

3.4

CHANGES IN THE MAGAZINE PRE-CHOICE QUESTION MODEL IN THE 1985 AWA

SUMMARY

A new pre-choice question model for magazines used in the 1985 Allensbach multi-media-market analysis (AWA '85) is presented and discussed; this analysis comprises 200 media and over 1,500 target groups (markets) in a single-source interview, in which confusion between magazines was to be minimised compared with the past.

INTRODUCTION

As a result of a large number of methodological experiments the Allensbach Institute has, since 1979, been using a magazine pre-choice question model with separate questions for magazines with different publication intervals, first for monthlies, then for bi-weeklies, and finally for weekly magazines. In order to keep the interview lively, in between the two blocks of questions on magazines, questions on buying habits and consumer behaviour, on services, attitudes or leisure time activities were inserted.

In the past, the appropriate masthead cards were presented for each publication interval, with the request to distribute them into seven categories indicating frequency of reading: from 'read regularly, ie every issue' up to 'read or look at less than one issue a year' (for monthlies). The seventh category, 'never read or look at' also served as a filter, to eliminate the rpi question about when the magazine last was read, which immediately follows.

There can be no doubt that there have been changes in the way people in the Federal Republic use the communications system in recent years. On the one hand, new sales methods and forms of presentation have definitely given prominence to the print media. The 'open' display on a self-service rack

has made it easier for potential buyers and readers to pre-select magazines. On the other hand, there is also evidence of changes in the media scene which affect the use of the media: over and over again, new magazines enter the market, a growing number of which are similar in topic or capable of being confused with respect to their logos.

THE PROBLEM

Thus media research in the Federal Republic is continually faced with the challenge of arriving at as realistic a picture as possible of the populations' use of the media, taking into account people's limited recall ability. The greatest problems are presented by the magazines - the great number of magazines, the variety offered, the many new magazines and frequent changes in title as well as the danger of confusing different titles.

The Allensbacher Werbeträger Analyse is a multi-media-market analysis which has been conducted annually since 1959 based on a fully-structured multiple-topic questionnaire as a single-source investigation and face-to-face interview.

The extensive material to be investigated requires a considerable investment in time, with the average length of the interview of 95 minutes in 1984.

For 1985 there were a number of additional requirements:

- More magazines were to be included than previously; nine more than in 1984 and thirty-four more than in 1983.

- In addition to determining the quantity read and intensity of reading, a qualifying variable for magazines was to be included: 'reader loyalty' (identifying with the magazines: How closely do you identify with the magazine?).

- Distinguishing between magazines which are similar in topic or which have logos which are easily confused was to be improved.
- The overall level of coverage was to remain as similar as possible to what it had been previously.
- All of this was to be achieved essentially without losses among target groups from the market areas.
- With the average length of the interviews possibly being longer, the interview was to be designed to flow well and to be so interesting that subjective impressions of the length of the interview would not compare unfavourably with 1984.

METHOD

With the new pre-choice question model we have been trying to keep confusion between magazines to a minimum in the AWA '85. For this purpose, the Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach has developed a question model which ensures that the ascertainment of media use is as close to reality as possible - without creating more work for the interviewers and the respondents.

In the AWA '85 the media use of general interest magazines and weekly newspapers - reading frequency, with the readership in the broadest sense defined at the same time - was determined by presenting masthead cards in different groups one after the other. Rather than being grouped together by frequency of publication, magazines were assigned to different groups based on similar content, or on the likelihood of confusion between the logo of different magazines.

Thus each set of questions concerns a group of magazines or of masthead cards, which are spread out next to each other in front of the respondent. A question is then asked about the general use of these magazines, seeking to identify the readership in the

broadest sense - in the true sense of the expression - of the different magazines. It is not until after this general question has been asked for all magazines, followed by a few target group questions, that the very specific question about most recent reading is asked, with the sequence determined by publication intervals in this case.

This procedure is based on pre-studies which we conducted during the second half of 1984, taking our cue from developments in British readership research. The danger of confusion, which is more pronounced for special interest magazines, is thus kept to a minimum, because similar magazines are presented together, side by side (and not one after the other), independently of the publication interval, so that the respondent is in a better position to recognise which magazines he has actually read.

Charts 1 and 2 show samples of the ten sets of masthead cards which the respondent is presented with for sorting into frequency categories, preceded by excerpts from the AWA '84 and AWA '85 question models for purposes of comparison.

A few questions on markets and attitudes are asked next, before the comparative information on the reading habits for bi-weekly magazines is ascertained.

In the same manner, the other eight magazine categories are successively sorted according to reading frequency. In order to keep the respondent 'busy' at the end, while the interviewer is writing down the frequency replies for over 160 magazines, and so that the respondent does not have to sit around and wait, the respondent is in the meantime given a question containing two pictures, where he/she is to pick out the 10 'mistakes' built into the one. This at the same time serves the purpose of giving us an idea of the respondent's powers of observation.

After a few market research questions in between, the rpi question then follows, in the same form as in the AWA '84, with monthlies first.

All of the masthead cards which are laid out here are put into an orange envelope for the later questions on quality of reading.

There was no change compared with previous years in the relationship between the categories qualifying for readers per issue (two) and those not qualifying (five), which is so important for establishing the level of coverage.

Through a number of new and imaginative measures, the model which was first used in 1985 was to keep effects on the level of coverage to a minimum, although the list of magazines was expanded considerably and another qualifying variable (identification with the magazine) was added, and although the interview required a somewhat greater investment of time.

These new measures include:

- In order to take possible pressure off the respondent and the interviewers, and to alleviate the situation, there was an opportunity for the first time in 1985 to conduct Parts I and II of the AWA interview in two separate sessions. The magazine questions were all asked in the second part. Each of the two parts of the questionnaire corresponded to the model of an omnibus survey.

Only approximately one out of ten respondents made use of the opportunity of setting up a second date for Part II of the interview; all the others were willing and able to answer both parts of the questionnaire one right after the other.

- The filter category for exclusion from the readership in the broadest sense was no longer linked to the publication interval (ie 'twelve issues') in 1985:

Monthly magazines
1984

Question: "...how many of the twelve issues which appear in a year do you read or look at?"

Response category:
Never read or
look at

All magazines
1985

Question: "...how often do you read or look at this magazine?"

Response category:
Never read or
look at

- While the response to the frequency question was being entered, with over 160 magazines to be placed in seven categories, a situation had to be dealt with in which the interviewer was 'busy' but the respondent was not. In order to avoid a 'break' in the interview, the respondent was given the task during this period of comparing two pictures in an effort to discover up to ten mistakes contained in one of them. At the same time this question provided information about the respondent's powers of observation.

- To keep the interview lively and improve the atmosphere there were a number of specific questions included additionally for purposes of describing the media public and for analysis purposes. This includes questions about a sense of time - how quickly does time pass, how quickly should it pass?; about posture or favourite colours as well as illustrations showing preferences in living-room styles or ladies' hairdos.

- In order not to create unnecessary pressure in the situation and to anticipate possible frustrations, respondents' addresses were not taken down. In connection with the debate about the right-to-privacy regarding the general Census and in view of increased awareness of this issue - and considering that 87% of the interviewers had already reported problems with taking down addresses in 1983 - we wanted to avoid running any risk in this area.

In the new Allensbach model, why did we present the masthead cards spread out next to each other for the ten groups of magazines which are to be sorted according to frequency categories, rather than writing them each on a sheet for pre-selection, as our British colleagues do with the EML technique?

We do not consider it an advantage at all for an (even) stronger profile to be established when magazines are presented grouped strictly by types.

We are certain that in such a highly selective process, pages with magazines which seem to be particularly geared to the respondent will be given preference while the others will be at a disadvantage. There is thus a certain amount of pre-selection, for example, with men saying: women's magazines "are not for me," immediately putting aside pages with titles of women's magazines and tending to avoid them in the course of the interview. Conversely, women are encouraged to 'ignore' men's magazines.

This is suggested by comparisons of results on readership composition when an abstract question model (masthead cards) is used and when the original issue is presented (see AWA '80, vol.1, p.xvii), which show that abstract masthead card models may in themselves already create too strong a profile.

RESULTS

A comparison with the 1984 results shows remarkable stability. This is something which cannot be taken for granted due to the well-known sensitivity of coverage measurements to changes in the question models.

The 'filter' for the readership in the broadest sense was passed in 1984 by approximately 16 magazines; in the new '85 model the number was 17.

The sum of exposures for all magazines stayed at practically the same level when compared with 1984, at 102 for the

readership in the broadest sense and 106 for readers per issue.

Changes in the AWA '85 - using the new pre-choice question model - as compared with 1984 (= 100)

AWA '85

	<i>Readership in the broadest sense</i>	<i>Readers per issue</i>
Total (110)	102	106
Weeklies (32)	111	115
Bi-weeklies (9)	90	102
Monthlies (64)	97	100
Magazines appearing less often (5)*	66	75

** Comparable only to a limited extent due to additional change in this model*

There are likewise no noticeable changes in the relations between the magazine categories as compared with 1985 (see next table).

As far as the question of a magazine's profile is concerned, ie percentage of men among the readers of men's magazines and percentage of women among the readers of women's magazines, the new question model in the AWA '85 can be viewed as being neutral. Out of 23 women's magazines (which in 1984 had 80% or more women readers), nine show a stronger profile in 1985 and 12 show a weaker profile as measured by the percentage of women readers.

DISCUSSION

On balance, the new AWA question model can be considered a success.

Despite the length of the interview having increased approximately 10%, the interview tended to be thought of as being shorter rather than longer than the previous year's.

CHANGES IN THE MAGAZINE PRE-CHOICE QUESTION MODEL IN THE 1985 AWA

Magazine categories: Using the new question model, only minimal changes in the percentages of the total market compared with 1984.

<i>Sum of exposures (rpi)</i>		
	<i>AWA '84</i>	<i>AWA '85</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
5 Illustrated news magazines	9.8	10.3
6 Radio and television magazines	14.7	15.7
12 Entertainment weeklies	11.1	12.6
3 Bi-weekly women's magazines	6.8	6.5
10 Women's monthlies	6.5	5.8
6 Women's needlework magazines	5.7	4.5
3 Health magazines	1.5	1.5
6 Young people's magazines	2.6	2.5
4 Soccer magazines	2.6	1.9
11 Automobile, motorcycle magazines	9.7	8.9
3 Men's magazines	1.8	2.1
8 Photography, audio, video magazines	2.2	2.0
7 Home and interior decorating magazines	7.7	7.6
5 Cultural, science magazines	3.0	3.0
11 Economic and political magazines	14.4	15.2
	<u>100.1</u>	<u>100.1</u>

This was definitely the result of the great effort made to create an interesting, varied questionnaire which avoided monotony as far as possible.

The length of the interview was - (Interviewer's subjective impression)

	<i>AWA '84</i>	<i>The new model</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>AWA '85</i>
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
Good	32	41
Somewhat too long	38	35
Much too long	30	24
Average length of interview	95 min.	105 min.

There was virtually no change in the level of coverage for the readership in the broadest sense as well as for Average Issue Readership. We are not yet in a position to state to which extent the new '85 model provides more precise information about the relationship between magazines which are likely to be confused. The questionnaire design and the side-by-side presentation of magazines capable of being confused - even with different publication intervals - would suggest that the new model is definitely more precise.

Validations based on comparing circulation figures with readership figures are problematical and do not provide much help. It is extremely rare for there to be the same number of readers per copy. For what characterises a magazine which is successful in the market is the very fact that more people look at it, that it is 'in demand' and that there are a greater number of people who read the same copy than is true of a competitor.

Thus we will have to be patient in this respect until the time comes when relations between magazines and their readership may be portrayed precisely through technical measurements and when they can be included for purposes of validating and evaluating question models.

The investigation of a possible question order effect in the presentation by groups would constitute a further development of the new question model. It is possible that the magazines presented as the first group tend to be accorded somewhat higher coverage figures. Thus it might be wise to have the first group presented consist of magazines which, according to current models, show the lowest reader-per-copy figures - under 1.0 readers per copy or only approximately 1.0 readers per copy - either because they are magazines for members or for other reasons.

An alternative suggestion would be to present the groups in the order of

increasing sum of exposures (rpi), beginning with the group with the lowest sum of exposures and ending with the group with the highest sum of exposures. According to our experience at present, we can dispense with a complete rotation of all the groups, which is a very complicated procedure. In any case, however, we urge that both magazines for men and for women be presented side by side in the same group, so as to counter the threat of an exaggerated profile.

The magazines which are published 'less than once a month' can only be included to a limited extent in a comparison of 1985/1984. In the interest of a more varied, less monotonous interview, they were formerly not subjected to a sorting procedure, with the readership categories being ascertained according

to lists up until 1984. In addition, the titles of these magazines were also printed in the questionnaire up until 1984 both for the frequency question and the rpi question. The only way to clarify the extent to which this influences results is to conduct new experimental surveys.

Regarding 'plausibility' the new question model seems to ascertain results more correctly while the old model may lead to coverage figures that are somewhat too high. But we will not be able to arrive at a final judgement on this until we have generally accepted coverage measurements available, which have been arrived at using technical means as far as possible and without relying on recall ability - in other words, until we have a 'gold standard'.

CHANGES IN THE MAGAZINE PRE-CHOICE
QUESTION MODEL IN THE 1985 AWA

3.4

The AWA '84 question model (for monthly magazines)

1. INTERVIEWER presents the grey masthead cards and spreads out the grey sheet in front of the respondent: "Here on these cards are the titles of magazines - all of them are magazines which appear *monthly*, that is, 12 issues a year. Could you give me an estimate of how often you read or look at these magazines, no matter whether at home or elsewhere? Could you please tell me for each magazine how many of the 12 issues which appear in a year you read? Please distribute the cards on this sheet accordingly. Simply set aside the cards for magazines which you never read or look at."

INTERVIEWER marks the appropriate replies in the boxes below; the cards for magazines which the respondent never reads or looks at to be marked in column G.

A Read regularly, ie all 12 issues	B Read very frequently, though not all 12 issues	C Read pretty often	D Read now and then	E Read very seldom, at most 1 or 2 issues a year	F Read or look at less than 1 issue a year	G Never read or look at
1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9	9	9	9
10	10	10	10	10	10	10
.

2. INTERVIEWER presents the grey masthead cards from columns A to F again along with the white sheet. "Could you tell me now when you last read these magazines or looked at them, aside from today? Would you please distribute the cards on this sheet: Please put magazines you happen to have looked at in the last 14 days in the first column; magazines you looked at sometime in the last 15-30 days in the second column, etc." (Circle replies)

1. Within the last 14 days	2. 15 - 30 days ago	3. Within the last 3 months	4. Within the last 6 months	5. Within the last year	6. Longer ago
1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9	9	9
10	10	10	10	10	10
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CHANGES IN THE MAGAZINE PRE-CHOICE
QUESTION MODEL IN THE 1985 AWA

3.4

The new AWA '85 question model

1. a) INTERVIEWER removes all masthead cards from the white envelope and spreads the cards from the first group out next to each other, ie cards 1 to 14, in front of the respondent.

"Here on these cards are some titles of magazines - Could you tell me how often you read or look at these magazines - no matter whether at home or elsewhere?"

INTERVIEWER puts down the large white sheet in front of the respondent and lets the respondent keep it until question 1k.

"This sheet shows various possibilities for how often you might read a magazine. Would you now distribute the cards on this sheet according to how often you read these magazines? Simply set aside the cards for magazines which you never read or look at."

ATTENTION INTERVIEWER: Circle the appropriate replies in the following boxes; the cards for magazines which the respondent never reads or looks at are circled in column G and should be put back into the white envelope.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Read regularly, ie all issues that appear	Read quite regularly, though not all issues	Read pretty often	Read now and then	Read seldom	Read almost never	Never read or look at
1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9	9	9	9
10	10	10	10	10	10	10
.
.
.

Attention interviewer: The cards listed in columns A to F will be used again!

CHANGES IN THE MAGAZINE PRE-CHOICE
QUESTION MODEL IN THE 1985 AWA

b) INTERVIEWER now spreads out the masthead cards numbered 15 to 36 next to each other.

"Here are a few more cards; could you please also distribute them on this sheet?"

ATTENTION INTERVIEWER: Circle the appropriate replies in the following boxes; the cards for magazines which the respondent never reads or looks at are circled in column G and should be put back into the white envelope.

A Read regularly, ie all issues that appear	B Read quite regularly, though not all issues	C Read pretty often	D Read now and then	E Read seldom	F Read almost never	G Never read or look at
1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9	9	9	9
10	10	10	10	10	10	10
.
.
.

Attention Interviewer: The cards listed in columns A to F will be used again!

CHANGES IN THE MAGAZINE PRE-CHOICE
QUESTION MODEL IN THE 1985 AWA

2. *INTERVIEWER* spreads out *grey* sheet in front of the respondent and gives the respondent the *grey* masthead cards.

"I once again have here cards for magazines which appear once a month and which you read with varying frequency. Could you tell me when you *last* read or looked at these magazines, not including today? Would you distribute the cards on this sheet? It works like this: Magazines which you happen to have looked at in the last 14 days go in the first column; magazines you looked at sometime in the last 15-30 days in the second column, etc." (Circle replies).

1. <i>Within the last 14 days</i>	2. <i>15 to 30 days ago</i>	3. <i>Within the last 3 months</i>	4. <i>Within the last 6 months</i>	5. <i>Within the last year</i>	6. <i>Longer Age</i>
1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9	9	9
10	10	10	10	10	10
.
.
.

CHART 1
AWA '85

Samples of the masthead cards (group 1) which the respondent distributes into the frequency categories on the sheet in front of him/her.



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12



13



14

CHART 2
AWA '85

Samples of the masthead cards (group 8) which the respondent distributes into the frequency categories on the sheet in front of him/her.



120



121



122



123



124



125



126

ADAC motorwelt

127



129



130



131



132

PLAYBOY

134

PENTHOUSE

135

l'ui

136