

1.2 Readership surveys in France: a brief history from 1957 to 1983

This paper is intended to give a systematic overview of the main readership surveys carried out in France from 1957 to 1983. It is limited to the syndicated research programme organised by CESP (Centre d'Etude des Supports de Publicité), which was created in 1957 as a non-profit organization comprised of advertisers, advertising agencies and media. The paper does not take into account a number of specific studies initiated by magazines or newspapers, or by research institutes outside CESP.

Jean-Pierre Leterrier having presented in New Orleans* information about current methodology in France and about CESP, our main contribution will be devoted to the historical evolution of the CESP programme in the field of readership surveys.

BASIC PROGRAMME

The first CESP readership survey was carried out in 1957; the second one took place in 1962; from 1966 onwards, the survey has been annual.

Table 1 lists the basic readership surveys carried out from the beginning (1957) to 1983, with their main characteristics. The main points to be noted are the fluctuations in the annual sample size (see **Figure 1**) at the beginning (20,000 to 22,000 interviews) and at the end of the period under review (from about 12,000 in the 70's to 15,000 in 1981, 82, 83) and the growing number of magazines and other periodicals covered: (**Figure 2**); this will be 119 in 1984.

The change in the number of dailies (both national and regional) reflects the trends of the daily press in France. After a long period of concentration, new titles have appeared (eg *Le Quotidien de Paris*, *Le Matin de Paris*, *Libération*).

As far as regional and local dailies are concerned, the sample size does not permit the publication of individual results for each publication. For each interviewing point, only a small number of the whole list is measured (never more than four or five, except in Paris and its conurbation).

Table 2 gives for each basic readership survey (identified by its year of publication) the number of different questionnaire formats: 2 or 4, according to the need to rotate titles — and the list of variables taken into consideration, in fact the list of questions in the

interview. It should be noted that some variables — mainly date of the last reading and/or reading within the last period, and reading frequency — have been covered each year. In the CESP programme these are the basic and permanent variables. It is notable that an apparently minor change in 1975 — the introduction of a filter question (12 months) and a modification of the last reading question — has led to significant changes in readership figures.

Other variables appear and disappear from time to time, or from period to period, eg. the question on the source of copy. This question does not give good results in comparison with audited circulation figures provided by another source (OJD: Office de Justification de la Diffusion), but it is useful for estimating primary readership (see eg Agostini's paper elsewhere in these proceedings) or as a check on the distribution or promotion policies of publishers.

The filter question has been included by reason of the growing number of magazines and other periodicals under survey (see **Figure 2**) in order to limit the number of publications considered in the detailed and complete interview. Combining the date of last reading and frequency habits provides the bases for estimating readership probabilities for each frequency group.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND OTHER TOPICS

The CESP readership study is part — and historically the base — of a multi-media audience measurement programme. And it is also used to experiment with some additional topics related to the context of reading.

Table 3 shows what kind of questions have been added to the basic items listed in **Table 2**.

Classified by media, these additional questions and items cover press readership, cinema attendance, radio listening and TV viewing. A set of cinema attendance questions have been included with the press readership questions from the beginning of the CESP programme: in future this set will probably join the radio-TV

* See *Readership Research: theory and practice — Proceedings of the first international symposium, New Orleans, 1981*, pages 82-83: Syndicated readership research in France, by Jean-Pierre Leterrier.

1.2 Readership surveys in France: a brief history from 1957 to 1983

questionnaire. Radio and TV questions have been linked to the press readership questionnaire but since 1970 the volume of these questions has required a second interview of the same sample two or three weeks after the press readership interview. In 1982 and 1983 the radio and TV sample was a separate sample, and it was decided to have a specific product-consumption questionnaire parallel to the press readership sample.

Table 3 also shows which questions and topics have been included within the readership questionnaire, and which others in additional questionnaires. Within the main questionnaire, additional readership questions have been devoted to experiments with a limited number of additional readership questions (1966, 1969, 1970, 1975). More detailed topics have been dealt with in additional questionnaires. The main experiments have been as follows:

Centres of interest	(1971 and 1972)
Centres of interest and life style	(1977)
Time budget	(1978)
Sociological and psychological media contexts	(1980)
Readership among people aged 8-14	(1981)

Media market questions (1982)

This last experiment — inspired by the British TGI — is the most important innovation since the New Orleans readership symposium.

AVAILABILITY OF PUBLISHED READERSHIP FIGURES

Table 4 shows, for each year, whether readership figures have been published in two or three volumes, and what kinds of results are available in each volume.

Last period reading being, as already said, the basic readership variable of the CESP programme, volume 1 is devoted to cross-tabulations of this item with a number of the personal characteristics of informants. A second volume, and sometimes a third gives additional results, mainly frequency habits, reading probabilities and duplication.

We are currently devising a set of publications to summarize and present the past methodological experiences of CESP. This set will be continued in the future on a permanent basis.

FIGURE 1
Sample sizes

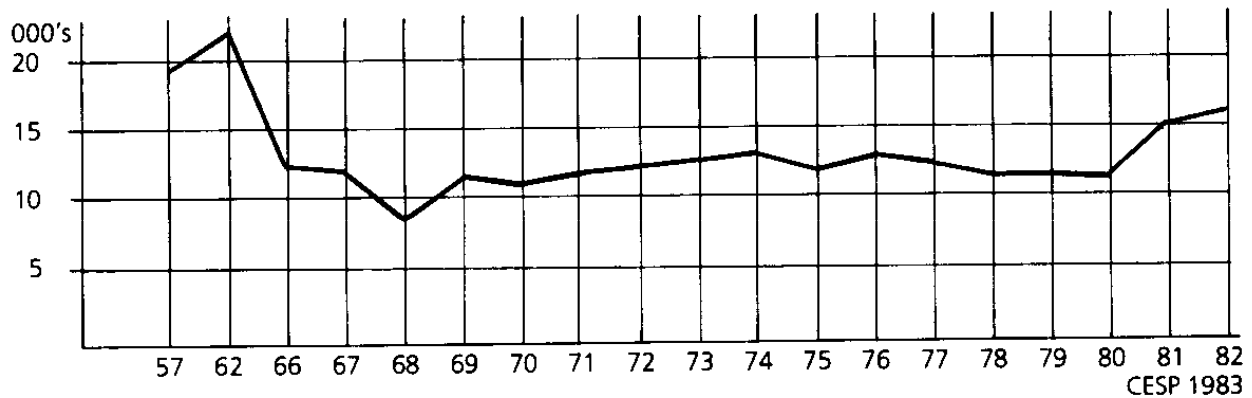


FIGURE 2
Numbers of periodicals included

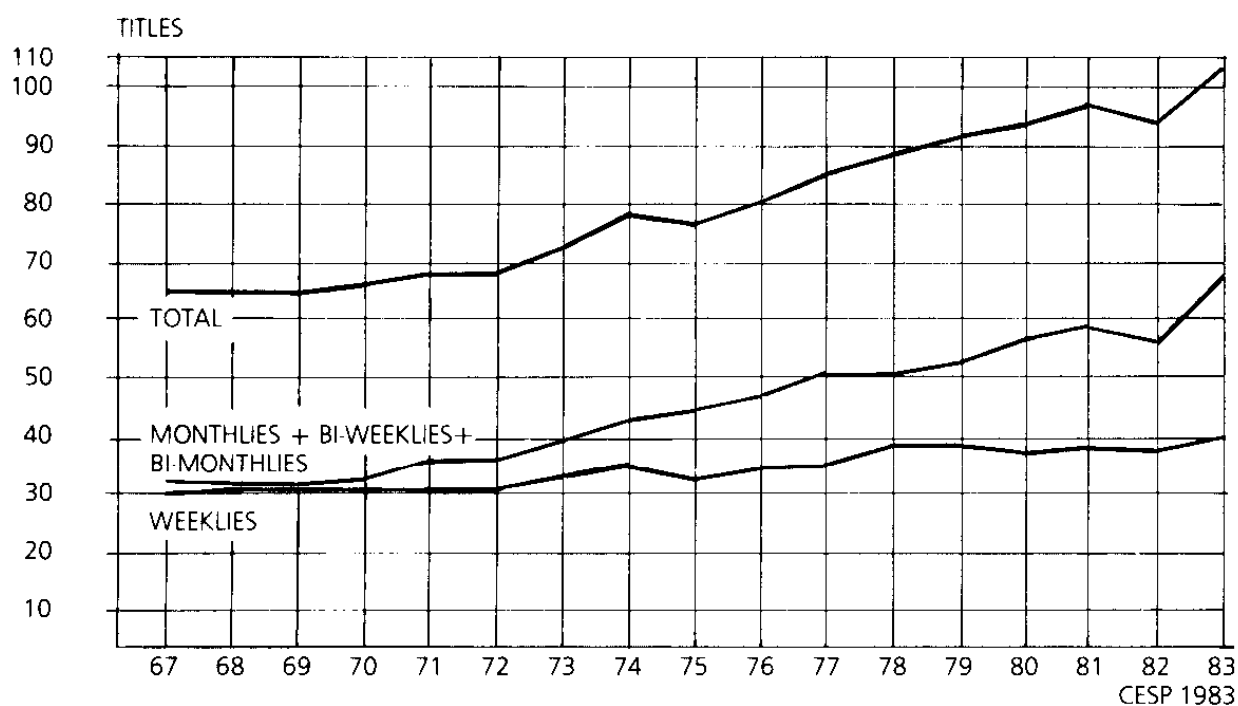


TABLE 1
Basic readership surveys in France — main characteristics

Year	Sample size	Number of waves on the field	TYPE AND NUMBER OF PUBLICATIONS STUDIED							
			National dailies	Regional dailies	Regional weeklies	National Sundays	Weeklies	Bi-weeklies	Monthlies	Bi-monthlies
1957	19 931	1	13	51	10	-	27	-	32	-
1962	21 926	1	13	38	2	-	29	-	29	-
1966	12 478	4	11	81	2	-	30	3	31	-
1967	12 075	4	10	81	2	-	31	2	32	-
1968	8 653	3	10	80	-	-	32	2	31	-
1969	11 292	3	10	80	-	-	32	2	31	-
1970	11 785	4	10	80	-	-	32	2	32	-
1971	11 875	4	9	80	-	-	32	2	35	-
1972	12 060	4	9	80	-	-	32	2	35	-
1973	12 302	4	8	-	-	-	34	2	38	-
1974	12 580	4	8	80	-	-	36	2	41	-
1975	11 895	3	8	77	-	19	33	2	42	-
1976	11 505	4	7	78	-	18	35	2	44	-
1977	12 461	4	7	72	-	17	35	2	44	2
1978	11 879	4	8	75	-	19	39	2	46	2
1979	11 945	3	9	72	-	19	39	2	48	2
1980	11 955	3	9	72	-	19	38	4	50	2
1981	15 167	3	9	72	-	19	39	4	52	3
1982	15 346	3	11	78	-	19	38	3	52	3

TABLE 2
Basic readership surveys in France — main questions

Year	Number of formats	Filter Questions			Date of last reading			Frequency habits			Origin of copy			Other questions	Socio. demog.	
		Nat. dailies	Reg. dailies	Mag.	Nat. dailies	Reg. dailies	Mag.	Nat. dailies	Reg. dailies	Mag.	Nat. dailies	Reg. dailies	Mag.			
1957	2			6 month	Yest.		7 days/week							Open question for regional dailies	7	
1962	4		3 month	3 month	Yest.	X	X								10	
1966	2				Yest.	Yest.	(cf. 1957)	Scale 4 items (A)			5 items (B)				10	
1967	2				As 1966										12	
1968	2				Yest.	Yest.	(cf. 1957)	Scale 6 items (C)							14	
1969	2				Yest.	Yest.	(cf. 1957)	Quant. Scale (D)						Amount of reading (habits)	12	
1970	2				As 1969									Amount of reading (evaluation after reading)	12	
1971	2				Yest.	Yest.	(cf. 1957)	Scale 6 items (C)							12	
1972	2				As 1971										12	
1973	2				As 1971						7 items (E)				13	
1974	2				As 1971									As 1973	13	
1975	2		12 months		Scale 4 items (F)		Scale 6 items (G)	5 items (H)			5 items (I)	Scale 7 items (E)				14
1976	2				As 1975									Amount of reading (last reading)	12	
1977	4				As 1975						(J)			Specific questions for bi-monthlies (dates or last reading/reading habits)	14	
1978 to 1982	4				As 1977										15	

1.2 Readership surveys in France: a brief history from 1957 to 1983

TABLE 2 (2)

-
- (A) Regularly — rather often — rarely — never.
- (B) Subscription — home delivery — personal purchase — other household purchase — borrowed, given — found.
- (C) Regularly — often — from time to time — rarely — practically never — absolutely never.
- (D) All the pages or nearly all — most pages — about half of the pages — a small part only — hardly anything.
- (E) Personal subscription — other household subscription — home delivery — personal purchase — other household purchase — borrowed, given — found.
- (F) Yesterday — day before yesterday — less than 8 days ago — more than 8 days ago.
- (G) *Weeklies:* yesterday or day before
yesterday — 3, 4 days — less than 8 days — 8 to 15 days — 15 to 30 days — more than one month.
Monthlies: less than 8 days — 8 to 15 days — 15 to 30 days — 2 to 3 months — 3 to 6 months — more than 6 months.
- (H) Everyday — 3 to 5 times per week — 1 to 2 times per week — 2 to 3 times per month — less often.
- (I) *Weeklies:* every week — 2 to 3 times per month — once per month — 5 to 6 times per year — less often.
Monthlies: every month — 6 to 10 times per year — 3 to 4 times per year — 1 to 2 times per year — less often.
- (J) As 1975, plus one item, company subscription.
-

1.2 Readership surveys in France: a brief history from 1957 to 1983

TABLE 3
Basic readership surveys in France — additional questions

	<i>Additional Readership Questions</i>	<i>Cinema Audience</i>	<i>Radio and Television Audience</i>	<i>Other Topics</i>
<i>Year</i>	<i>Within The Main Readership Questionnaire</i>		<i>Additional Questionnaire</i>	
1957		Cinema attendance frequency	Radio (channels) listening yesterday	
1962		Attendance 7 last days and 7 days before Frequency habits	Radio (channels) and TV (channels) listening yesterday	
1966	Test: readership of 4 magazines x3 issues (= 2 copies) for each wave (3 waves) reinterview of 1/4 sample: reading frequency of the 4 same magazines	Attendance 7 last days Frequency habits	As 1962	
1967		As 1966	As 1962	
1968		As 1966	Radio - Frequency habits for the whole day Listening yesterday according to time periods TV — Frequency habits (2 channels) for the whole day and 20-22 h. Listening yesterday according to time periods	

1.2 Readership surveys in France: a brief history from 1957 to 1983

TABLE 3 (2)

Year	<i>Additional Readership Questions</i>	<i>Cinema Audience</i>	<i>Radio and Television Audience</i>		<i>Other Topics</i>
	<i>Within The Main Readership Questionnaire</i>		<i>Additional Questionnaire</i>		
1969	Test: amount of reading (8 periodicals)	As 1966 + filter-question: attendance during the last 2 or 3 years	RTV: listening yesterday: channels according to time periods		
1970	Test: amount of reading/3rd and 4th wave	As 1969	RTV: As 1969/11 time periods	Radio detailed listening and TV watching/sample already interviewed about readership	
1971		As 1969 + watching of 14 films		As 1970	Centres of interest/ 2nd wave (self administered questionnaire after RTV interview)
1972		Filter question/ 12 months Frequency habits Attendance 7 last days with number of attendances	TV: watching yesterday, channels each 1/4 of hour	As 1970	As 1971/3rd wave
1973		As 1972	As 1972	As 1970	
1974		As 1972 + for films watched last 7 days: title of the film, day time, locality & place, ad. watched or not.		As 1970	

1.2 Readership surveys in France: a brief history from 1957 to 1983

TABLE 3 (3)

	<i>Additional Readership Questions</i>	<i>Cinema Audience</i>	<i>Radio and Television Audience</i>		<i>Other Topics</i>
<i>Year</i>	<i>Within The Main Readership Questionnaire</i>		<i>Additional Questionnaire</i>		
1975	Test: housing magazines	As 1974 + titles of films watched when last attendance more than 7 days	TV:As 1972	As 1970	
1976		As 1975		As 1970	
1977		Filter question Date of last attendance Description of attendances within last 7 days Frequency habits		As 1970	Centres of interest and life style: self administered questionnaire/3rd Wave
1978		As 1977		As 1970	Time budget: additional interview 2nd wave Multi media panel 5 to 8 weeks diary/3rd wave
1979		As 1977		As 1970	
1980		As 1977	As 1970		"Media context": socio and psycho characteristics/3rd wave

1.2 Readership surveys in France: a brief history from 1957 to 1983

TABLE 3 (4)

	<i>Additional Readership Questions</i>	<i>Cinema Audience</i>	<i>Radio and Television Audience</i>	<i>Other Topics</i>
<i>Year</i>	<i>Within The Main Readership Questionnaire</i>		<i>Additional Questionnaire</i>	
1981		As 1977		As 1970 Readership, listening radio and watching TV, activities for 8 to 14 aged within households/ 1st and 2nd waves
1982		As 1977		N.B. radio and TV separate sample "Media markets": self administered questionnaire on 270 products and more than 3,000 brands/2nd and 3rd waves
1983		As 1977		As 1982

**TABLE 4
Readership published figures**

(1: 1st volume of published results/2: 2nd volume/3: 3rd volume)

<i>Years</i>	<i>Last period reading (A)</i>	<i>Frequency habits (B)</i>	<i>(A) x (B) (C)</i>	<i>Duplication (D)</i>	<i>Amount of reading (E)</i>	<i>Date of last reading (F)</i>	<i>Origin of copy (G)</i>	<i>Other results (H)</i>
1957	1			2	2 (groups of periodicals)			Sole readers (2)
1962	1			2	2 As 1957			
1966	1	2		1				
1967	1	1 and 2	2	2			2 (regional dailies)	(A) x (B) = 2
1968	1	2	2	2				(A) x (B) = 2
1969	1	2	2	2				(A) x (B) = 2
1970	1	2	2	2	1			(A) x (B) = 2
1971	1	2	2	2				
1972	1 and 2	3	3	3	2			
1973	1				1		1	
1974	1	2	2	2	1		(G) x (B) = 2	
1975	1	2	2	2	2	1		(A) x (B) (A) x (G) 2
1976	1	2	2	2	2	3	(G) x (B) = 2	
1977 to 1982	1	2	2	2	2	3	3	