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Mediapulse Time Use Study

Methodology Factsheet

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AG für Medienforschung
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1 Introduction

The following document describes the methodological design for the Mediapulse Time Use Study (TUS) survey, which has been conducted since 2007. In 2022, the TUS was methodologically reconfigured in cooperation with GfK as the new service provider. All information in the following text refers to the current edition of the TUS.

The purpose of this document is to provide a generally understandable, transparent explanation of the methodological principles of the TUS, on which the research process is also based. This will enable data users to properly comprehend and evaluate the collection, processing and quality of the survey data.

2 Object of investigation

The Mediapulse Time Use Study records the daily routine of the Swiss population and allows a differentiated description in three different dimensions:

– Extent and timing of main activities such as sleeping, working, eating, shopping, etc;

– Extent and temporal distribution of media activities;

– Devices used for the media activities.

In addition, TUS provides important information for the further development of the research for which Mediapulse is responsible.

3 Universe

The Time Use Study universe comprises the resident population of Switzerland aged 15 and over.

To ensure the highest possible representativeness, the universe is adjusted in line with the latest figures from the Federal Statistical Office.

4 Methodological design

The research design of the TUS as a population-representative survey is based on the following two key elements:

– Recruitment and survey of individuals aged 15 and over living in private households in Switzerland based on the radio pool;

– Survey of daily activities, media consumption and headphone use as well as the use of different end devices via an e-diary (CAWI).

The TUS is conducted in four waves spread over twelve months and thus captures the daily routine of the Swiss population over the course of a year.

5 Survey basis

5.1 Recruitment of the sample

The basis for recruiting participants is GfK's radio pool. The focus is on individuals who do not currently wear a sampling watch. Participants are recruited by e-mail.

In order to represent all days of the week equally, the recruitment of participants is staggered.

5.2 Sample size and structure

The sample is divided according to language region (disproportionate), WEMF regions (Suisse romande, Alps and Pre-Alps, Western Mittelland, Eastern Mittelland, Ticino) as well as gender and age (15–24, 25–34, 35–44, 45–59, 60+)

The net size of the sample is around 500 individuals per wave. In a complete cycle (four waves), the sample thus comprises around 2,000 people. These are split between the three language regions (subpanels) as follows:

– German-speaking Switzerland: 1,200 individuals

– French-speaking Switzerland: 600 individuals

– Italian-speaking Switzerland: 200 individuals

Finally, with an average of three complete logged days in the e-diary, the 2,000 individuals result in around 6,000 sampling days.

5.3 Ensuring sample quality

To ensure the quality of the sample, GfK continuously monitors the response rate of the sample during the field phase. This involves verifying the net size of the three language-regional subpanels as well as the even distribution of the surveyed measurement days over all weekdays.

Based on the response from the previous waves, it may be necessary to tweak the configuration slightly for subsequent waves.

Both during the field phases and after their completion, Mediapulse is informed by GfK about the response rate as well as the degree of compliance with the agreed net size.

5.4 Survey methodology

The TUS is conducted using an e-diary (CAWI). This permits granular and continuous entry (5-minute blocks) of all activities on four consecutive days.

Early each morning, participants receive a link giving them access to the new day in the e-diary. The previous day must be completely filled in by the following evening, which guarantees the timeliness of the entry.

For each activity during the course of the day, respondents must indicate in the e-diary whether media were consumed – provided media consumption is possible during the activity in question –, on which device the media consumption took place and whether headphones were used for most of the time or not. Multiple media activities can be recorded in the same period in order to take into account possible parallel use.

The e-diary can be completed via desktop as well as mobile phone.

5.5 Ensuring the data quality

GfK is committed to a high level of compliance among participants. To ensure this, participants are properly instructed in the use of the e-diary before the start of the first day. If desired, a tutorial is also available that provides a simple and easy-to-learn explanation of how to fill out the e-diary. The instructions in the e-diary are also kept as brief and clear as possible to ensure the diary is filled out correctly and to achieve sufficient compliance.

The data quality is guaranteed through the programming and structure of the e-diary. This enforces a seamless recording of the day in five-minute blocks, prevents entries for the previous day after the end of the following evening and technically prevents implausible entries (e.g. media consumption while asleep or on non-mobile devices installed at home when the subject is away from home).

This is additionally backed by various automated quality controls carried out by GfK on behalf of Mediapulse to check the completeness of all sampling days. Sampling days that are not complete are excluded. If there are less than two complete sampling days from the same person, the corresponding data is also excluded.

5.6 Data processing

Following a quality check, the TUS data is adjusted, weighted, enriched with additional personal variables from radio research and extrapolated to the TUS universe.

The target specifications for the weighting are laid down during the calculation of the TUS universe. Mediapulse and GfK agree jointly on the weighting cells and their characteristics.

Despite the staggered recruitment, any differences that exist in the number of weekdays are compensated for with the weighting. Further weighting dimensions include the variables age and gender (intersected), education (two-stage), employment (four-stage), type of settlement (two-stage) and WEMF regions (five-stage). The disproportionality of the language regions in the sample is compensated for with the inclusion of the WEMF regions.

5.7 Ensuring the quality of data processing

Various manual checks are carried out to verify the accuracy of the data processing.

This involves firstly checking for continuous and complete days; secondly, detecting possible discrepancies in the number of media activities in the raw data compared to the data output; and thirdly, checking the number of complete days and panellists.

If necessary, manual corrections are made after the quality check has been carried out to ensure that the data is completely correct. Finally, sampling days that are highly implausible in terms of content are removed.

6 Data release

Data is released after the most recent four survey waves have been completed in an evaluation tool provided by Mediapulse.

The tool allows, among other things, combinations of variables (e.g. daily activity x media activity; media activity x headphone use), separate or overall evaluations across all language regions/country parts as well as time periods and days of the week, custom-defined time periods and target groups as well as target

group comparisons (socio-demographic, media consumption typology). The TUS evaluation tool is available in German and French.

Mediapulse AG

info@mediapulse.ch
+41 58 356 47 11

Weltpoststrasse 5
3015 Bern

Badenerstrasse 15
8004 Zürich