

IN THE MOOD: EFFECTS OF THE INTRODUCTION OF A SUNDAY PAPER

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Abstract

In the spring of 2004 De Telegraaf, the largest Dutch daily newspaper, introduced a very unusual phenomenon for the Netherlands: a Sunday edition. An extensive research project concerning the introduction was carried out, focusing on two central questions: (a) are there cannibalisation effects on the Saturday edition, and (b) is the effectiveness of advertisements influenced by the relaxed Sunday mood of the reader. From publications in psychology and communication science it becomes clear that persuasive impact is greater if the person is in a happy, benevolent mood. Our results show that there are some cannibalisation effects, but they are limited. Furthermore our research makes clear that people are in a better mood on Sunday; people in a better mood see more advertising, so people see more advertising on Sunday, which explains the high advertising reach scores that were found in this study, as compared with the benchmarks. Introducing a new Sunday issue is a promising tool for newspapers to use in strengthening their position. For advertisers, it is an opportunity they should take advantage of.

Research problem: is a new Sunday paper a tool to strengthen the position of print media?

In this time of communication abundance and increasing fragmentation, media planners have to use multi-media strategies. A combination of traditional and new media is used to deliver the communication strategy. An updated Marshall McLuhan quote could be: *'the media are the message'* (White, 2003). Campaigns are run in combinations of media and channels. Newspapers are one of these media. To maintain a firm position in this multi-media approach, traditional newspapers have to innovate, and they use several strategies in parallel: more life-style items, new feature sections, more promotions, a switch to a more compact tabloid format and a new Sunday issue. This paper is about the last tool. Traditional newspapers are under pressure. Consumers increasingly turn to television and the Internet for news. And growing broadband penetration encourages the wider use of online media. Newspapers have to fight back. Are Sunday papers an answer?

The Netherlands has not had a regular Sunday newspaper for a long time. Apart from the ill-fated attempt of new entrant "De Krant op Zondag" in the eighties and a few regional free sheets, Sunday news was left to radio and television. But in the spring of 2004 De Telegraaf, the country's largest daily newspaper, (origin: 1892, TR=60%, AIR=20%), ventured into this unknown area. They joined forces with Kobalt, the largest media buying agency, and TNS-NIPO/Veldkamp, for an in-depth study of the influence of the introduction of the new Telegraaf Sunday edition on both reading behaviour and advertising effectiveness. So our study is about a very unusual phenomenon in our country. Until now (more than a year later), it is still the only national newspaper with a Sunday edition, and no 'me-too' products have been introduced.

The extensive research project is based on two theoretical angles:

(a) brand stretching and cannibalisation effects

The launch of the new issue can be seen as a form of brand stretching, with the danger of resultant cannibalisation of existing products. In the Netherlands, Saturday newspapers are produced to last the whole weekend. With too many 'general interest sections' and a separate magazine, readers developed the habit of reading the Saturday issue over both weekend days. As the Telegraaf did not change the format of its Saturday issue, how would the new Sunday edition influence reading behaviour as regards the Saturday paper? Which leads to the following more concrete Research Questions:

RQ1: do readers appreciate a Sunday version of their newspaper?

RQ2: does the Sunday edition have cannibalisation effects on the Saturday issue; in other words, does the Saturday issue have lower levels of time spent reading, fewer reading occasions, less page traffic, fewer pages opened, after the introduction of the Sunday edition?

This theoretical angle (a) is linked to the business of publishing.

(b) mood effects

How effective are the advertisements in the new Sunday issue, as compared with those which appear on Saturdays and weekdays? Earlier research (Braun & Pfeleiderer, WWRS 2003) showed that in Germany people are in a better mood on Sunday, and the better the mood the greater the attentiveness to advertisements. This leads to two more Research Questions:

RQ3: how effective are the advertisements in the Sunday issue as compared with advertisements in the Saturday and weekday issues?

RQ4: can we explain the advertising effectiveness of the Sunday paper with the help of mood theories?

This theoretical angle (b) is linked to the advertiser and media-planner perspective. We should state that in answering RQ3 and RQ4 we should take account of the size of the newspaper. There is a strong relation between number of pages of the newspaper and advertising reach/effectiveness (Bronner & Faasse, WWRS 1999). So, related to RQ3 we can formulate as a research question: is the ad reach of a Sunday paper more similar to that of a Saturday paper (comparable type of day but larger size), or to that of a weekday paper (different type of day but comparable size)?

Theoretical backgrounds: the role of mood in advertising effectiveness

If we consider past Worldwide Readership Symposia, not much attention has been paid to reading newspapers on Sunday. Measurement of Sunday newspaper readership and quality of reading have been the subject of earlier WWRS papers (Meier & Cornish, 1983; Hall, 1988; McLellan, 1995), but mainly from a technical measurement perspective. But in Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2003 Sunday reading was a topic of research from a more theoretical perspective. In their paper, Braun and Pfleiderer drew some important conclusions:

- conclusion 1: people are in a better mood on Sunday. As the authors said in their presentation ‘here we present some results which may shake some of your cherished prejudices about Germans’.
- conclusion 2: the better the mood, the greater the attentiveness to advertisements.
- conclusion 3: the more active the reader feels, the greater his attentiveness to advertisements
- conclusion 4: and their final conclusion is: ‘these results support strongly the hypothesis that Sunday is the best day to get attention for an advertisement’ (p.32)

The results from this study inspired us to look in more detail and at a more theoretical level into the role of mood in advertising. In the literature, mood is defined as a person’s current, subjectively-experienced and non object-related emotion (Gierl & Bambauer, 2005). And it has been shown that people have a variety of mood-dependent reactions. A positive mood implies (a) that people are more sensitive to social appeals like demands for blood donation (O’Malley & Andrews, 1983), (b) are more polite and willing to help (Rusting, 1998), and are (c) easier to influence (Gierl & Bambauer, 2005). The last finding in particular is relevant for media and advertising research. Batra and Stayman (1990) found that a positive mood facilitates brand-attitude change. They conclude (p.213): ‘moods appear to not only have peripheral effects on attitudes, but also to have significant effects on and through the cognitive processing of message content’. Lee & Sternthal (1999) conclude that a positive mood enhances the learning of brand names. And according to the same authors, a positive mood might enhance the processing of messages that require the recipient to link the content of a current ad to information that has been presented in prior executions (p.126). So mood also has effects on memory and learning.

From literature in psychology and communication science, it becomes clear that persuasive impact is greater if the person is in a happy, benevolent mood (Petty et al., 1993). Positive mood can favourably influence attitudes. Especially in high involvement conditions, a positive mood can increase persuasion. A limitation of many academic studies concerning mood effects is that mood is manipulated in an *experimental setting*. For example, in an experimental study, positive mood induction took place by having subjects stay in a huge/comfortable room, with many drinks and Mr. Bean running on the television channel. In the negative mood induction, the reverse situation was created: a small room without windows, no drinks and a anti-war movie on the television channel. A big advantage of our study, as described in this paper, is that we have data from a *real life* study. By asking respondents about their mood on the interview date we get people in the sample with a positive mood, and people with a negative mood. And our hypothesis is that this mood is related to the day of the week: on Sunday people have free time and are well balanced, good humoured and relaxed.

To summarise: from the literature we know that people in a positive mood are easier to influence and as a consequence may be more susceptible to advertising. This implies that a positive mood leads to greater attentiveness to advertisements. And this leads to the expectation that on days in which people are in a better mood, advertising attention is at a higher level as compared with ‘bad-mood days’.

In the next paragraph we will describe our research design.

Research design and method

In the preceding paragraphs our research questions were elaborated. To answer these questions we needed measurements of (a) reading behaviour as regards the Saturday issue before and after the launch of the Sunday issue, and by reading behaviour we mean reading the Saturday issue on Saturday and Sunday (reading over both weekend days), (b) reading the Sunday newspaper, (c) reading weekday papers.

Seven measurements were carried out: see table 1. The Sunday paper was introduced on March 21st 2004, so the measurements before this date can be considered as ‘before measurements’, and the others as ‘after measurements’. The total number of respondents is n=1287. The respondents had to answer two types of questions: (a) about reading behaviour on a specific day, (b) about mood on a specific day. Respondents were asked to fill in a questionnaire on both Saturday and Sunday. On Saturday we asked about reading the Saturday paper on Saturday and on Sunday we asked about reading the Saturday paper on Sunday. After the introduction of the Sunday paper we also asked these respondents about their reading behaviour as regards the Sunday edition. Take for example the fourth wave on 27/28th March. The sample includes 285 different respondents. They filled in three questionnaires, so we have 855 reading day observations. The mood factors were only asked in respect of two days (Saturday and Sunday), so we have 570 mood day observations. In respect of the weekdays, the respondents only had to answer these questions once. The 2300 mood day observations are divided as follows over the days: weekdays n = 274, Saturday n = 1013 and Sunday n = 1013.

Issue	Data	Respondents	Reading day interviews	Mood day interviews
Saturday	6/7 March	239	2 x 239 = 478	2 x 239 = 478
Saturday	13/14 March	175	2 x 175 = 350	2 x 175 = 350
Saturday + Sunday	20/21 March	109	3 x 109 = 327	2 x 109 = 218
Saturday + Sunday	27/28 March	285	3 x 285 = 855	2 x 285 = 570
Saturday + Sunday	3/4 April	205	3 x 205 = 615	2 x 205 = 410
Wednesday	21 April	149	1 x 149 = 149	1 x 149 = 149
Thursday	22 April	125	1 x 125 = 125	1 x 125 = 125
Total		n = 1287	n = 2899	n = 2300

Table 1. The design: seven measurements.

The samples are representative for readers of an issue. Respondents were selected from the access pool of TNS NIPO (with about 200,000 potential respondents, this is the largest Dutch access pool). The response rate was between 80 and 90%. For data-collection, CASI (Computer Assisted Self Interviewing) was used (for more details, see Bronner, Tchaoussoglou & Ross, WWRS 2003). The project was carried out by market research agencies Veldkamp and TNS NIPO. As a measurement tool we used a validated page traffic model originally developed for measuring section reading (see Bronner, van Niekerk & Brennecke, WWRS 1997, and Bronner & Faasse, WWRS 1999). The respondent was asked to complete the questionnaire at the end of the day the issue appeared (for the Saturday issue, one questionnaire at the end of Saturday and one at the end of Sunday). So memory loss is minimized. The questionnaire is dedicated to the newspaper of the specific day. This included among others the selection of advertisements whose impact should be assessed. Advertisements were chosen spread over the various sections, and further spread as to product, size and insertion. Variation was the core in our selection process. In table 2 the structure of the questionnaire is represented.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ frequency of reading ▪ time spent reading ▪ four hierarchical levels of reach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) open eyes before open pages (b) something read/noticed on a page (c) advertisement seen (d) advertising effectiveness (product, brand realisation) • mood as a basic state of mind that day • reading situation (primary/secondary activities) • background variables
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Table 2. The structure of the questionnaire.

To summarise: we carried out seven measurements and used CASI in an access panel with a validated page traffic research model.

Results: appreciation of a Sunday issue

As we described in the preceding paragraph, the Sunday version of De Telegraaf was introduced in March 2004. But already a year before, in the summer of 2003, the general attitude towards a Sunday issue was measured by research agency Veldkamp. In 2003, somewhat more than 50% had a positive attitude. After the introduction, the attitude was measured again and the attitude increased significantly in a positive direction as is shown in table 3. Similar to findings in marketing related to new product introduction, we can conclude that people have to become accustomed to new products, but if the new product is introduced and appreciated, new habits develop quickly.

	June 2003	March/April 2004
Very (positive)	56%	77%
Neutral	36%	19%
Very (negative)	8%	5%

Table 3. General attitude to a Sunday issue of De Telegraaf.

So readers appreciate a Sunday version of their newspaper very much. They also spend more time reading a Sunday issue (38 min.) than a weekday issue that is comparable qua size (30 min.). Furthermore the Sunday version has the highest reading intensity of all issues, as is shown in table 4.

	Weekdays	Saturday issue on Saturday	Saturday issue on Sunday	Sunday issue
Reads >75%	48%	47%	22%	65%
About 75%	20%	19%	10%	16%
About 50%	17%	17%	21%	10%
Less than 50%	16%	16%	48%	10%

Table 4. Intensity of reading.

RQ1 ('do readers appreciate a Sunday version of their newspaper?') can be answered affirmatively.

Results: cannibalisation effect

As is shown in theory and research about brand stretching, new brand extensions can generate cannibalisation effects. Because we measured reading behaviour in respect of the Saturday issue during the whole weekend both before and after the introduction of the Sunday paper, we can draw conclusions about this effect. Analysis of (a) number of reading days, (b) time spent reading, and (c) page traffic scores shows that there is no cannibalisation effect as regards reading the Saturday issue on Saturday, but some cannibalisation effect as regards reading the Saturday issue on Sunday.

In table 5 the effect on the number of reading days can be seen, and in table 6 the time effects are shown. Before the introduction of the Sunday paper, 65% read the Saturday issue on Sunday, and after the introduction this percentage decreases to 41%. Also the time spent reading the Saturday issue on Sunday decreases by about 10 minutes.

Before introduction	After introduction
65% read Saturday issue on Sunday	41% read Saturday issue on Sunday

Table 5. Number of reading days for the Saturday issues before and after the introduction of the Sunday issue.

Before introduction			After introduction		
Sat. issue on Sat	Sat. issue on Sun.	Sunday issue	Sat. issue on Sat.	Sat. issue on Sun.	Sunday issue
55 min.	34 min.	X	54 min.	26 min.	38 min.

Table 6. Average time spent reading before and after introduction of the Sunday issue.

Based on the 'open eyes before open pages' scores, we can make a more detailed analysis of reading behaviour in the 'before' and 'after' situations. The results can be presented in a graphical form per newspaper page (see figures 1 and 2). In figure 1, the reading profile of the Saturday issue in the 'before' situation is shown; in figure 2 we represent the reading profile in the 'after' situation. On the horizontal axis are the page numbers and the division into 7 sections. On the vertical axis are the 'open eyes' percentages. The straight line represents the 'open eyes per page' for the Saturday issue if the Saturday and Sunday reading scores are added. The dotted line represents the percentages of 'open eyes' only on Saturday. The difference between the lines represents the percentages of readers who missed that page on Saturday but noticed it on Sunday.

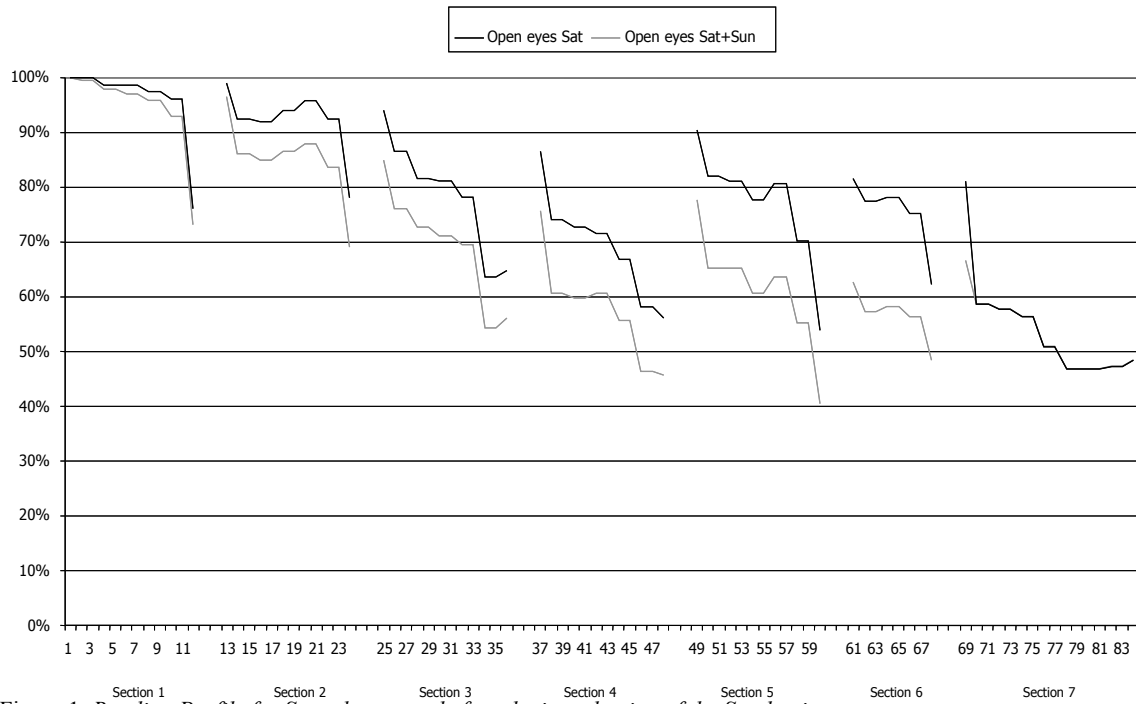


Figure 1. Reading Profile for Saturday paper before the introduction of the Sunday issue

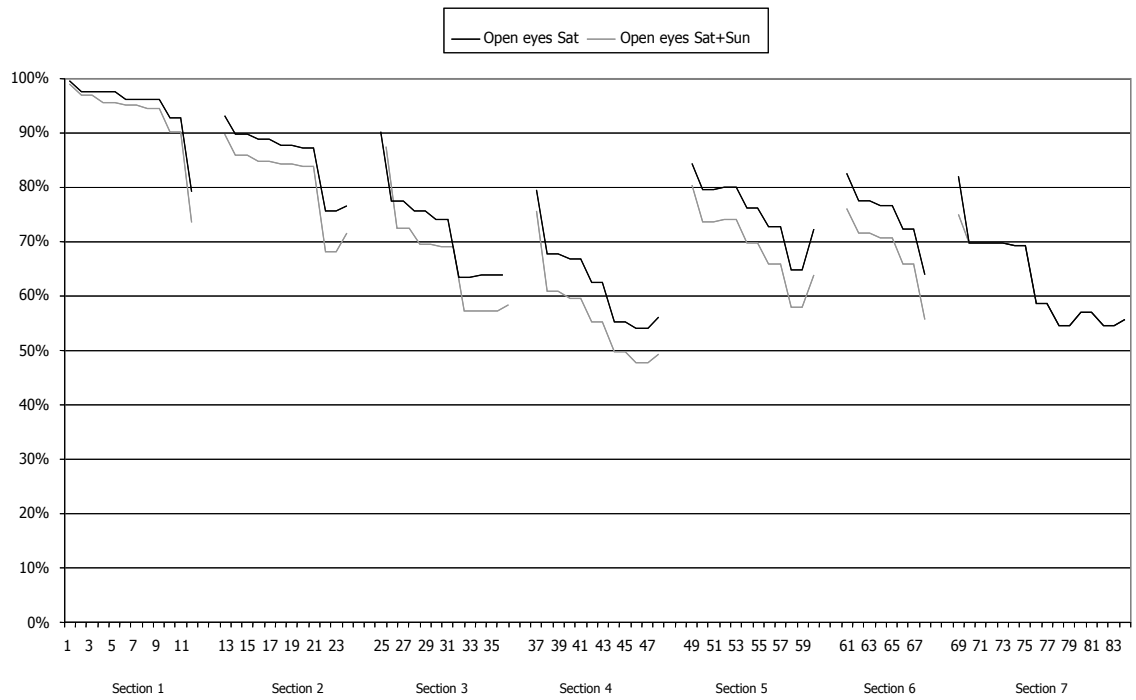


Figure 2. Reading Profile for Saturday paper after the introduction of the Sunday issue

What do these two figures make clear?

- the ‘before’ situation shows that on Sunday especially the last sections are read (most additional Sunday reach is between pages 40 and 70)
- In the ‘after’ situation, the straight and dotted lines are closer to each other, so the additional Sunday reach is reduced in the ‘after’ situation
- Because in the later sections especially the dotted line in the ‘after’ situation is at a higher level than in the ‘before’ situation, we can conclude that in the new situation with the Sunday paper readers are inclined to read as much as possible in the Saturday issue on Saturday, although reading time on Saturday is stable (see table 6). Apparently people see more pages in the same period of time
- In particular, readers already notice the latter sections on Saturday, instead of on Sunday as was their habit in the old situation

RQ2 (‘does the Sunday edition have cannibalisation effects on the Saturday issue?’) can be answered as follows: as regards reading the Saturday issue on Saturday, there is a stimulating effect with particular respect to the later sections (although reading time is stable, so on Saturday they see more sections in the same period of time), but as regards reading the Saturday issue on Sunday, there *are* some cannibalisation effects.

Up to now in this section we have discussed the possible cannibalisation effects on reading behaviour. But a completely different possibility of cannibalisation can take place with respect to the advertising market. The question is: if advertisers and media planning agencies are starting to spend money on advertising in the Sunday edition, does that result in less money being spent on other weekday editions? In figure 3, the gross spendings for De Telegraaf are shown. The bottom line represents the advertising spending in the Sunday edition. The other lines show that spending on the other days does not decline as compared with the situation before the introduction of the Sunday paper. So we can conclude that the Sunday spending is additional, and that there is no indication of a cannibalisation effect in the advertising market.

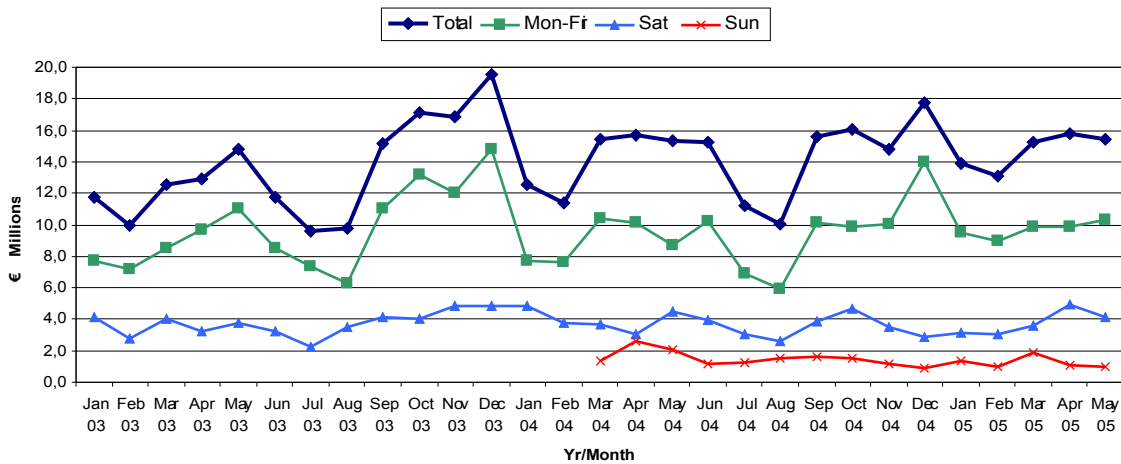


Figure 3. Gross spendings De Telegraaf per month 2003-2005 (before and after introduction)

Results: noticing advertising on Sunday

If we follow the hierarchical levels of reach measurement, advertising reach is situated at the third level, after open eyes and page traffic. The Sunday paper was measured three times (21/3, 28/3, 4/4, see table 1). The results of 66 advertisements are available. As mentioned above, variation was the core in our selection process. The average advertising reach for these ads in a Sunday issue is 56%. The Dutch Newspaper Sections Survey offers a reliable benchmark for advertising reach in weekday and Saturday issues. There is in this survey variation over time (1996-2000), days of the week, type of paper, type of ad. Over all the available ads, the average reach is 34%. Size of the ad and the section in which the ad is placed have a strong influence on the reach score (see table 7a/b, Puister, 2004)

Size of ad	% adv. reach
2800 – 5700 mm	36.9
1400 – 2800 mm	31.6
<1400 mm	32.0
total	33.7

Table 7a. Benchmarks for advertising reach in newspapers (Dutch Newspaper Sections Survey) - size of ad.

Section	% adv. reach
First (incl. front page)	38.9
Second	29.9
Third	26.6

Fourth and following (incl. back page)	30.5
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Table 7b. Benchmarks for advertising reach in newspapers (Dutch Newspaper Sections Survey) - section.

Since our selection process regarding the ads in the Sunday paper was comparable to the selection process in the Dutch Sections Survey we need only keep the number of pages constant. The average number of pages of a Sunday paper is 38, and for reasons of comparison we can take from the Dutch Newspaper Sections Survey all ads which appeared in newspapers with 28 – 48 pages in total (see table 8).

	% adv. reach
Benchmark all ads in newspapers	34
Benchmark ads in newspapers 28 – 48 pages	37
Ads in workday issues (benchmark study)	37
Ads in Saturday issues (benchmark study)	29
Ads in Sunday issues (this study)	56

Table 8. Advertising reach levels.

We can conclude (answer to RQ3) that on Sunday, relatively high scores on advertising reach are found. In the next section we try to find an explanation.

Results: Sunday - in the mood for advertising

In the theoretical part of this paper we formulated the idea, based on the literature, that people are in a better mood on Sunday, and the better the mood the greater the attentiveness to advertisements. So the first question to answer is: are people in a better mood on Sunday? Table 9 gives the results. Nearly all mood factors show a significant difference between Sundays and workdays (tested one-sided, 5% level). We can discern two types of mood factors, one relating to reading behaviour and one relating to mood as a general state of mind (on that specific day). The reading mood in particular shows very significant differences.

	Sunday % n = 1013	Workday % n = 274	T-Value and Significance
<i>Reading mood</i>			
Read feeling very relaxed	61	44	T = 5,05 P < 0.001
Read feeling hurried/stressed	17	31	T = 5,14 P < 0.001
<i>General mood</i>			
Today everything went super	21	11	T = 3,75 P < 0.001
In relaxed state	88	79	T = 3,82 P < 0.001
In a good humour	88	83	T = 2,18 P < 0.05
In balance	82	77	T = 1,87 P < 0.05
Cheerful	86	82	T = 1,65 P < 0.05
Interested	85	81	T = 1,61 n.s.
A broad view	81	77	T = 1,47 n.s.

Table 9. Mood on Sunday and workdays.

Although the differences between mood on Sundays and workdays are smaller in the Netherlands than in Germany (Braun & Pfeleiderer, 2003), our hypothesis can clearly be confirmed: people are more relaxed and in a better mood on Sunday.

The next question to be answered is as follows: is there a relation between mood and noticing advertisements? In table 10 the results are presented. In this analysis we relate the mood state based on all 2300 observations (see table 1) to the noticing of advertisements in that specific issue. We find a strong relationship between the mood state on the day of reading the newspaper and the attentiveness to ads. Nearly all expected relationships are significant (tested one-sided, 5% level). For example, the people who feel well-balanced on the reading day see 45% of the ads and this noticing score is 13% lower for people who do not feel well-balanced that day. The reading mood seems to be the most important factor of influence on advertising reach (T = 6,92). In Table 9, it has already been shown that people read their newspaper in a significantly more relaxed manner on Sunday than on weekdays. Therefore we can conclude that one of the reasons for the high advertising reach on Sunday is that people are in a much more relaxed, well-balanced and cheerful mood on Sundays.

	% advertisements seen in this issue		T-Value and Significance
	Yes (Top 2 boxes)	No (Bottom 2 boxes)	
<i>Reading mood</i>			
Read feeling very relaxed	54	36	T = 6,92 P < 0.001
Read feeling hurried/stressed	36	54	
<i>General mood</i>			
Today everything went super*	46	26	T = 2,71 P < 0.01
Interested	45	27	T = 3,20 P < 0.001
In balance	45	32	T = 2,78 P < 0.01
In relaxed state	45	36	T = 2,11 P < 0.05
A broad view	45	34	T = 2,05 P < 0.05
Cheerful	45	35	T = 1,98 P < 0.05
In a good humour	45	38	T = 1,27 n.s.

* for this variable only a top 1 and bottom 1 box was available
 Table 10. Relation between mood and noticing advertising.

To summarise: people are in a better mood on Sunday; people with a better mood see more advertising, so people see more advertising on Sunday, which explains the high advertising reach scores compared with the benchmarks.

Conclusions

This research design offers valuable insights, both to publishers – with respect to the profitability of new ‘brand extensions’ – and to media agencies and advertisers, in terms of the differential effectiveness of newspaper issues on a day to day basis.

Traditional newspapers have to fight back and strengthen their position amidst other media. This paper shows that introducing a new Sunday issue is a promising tool for doing so. From literature in psychology and communication science, it becomes clear that persuasive impact is greater if the person is in a happy, benevolent mood. And because people are in a better mood on Sunday they are easier to influence that day. An opportunity media and advertisers should take advantage of!

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