

Media consumption changes in higher income groups: The untold story

By Maria Petousis, *Ask Afrika's* Director of TGi

Are we prematurely arranging print and cinema's funeral or perhaps overinvesting in the digital hype? The media industry has been buzzing around the pronounced death of print along with cinema and sceptically celebrating the emergence of digital media. However, are these truly reflecting the happenings of media consumption? It is generally assumed that higher income individuals drive digital media consumption and that traditional media use is declining under this market. However, are higher income groups really betraying traditional media in favour of digital media?

Higher income groups are still driving traditional print media consumption, making up 65% of heavy newspaper readers and 72% of heavy magazine readers. Contrary to the belief that print is driven by middle-aged generations, heavy users of print media are attributed to the young adult market with 38% of heavy users of newspapers and 36% of heavy magazine readers falling within settled singles and nest builders categories. Economic pressures have resulted in younger South Africans being less optimistic and they are worried about the future. This is reflected in their serious attitudes to building a better future for themselves and demanding more transparency. LSM 7-10 South Africans still trust newspapers for news and provide an important platform for them to engage in the job market, local news, personal finance and politics.

Additionally, an increase in online reading of newspapers and magazines indicates that print is not obsolete. Globally, figures show that print media have reached stability after its decline through online newspapers and magazines. Successful titles are those that combined print plus digital. Newspapers need to ensure that audiences can access information online, provide mobile platforms and applications, but should not ignore the importance of print platforms and inserts in magazines and newspapers.

Higher income South Africans are starved of information and knowledge. Their motivation for watching television is changing from a source of entertainment to an information platform. News channels and knowledge-based channels are becoming increasingly popular. More than half of LSM 7-10 individuals rely on television to keep them informed, compared to only a quarter in 2009. However, advancing technology and programme recoding such as PVR may become a threat for advertising and advertisers might start losing out on this audience. Half of this audience have satellite or decoder subscription and they make up 63% of all programme recordings in South Africa.



The danger for advertising lies in the fact that 38% of viewers in this market stated that they fast forward through advertisements compared to only 18% in 2008 and on average this relates to 3.61 hours per week of viewing time. Although this audience is becoming more desensitised towards violence, sex and nudity on television, there is an uprise in intolerance towards advertising that annoy consumers. As consumers are becoming more knowledgeable and critical, television advertisements that are condescending towards their audiences or underestimates consumers' knowledge, will run the danger of alienating this market. This calls for advertising to rethink their marketing strategies and provide more intelligent and thought-provoking advertising.

Internet usage, mainly driven by the youth, has also showed quite a significant upwards shift from 32% in 2007 to 55% in 2012, although compared to global figures this growth is slower than expected. In addition, middle-aged groups are not technologically incapable as they are stereotypically made out to be with heavy consumption of the internet ascribed to 18% of nest builders and 15% of teen parents. Searching for information is the key use of the internet with 41% higher income individuals agreeing that the internet is the first place that they looking when searching for information.

However a dichotomy of opinions and attitudes towards the internet seem to exist. On the one hand audiences are enjoying online advertising, finding it informative, creative and entertaining. On the other hand, they feel that online advertising is excessive and that they are being bombarded with online messages. It is therefore important to find the correct marketing balance and target strategies for online and digital campaigns.

Cinema remains an important part of higher income consumers' media repertoire making up 70% of heavy cinema goers, with a 5% increase in consumption from 2007 to 2012. As cinema goers are becoming younger, price and special offers will become more and more dominating. It will become imperative for cinemas to provide movie club cards and loyalty discounts as even in higher LSM's there is an increase in agreement from 22% in 2007 compared to 28% in 2012 that being part of a movie club is good value for money.

Radio seems to be the least favoured medium amongst the LSM 7-10 group, with less than half being heavier listeners of radio. Interestingly, within this income group, radio is driven by older generations, with 22% of heavy listeners being all alone and 18% being empty nesters.

Outdoor is driven by dependent singles (18%), and single parents (15%). The higher income group is also paying more attention to outdoor posters compared to other media from 33% in 2007 to 40% in 2012. Opinions on outdoor media in general have remained stable over time. The most noticed advertisements are those on busses, shopping trollies and poster advertisements on the side of the road.

With added complexities of the media space and audiences within South Africa, current predictions may misunderstand current media use and motivations of media consumption, as we too readily believe global insights and adopt international media models. A key to the homes, hearts and mind of the media consumer, is to provide information and knowledge.

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About TGI:

TGI research, for which Ask Afrika own the South African copyright, is a single source sample of 15 000, it has a global geographic coverage of 67 markets and measures services and products, media and brands. Ask Afrika's knowledge of brands is extensive and as owners of the local TGI license, they are the leaders in brand expertise in South Africa. TGI can provide a commercial alternative to industry media measurements and is the perfect vehicle for brand positioning. The TGI Icon Brand Awards have been published consecutively for 5 years and are setting a new benchmark in innovative brand thinking and assessment.

About Ask Afrika:

Over a period of almost two decades, Ask Afrika has grown to be the largest independent South African market research company. The company focuses on local relevance, benchmarked against the global context. Apart from its large South African footprint, Ask Africa also operates in a dozen African continental territories. Their exclusive product suite includes the Orange Index, Trust Barometer, Radio Moods, TGI Icon Brands and TGI (the Target Group Index).

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