion Index, were in effect the sum totals of individual components. For instance, buying behaviour could be measured as a sum total of
- whether the respondent bought the publication or borrowed it
- was it a 'one-off' interaction with the publication or he / she reads most of the issues
- how frequently did he / she pick up other publications to get the same kind of information, and
- whether he / she believes that the publication belongs primarily to himself / herself and not someone else.

The next step in the developing process was to define the components that comprised each variable. Given below are the components on which the six variables are developed

The Buying Behaviour	**Page Exposure Measures**
» Source of copy » Regularity of reading » Loyalty to the publication » Active / passive purchase of title	» Quantity of publication already read » Time spent reading » Issue pick up » Place of reading
Attachment / Bonding / Affiliation	**Environment**

» Publication ratings on various aspects such as
 	
   layout, writing style, credibility
 	
» Anticipation value
 	
» Satisfaction levels
 	
» Saving / future reference
 	
» Participation / contact with publication
	» External disturbances while reading such as
	
	   telephones, doorbell ringing etc
	
	» Distractions while reading such as talking, eating…
	
	» Reactions to them

Affinity with advertising	**Image of the publication**

» Recall of advertising
 	
» Impact on purchase
 	
» Loyalty to the advertising
	» Bipolar ratings on various attributes for e.x.
	
	   − Conservative / modern
	
	   − Captivating / Boring

Table 1. The Six Variables

The Passion Index

In a nutshell, the Passion score for each publication was calculated by
- assigning scores to each component of each variable
- adding the scores of each component to arrive at the final score for each variable
- indexing the scores for each variable
- computing a weighted average of the scores for each variable

A detailed explanation of the above procedure along with an example is given in the Appendix **The Findings.**

To reiterate, our key focus area in this study was to develop a measure of **"Passion"** which indicates the reader's attentiveness or involvement with the publication.

For the six newspapers that were included in the scope of this study, the Passion Indices computed were as follows:

Table 2. Passion Scores for the Newspapers

	Passion	Buying Behaviour	Page exposure	Attachment	Image	Environment	Affinity
Weights		0.15	0.14	0.13	0.12	0.1	0.35
Newspaper A	70	65	63	79	85	78	67
Newspaper B	71	72	66	77	76	75	70
Newspaper C	54	79	63	74	90	79	15
Newspaper D	52	71	58	68	86	73	19
Newspaper E	53	72	55	77	88	69	20
Newspaper F	60	78	65	74	81	69	38

Similarly the Passion Indices for the eight magazines that were included in the scope of this study, were as follows:

	Passion	Buying Behaviour	Page exposure	Attachment	Image	Environment	Affinity
Weights		0.15	0.14	0.13	0.12	0.1	0.35
Magazine G	51	50	67	82	88	75	17
Magazine H	60	70	57	82	93	76	33
Magazine I	72	69	73	75	88	78	67
Magazine J	61	74	61	82	89	72	36
Magazine K	52	66	51	77	90	72	21
Magazine L	71	81	70	78	94	70	58
Magazine M	47	65	49	77	88	77	6
Magazine N	53	78	67	82	88	78	8

Table 3. Passion Scores for the Magazines

The Issues

Computing the passion score was one task. Post this, certain questions that arose were
- Does the Passion score provide the industry with an additional parameter (besides AIRs) for their vehicle selection process?
- Do we need all the six variables? In other words are they correlated?
- Do we require a composite score for computing each of the six variables?

To analyse the first question, a comparison was conducted between the AIR's of the publications included in the study along with their corresponding Passion scores

Rank	Dailies	AIR figures(%)
1	Newspaper C	30
2	Newspaper F	25
3	Newspaper D	25
4	Newspaper E	17
5	Newspaper B	10
6	Newspaper A	9

Rank	Dailies	Passion Scores
1	Newspaper B	71
2	Newspaper A	70
3	Newspaper F	60
4	Newspaper C	54
5	Newspaper E	53
6	Newspaper D	52

Table 4. Comparison of AIRs and Passion Scores

As can be seen from the above tables, the ranking of the publications across the two measures was different. For example, Newspaper B, ranks fifth in the Delhi market in terms of AIRs, but first in terms of Passion score. This indicates that though fewer people are reading it, the involvement of its readers with the publication is much higher.

In the case of magazines, a similar situation is observed

Rank	Magazines	AIR figures(%)	Rank	Magazines	Passion Score
1	Magazine J	17	1	Magazine I	72
2	Magazine K	16	2	Magazine L	74
3	Magazine H	9	3	Magazine J	61
4	Magazine H	8	4	Magazine H	60
5	Magazine L	7	5	Magazine N	53
6	Magazine I	6	6	Magazine G	51
6	Magazine M	6	7	Magazine K	52
6	Magazine N	6	8	Magazine M	47

Table 5. Comparison of AIRs and Passion Scores

Magazine I, ranks sixth in terms of AIRs but tops the list in terms of the Passion scores. This title therefore has a lesser reader base, but can claim a higher reader involvement / attentiveness – 'Quality Reading'.

This indicated that the Passion scores captured certain dimensions of reading behaviour that were unaccounted for in the AIR estimates. This proved one point – The Passion Index could provide the industry with another parameter in the selection of Print vehicles.

To answer the second question, a correlation exercise was conducted between these variables to investigate their interrelationship

The table below gives the correlation between the parameters

RSQ Values	Page Exp	Attachment	Image	Environment	Affinity to Ads
Buying Behvr.	0.08	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.02
Page Exp	-	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02
Attachment	-	-	0.15	0.00	0.00
Image	-	-	-	0.01	0.11
Environment	-	-	-	-	0.00

Table 6. Regression values across the 6 variables

As can be seen from the above table, there is virtually no relationship between any pair of variables. Hence we can assume that the variables are independent and required.

The next question to be answered was 'Should each variable be computed as a composite score, involving multiple components?'

Presented below are the findings for the Buying Behaviour indices of four newspapers that were studied:

The Buying Behaviour scores:
Newspaper D – 71
Newspaper A – 65
Newspaper C – 79
Newspaper F – 78

In the table below, the scores of two components of the Buying Behaviour variable for the 4 newspapers are presented

Regularity of Reading				
No. of issues	D	A	C	F
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
1-2(Score -1)	8	-	-	-
3-5(Score 0)	-	10	-	-
6-7 (Score 1)	92	90	100	100
Source of copy				
	D	A	C	F
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
OWNED(Score 1)	83	50	100	100
NOT OWNED(Score -1)	17	50	-	-

Table 7.1. Components score comparison (Buying Behaviour)

Newspapers C and F have a higher Buying Behaviour index, depicting higher bonding with a reader as compared to Newspapers A & D. For the two components Regularity (i.e. the number of issues read…) and Source of copy (i.e. Owned copy Vs Not owned copy) it can be observed that the scores depict a similar picture. There is a positive correspondence between the Regularity of Reading and Ownership of Title. Reading higher number of copies would mean a higher bonding with the publication, so also ownership would indicate higher affiliation with the title. For both the newspapers C & F scores are higher for Regularity & source as compared to the other two titles.

The Environment scores:
Newspaper C – 79
Newspaper F – 69

In the table below we have studied the scores of two components of the Environment variable for the 2 newspapers,

Was TV switched on while reading		
	C	F
	%	%
Yes, I recall having myself switched on the TV (Score -1)	-	20
No, I recall not having switched on the TV myself (Score 1)	90	50
Yes, the TV was switched on but I had not switched it on (Score 0)	10	30
Other Activities		
Activities performed while reading		
	C	F
Listening to music on a music system, walkman etc.(Score -1)	10	10
Listening to the radio (Score -1)	10	20
Eating meals /snacks (Score 0)	-	20
Supervising maids/servants/children (Score -1)	-	20
Preparing meals/tea/coffee/snacks (Score -1)	-	-
Drinking tea/coffee/soft drinks etc. (Score 0)	80	70
Attending to sales representatives/plumber /electrician (Score -1)	-	-

Table 7.2. Components score comparison (Environment)

Newspaper C has a higher Index for this variable as compared to Newspaper F. This reflects a higher bonding with the title. For the two components TV switching on (i.e. whether the TV was switched on by the reader) and Activities performed while reading (i.e. Listening to music, eating, etc) we observe that the scores depict a similar picture. Newspaper F shows higher number of people who switch on TV while reading, this indicates lesser attachment with the title. The same picture is repeated in terms of the 'Activities performed while reading'. Newspaper F readers indulge in more activities while reading e.g. Listening to radio, supervising maid / servants / children.

Thus, we see that each variable is comprised of various components and the effect of each component needs to be factored. Thus it is essential that each variable be expressed as a composite.

Phase 4: Advertising Impact module

In order to test the validity of the *"Passion Indices"*, a Reading and Noting study was conducted to look at actual noticeability of ads and articles among the Newspapers and Magazines.

The information areas covered in this phase provided cues on the recall of ads / editorial in terms of
- Pages / Sections / Supplements
- Size of ad
- Colour v/s Black & White
- Position (left hand page vs right hand page)

During the interview, the selected publication was given to the respondent closed.

They were then asked to identify which page was read first on the last / only pickup, then the second page and so on. Thus the order in which the pages were read was noted. For each page, the articles / advertisements read or seen were marked in blue. For each ad observed, the specific elements (copy, logo etc.) noted were also marked.

The respondent was then systematically taken through the entire publication (page by page) and asked to mark all articles / advertisements read or seen with a red pen.

Reading and Noting scores were then calculated to see which of the advertisements were noticed and recalled by the respondent.

The Reading and Noting scores were then compared with the Passion Indices computed. The validation exercise showed a one to one correspondence between the two set of scores.

Advertisements	Total ads	Noticed ads	% Noticed ads	Passion Index
Newspaper B	203	125	62	71
Newspaper A	435	115	26	70
Newspaper F	249	52	21	60
Newspaper C	230	39	17	54
Newspaper D	174	15	9	52
Newspaper E	389	32	8	53

Articles	Total articles	Noticed articles	% Noticed artcls	Passion Index
Newspaper B	1186	394	33	71
Newspaper A	1569	423	27	70
Newspaper E	1535	386	25	53
Newspaper C	1255	239	19	54
Newspaper D	1384	225	16	52
Newspaper F	1366	177	13	60

Table 8. Passion Score Vs the Reading and Noting figures

Conclusion

To conclude, it can be seen that this study, has provided the industry with:
- A score which measures Attentiveness or Passion with which a publication is read
- A score that can be used to factor the AIR to arrive at an "Effective AIR " which is a measure of reach as well as involvement/attention

There are several potential utilities that this experiment offers:
- An option to fine-tune communication by selecting vehicles which have high involvement among the particular target group.
- Holistically defining the target audiences incorporating reader behaviour parameters along with the standard demographic descriptors which can enhance the efficiency of media spends.

Next Steps

- Currently, this experiment has been conducted in one selected market. This needs to be further expanded to encompass additional markets.
- Also, the basic mix of the six variables needs to be further fine-tuned and investigated for finer measures.
- An experiment to calculate relative Passion indices for different ad specifications i.e. Right Hand, Color / B&W, quarter page etc. needs to be undertaken.

Efforts to integrate Passion into the planning process are being made by,
- Computing an Ideal / Minimum Passion Threshhold
- Computing weighted Passion AIRs for the plan

Appendix 1.

The Passion mechanism

Each component was expressed in the questionnaire in the form of questions with various alternatives or statements with bipolar scales (as the qualitative module showed that bipolar scales were easier for the respondent to answer).

Scores were then assigned to each alternative. For instance, for the "Active passive purchase of the publication" component of the Buying Behaviour variable, the alternatives and the scores were as follows:

Alternative / Response	Score
Get it free at the doorstep	-1
Get to read at beauty parlour / college / office	-1
Get a free copy while travelling	-1
Get from library / borrow from friends & relatives / family member buys a copy	0
Subscribe to it	1
Newspaper boy delivers it	1
I, myself buy it from stall	1

Table 1.1. Active passive purchase of the publication

Thus the range for scores on this component was **'+3'** to **'–3'.** The scores are give based on the level of involvement with the publication. Hence, the first three alternatives get a lower score as compared to the latter three.

Similarly, scores were computed for the source of copy, regularity of reading and loyalty to the publication. A composite score for the Buying Behavior variable was then calculated by adding the scores of each of the four components.

For ex. Let us consider the calculation of the score for the Active /Passive purchase of Publication 'A' for say, Respondent 'X". He has responded that he gets the publication in the following manner

Statements	Score
I, myself buy it from stall	+1
Get a free copy while travelling	-1
Get to read at beauty parlour/office/College	-1
Total	**-1**

Table 1.2. Active passive purchase of the publication

Hence, Respondent X on this component gets a score of –1 on this component

Similar Calculation for Source of copy, Loyalty to Publication, and Regularity of Reading.
Add the scores of Active Passive purchase of Publication, Loyalty, Source & Regularity to obtain a score for Buying Behaviour (say +4).

The score for this variable were then converted into an Index on a scale of 0 – 100. For instance, as the Buying Behaviour scores range between +8 to – 8. This is equated to 0 to 100. Thus a score of +4 becomes 75.

Similarly scores were calculated for each of the six variables that constitute the Attentiveness of Reading.

The final score for each publication 'Passion Index', was then computed by averaging the Indexed score for each of the six parameters.

For example:

Variable	Index
Buying Behaviour	75
Page Exposure Measures	73
Attachment / Bonding / Affiliation	64
Image	75
Environment	80
Affinity with advertising	17
Passion Score	**64**

Table 1.3. Computing Passion Score

To arrive at the relative importance of each of the six variables, a regression analysis was conducted with Intermediate Passion Score as a dependent and the other six parameters as independents. The corresponding Beta Co-efficients were then normalised to arrive at the weights for each parameter. The weights were then applied to each of the six parameters to arrive at the final Passion Index.

REFERENCES

PIET NELISSEN and JOLANDA VAN KESTEREN. "Quality, so what?'.

JENNIE BECK. 'How to define 'quality of reading''.

PHIL GULLEN. 'Women beyond 'AIR''.

JOHN FASSE. 'Taking things in – evaluating print media in terms of reader's styles of 'information processing''.