

7.10 Life styles of American women and their relationship to magazine reading

INTRODUCTION

In the United States, increasing attention is being paid to life style analysis as a better way than demographics to understand the audience and appeals of different magazines. The impetus for this development has been twofold.

Advertising agencies need as much data as possible to direct their efforts against the most suitable target markets. Magazines, for their part, need to distinguish themselves from competitors in meaningful, and measurable ways.

Some of the custom research houses recently have developed their own approaches to life style analysis and one in particular — known by the acronym, VALS (Values and Life Style) — is being incorporated into syndicated magazine audience measurements.

This paper will present the results of the first life style analysis study conducted, to the best of my knowledge, by any American magazine.

OBJECTIVES

This *Family Circle* Life Style Study was undertaken with the objective of providing information to help develop long-term editorial and marketing strategy, based on a new and different audience categorization — one which would allow for the analysis of women/readers in terms of their interests and attitudes towards life and society; their Life Style, rather than by their demographics.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted for *Family Circle* by Market Opinion Research. A national, random probability sample of some 1,800 women completed interviews by telephone. Four percent of all women were excluded, on the basis that they had neither looked through or read a magazine, nor had they looked through or read a book during the two months preceding the telephone contact; they were deemed functional illiterates.

There were three basic areas of measurement in the study:

(1) The leisure activities in which the sample was engaged; there were 29 of these activities.

(2) The interests of the sample in different types of magazine content; there were 18 of these different topic areas.

(3) The attitudes of the sample towards the role of women in today's society and their perception of that role; there were 13 of these attitudinal questions.

Demographic data also were collected. Extensive factor and cluster analyses were employed.

The 29 leisure activities were statistically summarized into seven groups (**Table 1**). Each set of groupings has been labelled to reflect the trends of activities in the group.

TABLE 1
Leisure activities groups

Type of Person	Percent of US Women
Crafts Person	30.0
Young Sports/Dating	33.6
Cultural Pleasures	33.0
TV Buff	35.8
Outdoor Weekends	30.2
Volunteer	36.7
Pride in Home	31.5

The 18 magazine contents topics were statistically summarized into five groups (**Table 2**). These groups also have been labelled to reflect the interests in the editorial areas.

TABLE 2
Magazine contents interests groups

Type of Person	Percent of US Women
Working Mother	35.3
Practical Cooking and Crafts	35.5
Keeping Healthy and Fit	34.8
Hostess	33.6
Fashion Conscious for Self and Home	34.5

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The responses to the 13 attitudinal questions were combined statistically with the Leisure Activities groupings and the Magazine Contents Interests groupings, resulting in nine Life Style Clusters (**Table 3**).

TABLE 3
Life style clusters

	<i>Percent of US Women</i>
Energetics	17.8
Church, Tradition and Apple Pie	16.0
Mrs. Average	15.6
Office and School-Based Youngers	11.6
Upscale Actives	10.4
Dynamic Young Readers	10.3
Older Traditionalists	9.9
Non-reading Passives	5.6
Retired Retrospectives	1.9

FINDINGS

Attitudes orientation and characteristics

As noted above, the nine life style clusters were developed by combining statistically the leisure activities groupings of the sample, their magazine contents interests, and their attitudes towards their lives and the society in which they live. There is a definite skew towards the liberal (**Table 4**).

TABLE 4
Sociological values positioning distribution

Traditional	26%
Middle-of-the-Road	26%
Liberal; Women's Movement Oriented	48%

Several of the measures of women's attitudes towards their lives were first used by the supplier in 1975.

At that point, the distribution among the three groups was analyzed as normal, and it is that base that has been used as the criterion in evaluating the findings of the current study. The obvious conclusion is that since 1975 there has been a definite movement towards the liberal. The implications, of course, for magazines is that the editorial should presumably show a similar trend if a

magazine is to retain its appeal.

Each life style cluster has its own distinctive characteristics which set it apart from the others. They are shown here, with their corresponding US totals.

Energetics (17.8%) — young marrieds; children at home; work, but are not career oriented; see their lives as better and getting better.

Church, Tradition and Apple Pie (16.0%) — religion very important; largest percentage of full-time homemakers; spread across all age groups; tend toward rural areas and small towns.

Mrs. Average (15.6%) — average in almost all measures. Middle in terms of attitudes.

Office and School-Based Youngers (11.6%) — younger and single; many are students; very liberal in attitudes.

Upscale Actives (10.3%) — higher household incomes; well-educated; highest social class; highest level of full-time employment; career oriented.

Dynamic Young Readers (10.3%) — heavy readers; active; young; about half are married; two-thirds work; children at home.

Older Traditionalist (9.9%) — very conservative; older; tend towards crafts, church, hobbies.

Non-Reading Passives (4.6%) — older; inactive; relatively low social class; television-oriented; few work;

Retired Retrospectives (1.9%) — older; inactive; one-third are widows.

Demographic benchmarks

The sample overall can best be described as being between 35 and 44 years of age (median age is 37.5), married, and living in their own one-family dwelling. Most are employed, with a median household income of \$24,000.

The discriminating demographic characteristics are household income, age, marital status, and employment status.

The Upscale Actives cluster has the highest household income (\$37,000), followed by Mrs. Average (\$30,000), the Energetics (\$27,000), Office and School-Based Youngers (\$25,000), Older Traditionalists (\$24,000), and Dynamic Young Readers (\$20,000). The remaining three clusters have a median household income of less than \$20,000.

Non-Reading Passives, Retired Retrospectives, and Older Traditionalists all have a median age of 55 or older. Dynamic Young Readers and Office and School-Based Youngers are below 30, and Church, Tradition and Apple Pie is 46. The rest are close to the total sample median age of 37.5.

The Mrs. Average cluster has the most married women and the Retired Retrospectives cluster has the

TABLE 5
Life style clusters

Total family Income 1981 000's	<i>Total US Women</i> 85,980 %	<i>Upscale Actives</i> 8,910 %	<i>Energetic</i> 15,270 %	<i>Non- Reading Passives</i> 4,800 %	<i>Church, Tradition & Apple Pie</i> 13,720 %	<i>Mrs. Average</i> 13,370 %	<i>Office & School- Based Youngers</i> 9,990 %	<i>Dynamic Young Readers</i> 8,920 %	<i>Retired Retro- spectives</i> 1,650 %	<i>Older tradition- alists</i> 8,550 %
Less Than \$10,000	14.4	3.5	10.0	34.7	27.0	7.2	8.6	8.1	39.8	17.3
\$10,000 - \$14,999	11.7	6.8	9.3	14.1	19.4	7.8	12.8	15.1	7.7	10.6
\$15,000 - \$19,999	13.6	9.8	13.6	8.6	14.7	10.1	13.2	26.4	8.0	12.9
\$20,000 - \$24,999	12.2	10.6	13.5	7.7	8.7	15.8	13.6	14.6	4.8	12.5
\$25,000 - \$34,999	16.1	16.4	18.2	10.2	10.3	18.5	25.3	16.1	8.3	13.0
\$35,000 - \$49,999	9.5	21.8	12.9	3.5	2.5	12.1	7.5	6.7	4.3	6.4
\$50,000 and Over	6.4	17.3	10.5	1.9	2.8	3.9	6.1	3.6	6.6	4.4
No Answer	16.1	13.8	12.0	19.3	14.6	24.6	12.9	9.4	20.0	22.9
Median	\$20,922	\$27,286	\$24,111	\$12,005	\$14,798	\$23,978	\$23,287	\$19,188	\$10,118	\$19,130
Age of Respondents										
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
18 - 24 years	20.6	14.3	27.9	9.4	11.5	16.2	41.6	37.3	0.0	3.1
25 - 34 years	25.8	29.3	31.4	13.8	23.8	23.4	31.9	33.0	8.3	17.2
35 - 44 years	14.2	20.8	16.2	8.0	13.4	15.3	11.9	15.8	4.8	10.6
45 - 49 years	6.9	13.5	7.6	2.6	8.4	8.9	5.7	1.2	1.9	3.6
50 - 54 years	8.1	10.1	6.4	10.9	6.8	11.4	2.5	3.6	6.9	15.6
55 - 64 years	11.9	6.0	6.8	21.6	19.8	14.3	3.4	4.9	15.0	20.9
65 and older	11.7	5.5	3.7	30.7	15.6	9.8	1.6	4.2	61.2	27.9
No Answer	0.8	0.5	0.0	3.0	0.7	0.7	1.4	0.0	1.9	1.1
Median Age	37.5	38.1	32.0	57.5	45.7	41.8	27.6	28.8	66.8	54.9
Marital Status										
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Married	60.8	64.0	65.0	57.9	59.8	69.6	51.9	54.7	39.4	61.4
Single-Never Married	21.2	24.1	22.7	11.6	13.5	16.2	40.6	27.4	7.3	13.4
Single/Divorced/ Separated	9.0	6.8	9.0	9.6	11.9	6.8	6.6	14.7	12.1	6.0
Widow	8.8	4.6	3.3	20.9	14.5	7.4	0.9	3.2	41.2	18.7
No Answer	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5
Employment Status										
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Employed:	54.0	60.3	60.5	45.4	43.7	49.1	65.0	65.4	15.4	46.7
Full-Time	37.0	45.6	37.9	31.5	28.7	33.1	41.4	44.6	15.4	38.0
Part-Time	17.0	14.7	22.6	13.9	15.0	16.0	23.6	20.8	—	8.7
Not Employed Out- side Household	27.1	24.3	26.7	26.9	35.3	32.7	17.8	23.5	24.0	26.7
Retired	12.6	7.2	5.6	25.8	17.5	11.6	2.6	5.1	60.6	25.7
Student	4.1	5.6	5.2	—	1.2	3.0	12.7	3.0	—	—
Temporarily Laid Off	1.9	2.2	1.5	0.9	1.9	3.6	1.5	3.0	—	0.9
No Answer	0.3	0.4	0.5	1.0	0.4	—	0.4	—	—	—

Source: Family Circle *Life Style Study*.

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highest percentage of widows.

Four clusters have the most employed women — Office and School-Based Youngers, Dynamic Young Readers, Upscale Actives, Energetics; Retired Retrospectives have the least. (Table 5)

Differentiation by leisure activities

The seven leisure activities groupings are not mutually exclusive; some of the activities which went into these groupings appeal to different women. The most significant of these, for each leisure activities type of person, are shown here, with their corresponding US proportions.

Crafts Person (30.0%) — needlework; arts and crafts; hobbies.

Young Sports/Dating (33.6%) — movies; tennis; jogging and running; attending sporting events; listening to rock or pop music; bowling.

Cultural Pleasures (33.0%) — theatre; classical music; gourmet dining; home entertaining; volunteer civic and community activities.

TV Buff (35.8%) — watching television; reading about popular fashion.

Outdoor Weekends (30.2%) — camping; boating; country/western music; outdoor cooking; bowling.

Volunteer (36.7%) — church and related activities; civic and community activities.

Pride in Home (31.5%) — home improvement projects; interior decorating; home entertaining;

gardening; outdoor cooking.

The degree to which each life style cluster is involved with the different leisure activities is shown in Table 6.

Differentiation by magazine interests

The five magazine interests groupings also are not mutually exclusive; some of these editorial topics are of interest to different women, albeit not to the same degree to each. The characteristics of each magazine interests type of person are shown here, with their corresponding US proportions.

Working Mother (35.3%) — child care; husband/wife sharing responsibilities for home/children; saving/managing money; career strategies; making housework easier.

Practical Cooking and Crafts (35.5%) — clear, simple recipes; clear, simple craft ideas; making housework easier; health and medicine.

Keeping Healthy and Fit (34.8%) — diet and nutrition; health and medicine; career strategies; re-entering the job market.

Hostess (33.6%) — gourmet cooking; entertaining; career strategies; re-entering the job market.

Fashion Conscious for Self and Home (34.5%) — practical fashion ideas; home furnishing/decorating; making housework easier; saving/managing money; entertaining; beauty/grooming.

The degree of interest each life style cluster has in

TABLE 6
Leisure activity groups by life style clusters

	Total US Women	Upscale Actives	Energetic	Non- Reading Passives	Church, Tradition & Apple Pie	Mrs. Average	Office & School- Based Youngers	Dynamic Young Readers	Retired Retro- spectives	Older tradition- alists
000's	85,980	8,910	15,270	4,800	13,720	13,370	9,990	8,920	1,650	8,550
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Crafts Person	30.0	43.2	54.6	1.9	20.3	25.9	9.4	51.9	10.6	16.5
Young Sports/ Dating	33.6	57.6	61.5	—	5.3	21.0	36.2	77.9	—	0.9
Cultural Pleasures	33.0	72.6	62.2	1.0	8.4	30.5	9.9	60.0	10.6	4.5
TV Buff	35.8	29.1	41.0	17.5	39.8	38.2	32.7	52.6	2.9	27.5
Outdoor Weekends	30.2	54.9	56.1	0.9	7.3	21.0	19.1	64.0	—	10.6
Volunteer	36.7	46.9	53.5	11.7	29.8	42.6	11.8	58.7	8.3	22.5
Pride in Home	31.5	61.7	73.7	—	8.1	19.9	2.2	66.8	—	3.1

Source: Family Circle Life Style Study

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TABLE 7
Magazine interest groups by life style clusters

	Total US Women	Upscale Actives	Energetic	Non-Reading Passives	Church, Tradition & Apple Pie	Mrs. Average	Office & School-Based Youngers	Dynamic Young Readers	Retired Retrospectives	Older traditionalists
000's	85,980	8,910	15,270	4,800	13,720	13.370	9,990	8,920	1,650	8,550
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Working Mother	35.3	—	36.3	11.7	87.5	0.7	33.8	98.5	—	—
Practical Cooking and Crafts	35.5	0.9	41.8	24.1	90.5	8.3	13.1	90.3	—	—
Keeping Healthy and Fit	34.8	0.5	38.2	9.1	83.7	6.4	27.4	95.5	—	—
Hostess	33.6	4.2	45.0	4.5	73.0	12.1	21.8	85.8	—	—
Fashion Conscious for Self and Home	34.5	—	40.6	9.0	86.4	3.5	18.4	98.9	—	—

Source: Family Circle Life Style Study.

the different magazine interest areas is shown in **Table 7**.

Differentiation by relative appeal of magazines read and least read

Yet another way that was found to differentiate among the nine life style clusters was the amount of reading each did of different types of magazines.

Taking the seven Women's Service magazines as a whole, they appeal most to Energetics, Church, Tradition and Apple Pie, and Mrs. Average. These magazines appeal least to Retired Retrospectives, Non-Reading Passives, and Older Traditionalists. Office and School-Based Youngers, Dynamic Young Readers, and Upscale Actives fall in between these two extremes. (**Table 8**)

These data are essentially what would be expected of each cluster, given their leisure activities and magazine contents interests, and their attitudinal characteristics.

Ten other magazines were measured, each representative of a different, distinct type of magazine that appeals to women (one of the 10 has a dual audience appeal).

The Dual Audience General Interest magazines appeal to all of the clusters, with the lowest being the Retired Retrospectives.

The Personality Profile also had broad appeal, attracting the Upscale Actives, Energetics, Office and School-Based Youngers and the Dynamic Young Reader more than the other clusters.

Food books attracted the Upscale Actives and the Energetics; not surprisingly, the Young Modern books

TABLE 8
Average percent of readers of women's service magazines* falling in each life style cluster

	%
Total US Women	53.4
Upscale Actives	49.1
Energetics	65.2
Non-Reading Passives	35.9
Church, Tradition & Apple Pie	52.0
Mrs. Average	58.3
Office & School-Based Youngers	50.8
Dynamic Young Readers	64.0
Retired Retrospectives	23.9
Older Traditionalists	41.1

* Average of women who have read or looked through at least one issue of each magazine in the past 12 months

had a very narrow appeal — interesting only the Dynamic Young Readers. Both Young Women's General Interest and Young Fashion attracted the younger clusters — Energetics, Office and School-Based Youngers and Dynamic Young Readers. Career Related books also attracted two of the younger clusters, again the Office and School-Based Youngers and the Dynamic Young Readers. High Fashion magazines appealed to Upscale

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TABLE 9
Readers of women's service magazines by life style clusters

	Total US Women	Upscale Actives	Energetic	Non-Reading Passives	Church, Tradition & Mrs. Apple Pie Average	Office & School-Based Youngers	Dynamic Young Readers	Retired Retro-spectives	Older traditionalists	
000's	85,980	8,910	15,270	4,800	13,720	13,370	9,990	8,920	1,650	8,550
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Food	14	31	24	5	8	11	9	15	4	8
Young Modern	38	38	51	22	28	30	53	60	13	18
Health Related	13	6	17	13	15	10	6	28	3	8
Young Fashion	29	25	44	10	22	25	39	53	—	7
Women's Movement	16	14	22	11	10	14	18	30	—	7
Dual Audience General Interest	62	55	68	63	61	61	61	63	44	60
Young Women's General Interest	12	10	18	1	5	12	21	21	—	7
Career Related	13	15	21	2	11	9	16	23	3	5
High Fashion	26	39	35	9	19	20	25	43	5	11
Personality Profile	33	41	44	22	23	26	47	37	16	21
Average	25.6	27.4	34.4	34.4	20.2	21.8	29.5	37.3	8.8	15.2

Actives, and Dynamic Young Readers. (Table 9)

CONCLUSION

This life style analysis study was conducted for the purpose of developing a more sophisticated and sensitive instrument for understanding magazine audiences and the appeals of different magazines. It was hoped to be able to go beyond the demographic measures currently in use.

The study showed a relationship between the

leisure activities of women, their magazine contents interests, and their attitudes towards their lives and their roles in society. This inter-relationship was summarized statistically into nine different life style clusters.

It was further shown that these different life style clusters can be categorized by demographic data and that each cluster has different magazine reading habits.

This life style analysis study has met its objectives in that it has proved of use in assessing both the marketing and editorial strategies of the magazine, and has also proven useful in developing consumer promotion.