THE OUTDOOR TIMES: A READERSHIP SURVEY
AND HISTORY OF A SPECIALIZED
WEEKLY NEWSPAPER

THESIS

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By

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**LIST OF TABLES** ........................................ iv

**Chapter**

I. INTRODUCTION ........................................ 1

  Statement of the Problem
  Purposes of the Study
  Hypotheses
  Recent and Related Studies
  Definition of Terms
  Limitations
  Basic Assumptions
  Instruments
  Procedures for Collecting Data
  Procedures for Analysis of Data
  Organization of the Study

II. HISTORY OF THE **OUTDOOR TIMES** .................. 13

  Introduction
  History

III. READERSHIP SURVEY OF **OUTDOOR TIMES** ........ 27

IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS ............................ 45

  Characteristics of Subscribers
  Summary of Hypotheses
  Importance of the Study to **Outdoor Times**
  Conclusions
  Areas for Further Study

**APPENDIX** ............................................. 54

**BIBLIOGRAPHY** ........................................ 57
LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Number of Outdoor Publications Subscribed to by <em>Outdoor Times</em> Subscribers</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Opinions Concerning <em>Outdoor Times</em>' Effectiveness in Reporting Current Conditions on Outdoor Activities</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Opinions Concerning the Over-All Quality of Writing in <em>Outdoor Times</em></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Opinions Concerning the Effectiveness of <em>Outdoor Times</em> in Reporting Legislation That Pertains to Sportsmen</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Opinions Concerning the Number of Photographs in <em>Outdoor Times</em></td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. Amount of Advertisements Looked at in Each Issue of <em>Outdoor Times</em></td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. Importance of Advertising to Readers of <em>Outdoor Times</em></td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. Responses Concerning Main Reason for Subscribing to <em>Outdoor Times</em></td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX. Responses Concerning Major Interest in <em>Outdoor Times</em></td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X. Age Distribution of <em>Outdoor Times</em> Subscribers</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI. Education Level of Subscribers to <em>Outdoor Times</em></td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII. Yearly Income of <em>Outdoor Times</em> Subscribers</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIII. Length of Time Issues are Kept in Subscriber's Homes</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As evidenced by the failure of several prominent American publications in the last two decades, the age of specialization has come to periodical literature in this country. The number of general interest magazines and periodicals has decreased significantly, while the number and scope of specialized periodicals has significantly increased. During the decade of the sixties a total of 162 periodicals disappeared through sale, merger, or suspension, but 676 new periodicals appeared (7, p. 249). Since radio, television, and newspapers are primarily general media that aim at the broadest possible audience, the periodicals most notably affected by them are the general audience. It is not at all surprising, then, that the mass circulation general periodicals suffered first, and most, from the changes in the roles of the mass media brought on by television (5, p. 3). In contrast to the general interest publications that have died during the past two decades, the successful periodicals that grew up in the same period emphasize special interests and seek a particular audience (5, p. 3).

These new breeds of publications are aimed at very select and relatively small audiences. They attempt to appeal to the interest of a particular segment of the population, and their
success is directly tied to their effectiveness in hitting this target. Since these publications strive for a limited but enthusiastic audience, the variety of subjects covered by them are vast.

One subject that has enjoyed increasing popularity in the last few years is that of outdoor recreation. Hunting and fishing probably claim more adherents than any other American sport because the outdoor life has become the all-American activity for all ages. More than one hundred magazines alone are aimed at the outdoors (2, p. 57). Americans seek the specialized publications of sport and travel for suggestions to guide them on their way (2, p. 6).

Therefore, it is not by accident that more editors and publishers have turned their attention to the field of outdoor recreation. Americans are enjoying increased leisure time and a higher standard of living that enables them to spend more hours in pursuit of outdoor recreation. The Bureau of Outdoor Recreation estimated that in 1960 Americans engaged in the major forms of outdoor activities on 4.28 billion occasions (3, p. 197). By 1965 that number had increased by fifty-one percent to 6.48 billion occasions (3, p. 197). It is predicted that by 1980 participation in these summertime activities will have increased by 137 percent over the 1960 figure to 10.13 occasions (3, p. 198). These figures indicate that participation is increasing at about twice the rate of population.
In addition, a distinctive feature of life in America is mobility. American people spend about $18 billion per year on domestic tourist travel, much of it on the new and sophisticated outdoor recreation equipment that has swamped the market in the last decade (3, p. 41).

Still another contributing factor to the increased participation by Americans in outdoor activities is their growing amount of leisure time. Economic and labor specialists predict that by 1975 the work week among nonfarmworkers in the United States will average thirty-six hours and that by the year 2000 it will range between twenty-eight and thirty-two (3, p. 45). Americans today spend significantly less time on the job and more time at leisure than they did in the past.

However, it is only in the last few years that a new type of outdoor publication has been created in an effort to reap the rewards of the growing interest in outdoor recreation. This new type of publication is more specialized than its predecessors, and it is even more selective in the audience it seeks. The most striking features of these new publications are their introduction of the elements of timeliness and proximity to the field of outdoor writing.

These new periodicals are weekly outdoor newspapers that attempt to compete with the larger monthly outdoor magazines by giving their readers current and detailed information about outdoor activities in the area where they live. These
weekly newspapers are not like the monthly publications that appeal to subscribers by printing "how to do it" and "where to go" articles that are national and even international in scope. These new and smaller publications deal with outdoor recreation and sports only in a particular area and timeliness is an important part of their success.

Because of the newness of these publications, there has been no detailed analysis of their role in the outdoor publication field. Similarly, there has been no detailed audience analysis to determine the characteristics and preferences of subscribers to these types of publications, nor any attempt to explain why they read them.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was an audience analysis of the weekly newspaper _Outdoor Times_, a Dallas based publication, by conducting a readership survey of randomly selected subscribers. The study also contains a brief history of the _Outdoor Times_, tracing its development since its inception to the present.

Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study were (1) to examine the characteristics of a specialized, regional publication, the _Outdoor Times_, (2) to determine some characteristics of subscribers to the _Outdoor Times_, (3) to determine some reasons
why readers subscribe to the Outdoor Times, (4) to examine subscribers' likes and dislikes concerning the Outdoor Times.

Hypotheses

To carry out the purposes of this study, the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. More than fifty percent of subscribers to Outdoor Times also subscribe to other outdoor publications.

2. Readers who subscribe only to the Outdoor Times will rate the publication more favorably than those who subscribe to other outdoor publications.

3. Those readers who subscribe only to the Outdoor Times will consider its advertising content more important than those readers who subscribe to other outdoor publications.

4. The percentage of readers who subscribe to Outdoor Times for local information is greater among those who subscribe to other outdoor publications than among those who subscribe only to Outdoor Times.

5. The percentage of subscribers who prefer the hunting and fishing content of the publication is greater than the percentage of those who prefer its other outdoor activities.
Recent and Related Studies

The readership survey has long been a useful and proven tool in mass communication research. The flexibility of the readership survey makes it effective in many areas of audience analysis. Among other factors, it allows the researcher to find what individuals read in certain publications, or to find over-all communication behavior of particular groups. The readership survey can be useful in measuring the impact that communication has on opinion formation, and its effects on knowledge of and attitudes toward various subjects. It is also useful in revealing the attitudes, opinions, and criticisms readers have about certain publications.

Journalism abstracts and research guides show that little research of any type has been done in the area of outdoor publications. In fact, there apparently has been no audience analysis at all concerning specialized weekly outdoor publications such as the Outdoor Times.

Most readership surveys have dealt with daily newspapers, and many of these were concerned with assessing the appeal these publications have for their readers. One such survey, "Midcity Daily: What the People Think a Newspaper Should Be," was conducted by Charles E. Swanson in 1941 (6). Swanson directed his study toward learning the standards that readers expected of their newspaper. He compiled data to reflect readers' feelings on what the newspaper should and should not
print, and pointed out some characteristics of these readers. These characteristics included age, sex, education, religion, and nativity of parents. Swanson then compared responses according to a number of these categories, such as men versus women, protestant-catholic, et cetera.

In the area of weekly newspapers, a study conducted by Merritt Ludwig and Wilbur Schramm in 1951 is significant (4). The study, "The Weekly Newspaper and Its Readers," utilized twenty-four readership surveys conducted by universities and other non-profit organizations. The surveys were selected on the basis of such criteria as acceptability of methodology, sample size, and kinds of data reported (4, p. 302). After studying the results of these selected surveys, the authors compiled a list of findings pertaining to weekly newspapers in the United States. These include average time spent reading the weekly newspapers, percentage of content read, the importance of advertising, women's preferences as compared to men's in reading habits, and what other types of publications were read by the readers of weekly newspapers. Ludwig and Schramm concluded that the weekly newspaper is a powerful force of socialization for the community.

Another study of interest to those involved in readership surveys was conducted by Warren Engstrom, Malcolm MacLean, and Ralph Nafzifer in 1951 (1). Their study, "Useful Tools for Interpreting Newspaper Readership Data," deals with the problem of analyzing readership figures most effectively once they have
been collected. They deal with what readership percentages mean, how they can be analyzed most effectively for whom, and with what aim in mind. The authors believe that creating tables and charts to illustrate the results of the survey is the most effective means of analyzing readership survey data.

Some techniques used in the above-mentioned three studies were employed in carrying out this study. In addition, emphasis of this study was placed on what a weekly, specialized outdoor publication offers its readers that a larger, monthly outdoor publication does not.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following definitions were formulated:

Outdoor publication - any periodical that devotes the majority of its space to news, articles, and advertising concerning outdoor activities.

Outdoor activities - those out of door activities written about by outdoor publications. These activities include hunting, fishing, camping, travel, boating, and archery.

Outdoor advertising - the advertising of those products associated with outdoor activities.

Limitations

This study was limited to those subscribers of the Outdoor Times only. The newspaper is sold on newsstands, but
there was no attempt to survey those who might buy the publication in that manner. The survey of subscribers was conducted by a mailed questionnaire, so there was no way of explaining the intent of any of the questions other than an accompanying letter explaining the nature of the study.

Basic Assumptions

It is assumed that the selected subscribers responded honestly to the questions asked of them concerning personal data and opinions about the publication.

Instruments

A closed-end questionnaire was used to gather data from subscribers. The questionnaire sought personal data from the respondents, as well as their opinions and preferences concerning the content of the publication.

Procedures for Collecting Data

A cover letter explaining the nature of the study and encouraging responses was sent with each questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of twenty-eight questions that sought personal data from the subscribers and their opinions and preferences concerning the content of Outdoor Times. The questionnaires were mailed to 580 subscribers. These subscribers were randomly selected by picking every twentieth name from the Outdoor Times subscription list, which was in
zip code order. The size of the sample was deemed adequate based on the publication's circulation of 13,000. Of the 580 questionnaires that were mailed out, 246, or forty-two percent, were returned in usable form. Eleven of the returned questionnaires had to be discarded because of errors and omissions committed by the respondents in answering the questions. The questionnaire was pretested personally by seven subscribers to the Outdoor Times. No changes were made.

Since the Outdoor Times has subscribers in five states, it was possible to compare the percentage of actual subscribers in each state to the percentages drawn from each state in the sample. In a state-by-state comparison, in no instance did the actual percentage of subscribers in a state vary more than two percent from the percentage selected in the sample.

The historical data was gathered by studying past issues of the publication. The newspaper's founder and the present publisher were also interviewed.

Procedures for Analysis of Data

After the questionnaires were returned, the data were tabulated. Responses were recorded for each question, and tables were constructed to illustrate results. From these figures, conclusions and comparisons were drawn.

Much of the analysis consisted of testing the validity of the hypotheses. Emphasis was placed on comparing characteristics of readers who subscribe only to the Outdoor Times
with those characteristics of readers who subscribe to other outdoor publications. In addition, opinions were compared between these two groups concerning selected areas of the publication.

The analysis also included data describing the average age, income, and educational status of the subscribers, plus what the average subscriber reads and how much time is spent reading the publication.

Organization of the Study

The thesis was organized into four chapters. Chapter One, the introduction, explains the purpose and nature of the study.

Chapter Two gives a brief history of Outdoor Times. It explains how the publication has changed over the years, and an interview with the present publisher and founder were included to determine their views on the role and function of the publication. These views were compared with those of the subscribers.

Chapter Three provides an analysis of the data collected by the measuring device.

The fourth and final chapter deals with the conclusions and findings of the study.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF THE OUTDOOR TIMES

Introduction

The Outdoor Times is a weekly outdoor newspaper published in Dallas, Texas. It was founded in 1967 in an effort to appeal to outdoorsmen and sportsmen in a five-state region: Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Louisiana, and Arkansas. The publication contains stories and columns pertaining to hunting, fishing, camping, travel, and archery. In addition, the newspaper prints area fishing and hunting reports, lake conditions and levels, and news of sportsman's clubs.

The paid-in-advance circulation of Outdoor Times was approximately 13,500 as of June, 1973 (1). Subscription rates are: one year, 6 dollars; two years, 10 dollars; and three years, 14 dollars. The advertising rates are based on a sliding scale per insertion, with a five-dollar-per-inch base. A full page advertisement is priced at 350 dollars.

Outdoor Times is owned and published by Outdoor Times, Inc., and is a member of the Texas Press Association, the Texas Outdoor Writers Association, and the Outdoor Writers Association of America. The newspaper is published by M. L. Harrell, president of Outdoor Times, Inc.
History

In the summer of 1967, Outdoor Times was born. The desire to create a different and successful outdoor publication was its conception. Necessity gave it life. The publication's creator, Richard A. McCune, was unemployed that summer for the first time in his professional life. He had been the Outdoor Editor of the Dallas Times Herald since 1958, but the raise he had counted on that last year at the newspaper had turned out to be "embarrassingly small" (2). When his request for more money was refused by management, he resigned. McCune had conceived of a publication like Outdoor Times while he was still at the Times Herald, and his resignation more or less forced him into starting it (2).

While McCune was at the Times Herald, each week he would read all of the outdoor columns from daily newspapers in Texas. "I clipped all these columns and pasted them up one day," McCune said. "It occurred to me that this would be a hell of an idea for a newsletter or bulletin-type publication wrapping up the entire state as seen through the eyes of these resident experts. All of these men had been in the business for ten to twenty years, and, like myself, they were all recognized authorities on various ecological areas of the state." When McCune left the Times Herald, he began looking for someone to back him financially in the project.
McCune took a small office in Dallas and set up a presentation of his proposed publication. He attempted to estimate what kind of readers would be interested in such a publication, what it would cost to print the newspaper, what type of office expense would be involved, how much it would cost to pay correspondents, and where the advertising would come from (2). "I had a little money, but not much," McCune said. "I was looking for someone who enjoyed outdoor sports and believed, as I did, that a publication of this nature would be a sound commercial venture."

McCune believed that *Outdoor Times* would be successful for several reasons. He was aware that the America of the late sixties was increasingly mobile and affluent and he sensed the trend of increasing participation in outdoor activities (2). While writing for the *Times Herald*, McCune covered anything within a 500-mile radius of Dallas. "Dallas residents would travel anywhere they could get to and back from a Friday night to a Sunday night," McCune said. "This is why my area of coverage included parts of New Mexico, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Arkansas. My idea was to get a weekly publication to the sportsmen on Fridays that contained regional and up-to-date information helping them to decide where to spend the weekend." Because of this philosophy, McCune extended the coverage of *Outdoor Times* from only Texas to its four border states as well (2).
McCune found a partner to put up some money, and then worked out an agreement with Southland Corporation of Dallas to distribute the publication. The corporation owned and operated the 7-Eleven food stores in the Dallas area, and it was through this channel that Outdoor Times was first distributed. The agreement was that McCune would furnish each 7-Eleven store in the Dallas area with 100 copies of Outdoor Times each Friday morning. The agreement was on a consignment basis, with each store manager paying only for those copies sold. The price per issue was fifteen cents to the 7-Eleven stores and twenty-five cents to the public. The first issue reached the 7-Eleven stores on June 30, 1967, and right away Outdoor Times was in trouble.

McCune had realized, and admitted in his presentation, that he did not have a sound business background. "In the areas of advertising and circulation, I was doing a lot of guessing," he said. "I was on firm ground editorially, but the other two legs of that triangle were rather strange areas to me." The problem encountered with the 7-Eleven stores was one of improper display. McCune and his backers quickly found out that the manager of each 7-Eleven store is free to judge what they should be presenting to the consumer. They were required to accept the 100 copies of Outdoor Times each Friday, but how they displayed them was up to the managers. Some stores were enthusiastic in their acceptance of the publication, others largely ignored it (2). "Some stores were not even
opening their bundles," McCune said. "We didn't have newsstands because we couldn't afford them, and as a new publication we really needed point of purchase display. In many cases, we were not getting it."

At this time, circulation and advertising were almost nonexistent. The corporation tried to correct this by adding an advertising and circulation manager, both of whom were very expensive (2). "We tried to expand by getting the publication displayed at various news agencies around the state," McCune said. "We again ran into the same problem we had at the 7-Eleven stores. Some of these news agencies displayed it prominently, others ignored it, and some would not even take it."

All this time, advertising was coming in very slowly. This problem was complicated because the publication was running twenty to twenty-four pages per week, and without much advertising a lot of space had to be filled (2). "I should have started with an eight-or ten-page paper," McCune said. "I over-obligated the newspaper to pay the correspondents. I should have had four or five writers instead of twelve." McCune realizes that he was over enthusiastic because of his desire to have the editorial content of Outdoor Times the best. "We should have put more emphasis on advertising to begin with," he said. "I wanted too much too soon, and should have been hobbled. But my partner gave in
to my requests, and I now realize that he did not have that much business experience either."

After Outdoor Times had been published about a year, McCune began to realize some other things about his partner. "He kept indicating to me that the money was there," McCune said. "But it wasn't all there. He had the idea that we were going to make a lot of money in a short time. I had no illusions about that."

During this period, and for the next year as well, Outdoor Times was a sound and professional publication editorially. McCune was the editor, and he filled the pages of Outdoor Times with copy from professional journalists that was well written and interesting to the sportsman. A journalist all his working life, McCune never lost sight of the importance of timeliness to his publication, and the stories and columns that were printed contained up-to-date information on various outdoor activities in the five-state region. "I took great pride in the publication," McCune said, "and I wanted it to be a good example of journalism. But by the spring of 1969, we had let so many people go because of financial problems that the work load became a problem for me." McCune never drew a salary while he was working with the publication, and when the work load increased and financial matters continued to worsen, he began looking for a way out at the end of 1969 (2). "My own family life began to deteriorate the situation finally got so bad," he said. "I
didn't think it was possible to dedicate myself so much professionally and maintain a family relationship. I decided to leave the publication and get a job in an effort to save the family, but it didn't work out."

McCune rid himself of all his Outdoor Times stock, and after being divorced by his wife and saying goodbye to his two sons, headed for Austin with "a 1960 Volkswagon and a locker full of venison sausage" (2). He is still there today as the Director of Information and Education for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

A man who had expressed interest in the publication while McCune was there joined the company to replace him as publisher in January of 1970. The man was M. L. Harrell, and he is still publishing the newspaper. Harrell had approached McCune and his partner as early as 1967. His interest was in circulation (1). "It looked like they had a good thing going," Harrell said. "I was going to try to work with them on increasing their circulation, but we didn't work anything out then."

McCune said that Harrell had been watching the newspaper in a "vulture-like posture" almost since its inception. "He had a circulation company and had tried to make deals with my partner several times in the past," McCune said. "I felt like he wanted too much and offered too little, and probably incorrectly, I felt like he didn't know the business."
In the latter part of 1969, after McCune had left, Harrell said the publication contacted him. "They were in bad financial condition, about to go broke," he said. "I came in at first as the business manager and handled all the circulation." Harrell said that the problems when he entered the picture were in the areas of advertising and circulation. "They did put out a good paper editorially, but there was not enough attention paid to business aspects of the publication," he said. "They were just not making any money." Harrell immediately set to work at increasing the publication's advertising revenue. "We built the circulation up to the extent where the advertisers were getting what they paid for," he said. "We began to service the ads by seeing that they were displayed properly, were treated right, and got in on time. This is the main thing I worked on, because I felt the basic format of the publication was fine."

Harrell claims he has had some success in straightening out the publication's financial problems. "For a period, 1970 and 1971, we did quite well," he said. "We paid off about fifty percent of what they had lost." But Harrell also admits to encountering problems. "After those first two good years we made a bad decision," Harrell said. "It was through neglect on my part. At that time we started expanding two other operations that I was involved with, so I turned the advertising over to a person who was supposed to handle it."
This, according to Harrell, was the bad decision. The man did not get the job done, and when Harrell fired him and hired another for the same purpose, the new man did even less (1). These bad decisions forced Harrell to put a "considerable amount of money" back into the publication starting in January of 1973 (1). "I still believe that in time it will become a very valuable piece of property," he said. "I think it will be an ultimate financial success, and if I have to, I'll put even more money into it."

If the publication is on somewhat sounder ground financially since Harrell joined the company, it is difficult to say the same for the editorial content. Harrell replaced McCune as publisher, but there has been no editor since McCune left late in 1969. It is obvious that the content and attractiveness of Outdoor Times has suffered since that time. Harrell now simply sends his copy to Marca Advertising in Dallas, and the publication is made up as the firm sees fit. The only editorial control Harrell attempts to wield over the composition of each issue is to decide what stories and columns must absolutely go in the newspaper (1). Marca Advertising is free to omit any copy the publication sends to them with the exception of some articles that are marked "must go" by Harrell (1). The advertising firm decides where a particular story will be run, with the exception of the cover story, which is Harrell's decision. The firm also has the
authority to cut any articles and to decide how they should be displayed (1). No member of the staff of Outdoor Times has had any editorial experience prior to joining the company, and none have had any training.

McCune feels, naturally, that this lack of professionalism in editorial matters has hurt Outdoor Times. "They are using a lot of amateurs as writers," McCune said. "Only two of the columnists who were working with the publication when I was there still contribute with any degree of regularity. There is no news in the publication at all, but what could you expect when no one is editing the damn thing?"

Whatever the validity of McCune's judgment of the newspaper now, it is apparent that Harrell is sensitive to reader's likes and dislikes and has made an effort to improve the publication. Circulation was around 5,000 when McCune left, and Harrell says that it is 13,500 now (1). "We are very interested in what our readers think about our publication," Harrell said. "We have not gone to them seeking opinions all that often, but in the past few years we have tried to ask them, in the newspaper, to send in suggestions for improvements and tell us what they want to see in Outdoor Times.

Harrell does share McCune's philosophy on what Outdoor Times should offer its readers. "I see the publication as not going quite as far as monthly outdoor magazines, but farther than the outdoor pages of local newspapers," Harrell
said. "The only salvation, as I see it, for a publication of this nature, is the ability to provide current and local information to sportsmen."

However, Harrell will admit to some editorial problems. The publication has no staff writers, as such. They do have regular contributors, but all these writers are free lancers and try to sell to other outdoor newspapers and magazines (1). "This has caused some problems in the past," Harrell said. *Outdoor Times* has had difficulty in getting copy from a certain state or area. "Our writers are pretty much free to go where they want for a story," Harrell said. "Sometimes this works out to too much emphasis on a particular area."

Another problem the publication has encountered is that a writer sometimes works as hard for an advertiser as he does *Outdoor Times*. "On occasion a writer will plug products by name in his story," Harrell said. This can be an advantage to them personally, but obviously we are not in business to give out free advertising. We want them to write something that is of interest to readers, not manufacturers or resort owners."

In August of this year, however, *Outdoor Times* underwent a major format change that Harrell believes will ease or eliminate many of the publication's problems, both editorially and financially. "For the first time in the history of the publication we are biweekly," Harrell said. "We will have
only twenty-six issues per year." Harrell feels that the format change will be beneficial for two main reasons. "First, we will have more time to be selective and improve the quality of our content," Harrell said, "and second, we feel it will help our advertising."

Harrell is not concerned that the biweekly publishing schedule will dissatisfy subscribers, even though subscription rates will remain the same. In fact, Harrell believes that most of the subscribers will prefer the biweekly rather than the weekly format. "Based on what little polling we have done, most of them would rather have it every two weeks," Harrell said. "If we do what we told our subscribers we would do, give the readers a better publication, we will be all right."

Harrell expects the majority of subscribers to be in favor of the change because the publication will have spot color, more pages, and run more copy (1). Also, some advertisers have expressed the desire to be able to run color ads in the publication. "The advertising rates will be adjusted upward on the national level," Harrell said, "remain about the same on the regional level, and we are also creating what we call a local rate for the new format." This local rate will be what Harrell calls a "reasonable fee" for retail stores in the Dallas area (1).
There is one facet of the new publishing schedule that Harrell concedes could cause some problems, and that is in the area of timeliness. Harrell knows the importance of this element to the success of Outdoor Times, and plans to guard against publishing old copy in the newspaper. "We could be a little lacking in some areas pertaining to current information with the format change, but I feel if we work at this we can hold it to a minimum," he said. Harrell feels that the two main areas of coverage that must be timely are the regional hunting and fishing reports. "We can't run anything that is two weeks old here," he said. "I hope that we can keep the deadlines the same for these reports, which is five days to a week prior to publication of each issue."
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER III

A READERSHIP SURVEY OF OUTDOOR TIMES

To carry out some of the purposes of the study, a readership survey of the Outdoor Times was conducted. Questionnaires were mailed to 580 randomly selected subscribers to determine some characteristics of subscribers to Outdoor Times, to determine some reasons why individuals subscribe to the publication, and to examine subscriber's likes and dislikes concerning the newspaper. Of the 580 questionnaires that were mailed to subscribers, 246, or 42 percent, were returned in usable form.

Because of the specialized nature of Outdoor Times and the relative newness of this type of publication, emphasis was placed on comparing characteristics and opinions of readers who subscribe only to Outdoor Times to those who subscribe to other outdoor publications. It was hypothesized that more than fifty percent of subscribers to Outdoor Times also subscribe to other outdoor publications. It was also hypothesized that readers who subscribe only to Outdoor Times would rate the publication more favorably than those who subscribe to other outdoor publications.

Table I shows the data collected in relation to Hypothesis One, which states that more than 50 percent of subscribers to Outdoor Times also subscribe to other outdoor publications.
TABLE I
NUMBER OF OUTDOOR PUBLICATIONS SUBSCRIBED TO BY OUTDOOR TIMES' SUBSCRIBERS

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<td>No Response</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data presented in Table I clearly supports the hypothesis that more than 50 percent of subscribers to Outdoor Times also subscribe to other outdoor publications. Table I shows that 61.5 percent of subscribers to Outdoor Times also subscribe to at least one other outdoor publication, and that 46.9 percent of these subscribe to at least two.

Four of the 28 questions on the questionnaire were aimed at collecting data to test the second hypothesis. This hypothesis stated that those who subscribe only to Outdoor Times will rate the publication more favorably than those who subscribe to other outdoor publications. The four questions asked subscribers to rate a specific area of editorial content in the newspaper.
Since 69.1 percent of the respondents indicated that they subscribed to Outdoor Times for local information on outdoor activities, Table II was constructed to show opinions concerning the effectiveness of the publication in this area.

**TABLE II**

OPINIONS CONCERNING OUTDOOR TIMES' EFFECTIVENESS IN REPORTING CURRENT CONDITIONS ON OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subscribe Only to</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Times</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subscribe to Other</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Publications</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table II illustrates, there is no clear division of opinion between those who subscribe only to Outdoor Times and those who subscribe to other outdoor publications concerning the newspaper's effectiveness in reporting current outdoor activities. The publication's performance in this area was rated good or excellent by 60 persons, or 64 percent, of those who subscribe only to Outdoor Times, while 93, or 61 percent, of those who subscribe to other outdoor publications rated Outdoor Times good or excellent in this area. Conversely, 34, or 36 percent, of those who subscribe only to Outdoor Times rated the newspaper's performance good or fair, while 59, or
39 percent of those who subscribe to other publications rated *Outdoor Times* poor or fair.

Although the data presented in Table II indicates that readers who subscribe only to *Outdoor Times* rate the publication higher in the area of covering current outdoor activities, there is no strong support for Hypothesis Two since there is no clear division of opinion.

A second question that pertains to the second hypothesis asked respondents their opinion of the over-all quality of writing in *Outdoor Times*. Table III illustrates the opinions of those who subscribe only to *Outdoor Times* as compared to those who subscribe to other outdoor publications.

**TABLE III**

**OPINIONS CONCERNING THE OVER-ALL QUALITY OF WRITING IN *OUTDOOR TIMES***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>subscribe only to <em>Outdoor Times</em></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>72.3%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>99.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subscribe to other outdoor publications</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
<td>56.6%</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table III shows some support for Hypothesis Two, that those readers who subscribe only to *Outdoor Times* rate the publication higher than those who subscribe to other outdoor publications. Of those who subscribe only to *Outdoor Times*,
77, or 81.9 percent rate the over-all quality of the writing as good or excellent. Of those who subscribe to other outdoor publications, 108, or 71.1 percent rate the over-all writing as good or excellent. Only 17 readers, or 18 percent, of those who subscribe only to Outdoor Times rated its writing quality as poor or fair, while 44, or 28.9 percent, of those who subscribe to other outdoor publications rated the quality of the writing in the poor or fair category. However, it should be noted that the highest percentage of those who rated the publication's writing as excellent were in the group that subscribes to other outdoor publications.

The third question pertaining to the second hypothesis asked subscribers for their opinions on what kind of job Outdoor Times does in reporting news of legislation and legal matters that are of interest to sportsmen. Table IV shows the range of opinion on this question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE IV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OPINIONS CONCERNING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUTDOOR TIMES IN REPORTING LEGISLATION THAT PERTAINS TO SPORTSMEN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscribe only to Outdoor Times</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscribe to Other Outdoor Publications</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>152</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table IV shows no support for the second hypothesis. In fact, it illustrates that those who subscribe to other outdoor publications have a higher opinion of *Outdoor Times*’ coverage of legislation pertaining to sportsmen than those who subscribe only to *Outdoor Times*. Only 52, or 55.3 percent of those who subscribe only to *Outdoor Times* rate its coverage in the area as good or excellent, while 95, or 62.5 percent of those who subscribe to other outdoor publications checked *Outdoor Times*’ performance as good or excellent. In addition, only 4 subscribers, or 4.3 percent of those who subscribe only to *Outdoor Times* rate its coverage in this area as excellent, while 21, or 13.8 percent of those who subscribe to other outdoor publications feel *Outdoor Times* does an excellent job.

The fourth and final question that pertains to the second hypothesis asked subscribers to give their opinion on the number of photographs in *Outdoor Times*. The publication runs a large number of photographs in each issue, many of them on the same subject. Table V shows the respondents' feelings about the number of photographs in the newspaper.
TABLE V

OPINIONS CONCERNING THE NUMBER OF PHOTOGRAPHS IN OUTDOOR TIMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Too Few</th>
<th>About Right</th>
<th>Too Many</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subscribe Only to Outdoor Times</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subscribe to Other Outdoor</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publications</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>74.3%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table V indicates, there is no appreciable difference of opinion on the number of photographs in Outdoor Times between those who subscribe only to that publication and those who subscribe to other outdoor publications. The majority of both groups feel that the number of photographs in the publication is "about right."

To determine the validity of Hypothesis Two, it was necessary to consider the responses to all four of the questions that asked subscribers to rate areas of editorial content in Outdoor Times. This data is represented in Tables II, III, IV, and V, and shows that there is no strong support for Hypothesis Two. Only two of the four areas of editorial content were rated more favorably by those who subscribe only to Outdoor Times than those who subscribe to other outdoor publications. The group that subscribes only to Outdoor Times
did rate the reporting of current conditions on outdoor activities and the over-all quality of writing higher than those who subscribe to other outdoor publications, but the difference was slight. In the areas of reporting legislation that pertains to sportsmen and the number of photographs in Outdoor Times, the group that subscribes to other outdoor publications gave the higher ratings.

Therefore, there is inadequate support for Hypothesis Two, which states that those readers who subscribe only to Outdoor Times rate the publication more favorably than those who subscribe to other outdoor publications. The data indicates that the differences in opinion of the editorial content are slight, and that the two groups rate the publication similarly.

Two parts of the questionnaire were devoted to testing the third hypothesis. This hypothesis states that those readers who subscribe only to Outdoor Times will consider its advertising more important than those who subscribe to other outdoor publications. Table VI indicates the responses of subscribers to the question, "How many advertisements do you look at in each issue of Outdoor Times?"
Table VI indicates that the advertisements in the publication are well read by both groups, but there is no great difference in advertising reading behavior between the two. Of those who subscribe only to Outdoor Times, 61, or 64.9 percent read more than half or almost all the advertisements in each issue, while 94, or 61.9 percent of those who subscribe to other outdoor publications read more than half or almost all. However, the highest percentage of "almost all" advertising readers is found in the group that subscribes to other outdoor publications. Also, the highest percentage of "almost none" advertising readers is found in the group that subscribes only to the Outdoor Times. Therefore, the data presented in Table VI tends to refute the hypothesis that
those readers who subscribe only to *Outdoor Times* consider its advertising more important than do those who subscribe to other outdoor publications.

The other question used in testing the validity of the third hypothesis asked subscribers to rate the importance of advertising in *Outdoor Times* to their reading of the publication. The question was, "How important is the advertising in *Outdoor Times* to your interest in the publication?" Table VII shows that 27, or 28.6 percent of those who subscribe only to *Outdoor Times* consider its advertising important or very important to their interest in the publication. Table VII also shows that only 29, or 19 percent of those who subscribe to other outdoor publications, consider *Outdoor Times'* advertising important or very important.

**TABLE VII**

**IMPORTANCE OF ADVERTISING TO READERS OF OUTDOOR TIMES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Fairly Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subscribe Only to</strong></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outdoor Times</strong></td>
<td>23.4%</td>
<td>47.9%</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>99.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subscribe to Other</strong></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outdoor Publications</strong></td>
<td>25.7%</td>
<td>57.2%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>99.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data illustrated by Table VII gives only weak support to Hypothesis Three, that those who subscribe only to Outdoor Times consider its advertising more important than those who subscribe to other outdoor publications. Of those who subscribe only to the Outdoor Times, 27, or 28.6 percent, consider the advertising important or very important. Of those who subscribe to other outdoor publications, 29, or 15.7 percent rate the advertising as important or very important. However, the highest percentage of those who feel advertising is "very important" is found in the group that subscribes to other outdoor publications.

When this data is studied in conjunction with the data presented in Table VI, it becomes evident that there is a lack of statistical evidence to prove Hypothesis Three, which states that those who subscribe to only Outdoor Times consider its advertising more important than those who subscribe to other outdoor publications. The data indicates that those who subscribe to other outdoor publications read more advertising in Outdoor Times than those who subscribe only to that publication, and that those who subscribe to other outdoor publications consider Outdoor Times' advertising almost as important as those who do not subscribe to other publications.

Hypothesis Four, which also compared the two groups of subscribers, stated that the percentage of those readers who subscribe to Outdoor Times for local information is greater among those who subscribe to other outdoor publications than
among those who subscribe only to Outdoor Times. Table VIII illustrates the responses to the question, "What is the main reason you subscribe to Outdoor Times?"

**TABLE VIII**

RESPONSES CONCERNING MAIN REASON FOR SUBSCRIBING TO OUTDOOR TIMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Relaxation</th>
<th>Local Information</th>
<th>Advertisement</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subscribe Only to Outdoor Times</strong></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31.9%</td>
<td>57.4%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>99.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subscribe to Other Outdoor Publications</strong></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>76.3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>99.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data presented in Table VIII clearly supports Hypothesis Four that the percentage of those readers who subscribe to Outdoor Times for local information is greater among those who subscribe to other outdoor publications than among those who subscribe only to Outdoor Times. Local information was cited by the majority of both groups in determining why they subscribe to Outdoor Times, but the percentage for those who subscribe to other outdoor publications is 76.3, while the percentage for those who subscribe only to Outdoor Times is 57.4.

The fifth hypothesis formulated was that the percentage of subscribers who prefer the hunting and fishing content of
the publication is greater than those who prefer the other outdoor activities reported in the *Outdoor Times*. The questionnaire asked each subscriber, "What is your major interest in *Outdoor Times*?" The possible responses were hunting, fishing, camping and travel, and archery. Table IX shows the distribution of data on the question.

**TABLE IX**

RESPONSES CONCERNING MAJOR INTEREST IN 
OUTDOOR TIMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hunting</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>69.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camping and Travel</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archery</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table IX indicates, the total percentage of those respondents who prefer the hunting or fishing content of the publication is 88.6 percent, or 218 of the 246 who answered the question. The data presented in Table IX clearly supports Hypothesis Five, which states that the percentage of those subscribers who prefer the hunting and fishing content of the publication is greater than those who prefer its reports of
other outdoor activities. The data also indicates that fishing is by far the main area of interest to the majority of Outdoor Times subscribers.

Besides providing data for the testing of hypotheses, another function of the questionnaire was to gather personal data from subscribers to Outdoor Times. Respondents were asked questions concerning their age, sex, race, education level, and yearly income in an effort to determine some characteristics of subscribers to Outdoor Times.

In studying the age distribution of subscribers to the publication, it becomes evident that Outdoor Times readers are a somewhat older group. Of those polled, 101, or 41.1 percent of the subscribers are more than 46 years old, and 54, or 22 percent of these are over 55 years old. Table X shows the age distribution of subscribers to Outdoor Times.

TABLE X

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF OUTDOOR TIMES SUBSCRIBERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 - 19</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 25</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 - 35</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 - 45</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 - 55</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 55</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other data collected by the questionnaire shows that subscribers to *Outdoor Times* are predominantly white males. Of the 241 subscribers who answered the question about their sex, 230, or 95.4 percent were male. Only 11 were female, or 4.6 percent. Five respondents did not answer the question. On the question pertaining to race, all 246 subscribers, or 100 percent, were white.

The data collected to determine subscribers' education and income levels indicates that readers of *Outdoor Times* are a fairly well-educated and affluent group. Table XI shows the educational level of subscribers to the publication.

**TABLE XI**

**EDUCATION LEVEL OF SUBSCRIBERS TO *OUTDOOR TIMES***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grades 0 - 8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 9 - 12</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>40.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended College</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduated from College</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduate Work</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table XI illustrates that 137 subscribers, or 55.7 percent, have at least attended college, and that 59, or 23.9 percent of these, graduated from college.

The yearly income distribution of subscribers to *Outdoor Times* is illustrated in Table XII. All 246 respondents answered the question pertaining to income.
TABLE XII
YEARNLY INCOME OF OUTDOOR TIMES SUBSCRIBERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under $5,000</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5,000 - $10,000</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$11,000 - $20,000</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over $20,000</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blank</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table XII illustrates, 128, or 52.1 percent of respondents have a yearly income of 10,000 dollars a year or more, and 43, or 17.5 percent of these earn more than 20,000 dollars per year. Only 38, or 15.5 percent of the respondents earn less than 5,000 dollars per year, and it should be pointed out again that 13.4 percent of the subscribers in this survey are in the 15-19-years-old age bracket.

Another aspect of the readership survey was to determine how long readers have subscribed to Outdoor Times, and how they became interested in the publication. The data collected revealed that of the 245 respondents who answered the question concerning the length of time they had subscribed to Outdoor Times, 105, or 42.9 percent checked one to three years, and 97, or 39.6 percent have subscribed less than one year. Only 43, or 17.6 percent, have subscribed from three to six years.
The data also indicates that most subscribers became interested in *Outdoor Times* by hearing about the publication from a friend, since 139, or 56.5 percent of the subscribers in the survey indicated this method of becoming interested in the publication. Just 62, or 25.2 percent of the respondents checked advertising about *Outdoor Times* as the reason they became interested in subscribing, while only 45, or 18.3 percent became interested in the newspaper by seeing it on a newsstand.

Of the subscribers in the survey, 161, or 65.5 percent indicated that they spend from one to two hours reading each issue of *Outdoor Times*, and 144, or 58.5 percent, said that they read almost all of each issue, while 82, or 33.3 percent said they read about 50 percent of each issue.

Finally, subscribers participating in the survey were asked if any other members of the household read each issue of *Outdoor Times*, and how long each issue was kept in their home. The majority, 173, or 60.2 percent, said that at least one other member of the household read the publication. Table XIII shows the length of time each issue of *Outdoor Times* is kept in subscribers' homes.
Table XIII illustrates that 141, or 57.3 percent of subscribers participating in the survey keep each issue of the newspaper for at least two weeks, and that 79, or 32.1 percent of these keep each issue for more than one month.
CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Characteristics of Subscribers

By reviewing the data collected by the readership survey, it is possible to sketch the typical Outdoor Times subscriber. The typical Outdoor Times subscriber is likely to be a white male in his late forties. He makes more than ten thousand dollars per year, and has attended college. Besides Outdoor Times, he subscribes to at least one other outdoor publication, and reads the outdoor page of his local newspaper at least once a week. The typical subscriber has subscribed to Outdoor Times for from one to three years, and it is probable that he first became interested in the publication by hearing about it from a friend. He subscribes to Outdoor Times for the current and local information it provides on outdoor activities, and he has a generally high opinion of the over-all quality of the newspaper. The typical subscriber spends between one and two hours reading each issue of Outdoor Times, and reads more than fifty percent of each issue, including the advertising. He keeps each issue of the publication in his home for at least two weeks. The typical subscriber spends more time fishing than any other outdoor activity, and fishing is his major interest in Outdoor Times.
Summary of Hypotheses

The data collected for the testing of hypotheses revealed various attitudes and opinions of subscribers toward Outdoor Times. Five hypotheses were formulated and tested, and the analysis of data indicates strong support for only three of the five.

Hypothesis I: More than fifty percent of subscribers to Outdoor Times also subscribe to other outdoor publications. Since 61.5 percent of the subscribers to Outdoor Times in the survey also subscribed to other outdoor publications, the data indicates strong support for the first hypothesis.

Hypothesis II: Readers who subscribe only to Outdoor Times will rate the publication more favorably than those who subscribe to other outdoor publications. The data collected indicated no support for this hypothesis. In fact, those who subscribe only to Outdoor Times and those who subscribe to other outdoor publications rated the editorial content of Outdoor Times similarly. The high rating given to Outdoor Times by both groups suggests that those who subscribe to other outdoor publications feel that Outdoor Times is at least comparable in quality to other outdoor publications. However, those who subscribe to other outdoor publications could be such avid readers of outdoor activities that they tend to rate any outdoor publication favorably.
Hypothesis III: Those readers who subscribe only to Outdoor Times will consider its advertising more important than those who subscribe to other outdoor publications. There was no strong support for this hypothesis, since both groups consider Outdoor Times' advertising fairly important and read about the same amount of advertising in each issue. Once again, it is possible that those who subscribe to other outdoor publications have a higher degree of interest in outdoor activities, and as a result read a fair amount of advertising in any outdoor magazine or newspaper.

Hypothesis IV: The percentage of readers who subscribe to Outdoor Times for local information is greater among those who subscribe to other outdoor publications than among those who subscribe only to Outdoor Times. The data collected indicates strong support for this hypothesis. Although the majority of both groups subscribe to Outdoor Times for its reporting of local information, the percentage was highest among those who subscribe to other outdoor publications.

Hypothesis V: The percentage of subscribers who prefer the hunting and fishing content of the publication is greater than the percentage of those who prefer its other outdoor activities. This hypothesis was clearly supported, since 87.6 percent of the respondents preferred the hunting or fishing content of Outdoor Times.
Importance of the Study to Outdoor Times

Although the attitudes and opinions of subscribers toward Outdoor Times projected in this study do tend to reinforce publisher M. L. Harrell's philosophy of the role and scope of the publication, the data collected also suggests that the staff could strive for improvements in several areas. While it is true that the majority of subscribers have a generally high opinion of the publication, 37.8 percent of the respondents feel that Outdoor Times does only a fair or poor job in reporting current conditions on outdoor activities in their area. Since Harrell views this aspect of the publication as its "only salvation," it is obvious that the staff should concentrate on improving this type of coverage. Similarly, 39.8 percent of the respondents in the survey indicated that Outdoor Times does only a fair or poor job in reporting legislation and legal matters that pertain to sportsmen. This suggests that more emphasis should be placed on this type of material.

It is possible that Outdoor Times will want to make its advertisers aware of some portions of the study. Besides the readers of Outdoor Times having a generally high opinion of the publication, it could be pointed out that subscribers to the newspaper are a relatively affluent and well-educated group. The findings of the study also indicate that advertising is fairly important to the readers of Outdoor Times, and that a good portion of the advertising is read.
In addition, 60.3 percent of respondents said that each issue of the publication was read by at least one person other than themselves, and that the majority of subscribers keep each issue in their home at least two weeks.

Conclusions

M. L. Harrell, president of Outdoor Times, Inc., and publisher of Outdoor Times, feels that the main duty of his newspaper is to provide timely information on local outdoor activities (1). The findings of this study indicate that the subscribers to Outdoor Times agree with him. The data collected by the readership survey illustrates that the subscriber's perception of the role of Outdoor Times is similar to that of Harrell's. Most respondents said that they subscribed to the publication because of its reporting of local information on outdoor activities. Harrell also said that he sees his publication as "going not quite as far as a monthly outdoor publication, but farther than the scope of outdoor pages in daily newspapers" (1). There is a strong indication that subscribers agree on this point also, since the majority of respondents to the survey also subscribe to other outdoor publications and read the outdoor page of a local newspaper at least once a week.

The findings of this study also indicate that subscribers to the publication have a fairly high opinion of its editorial content. The majority of respondents gave Outdoor
high ratings on the effectiveness of covering current and local outdoor activities, the overall quality of the writing, the reporting of legislation and legal matters that pertain to sportsmen, and the number of photographs in the newspaper. Subscribers also indicated that the advertising in Outdoor Times was fairly important to them, and that they read a good portion of the advertisements in each issue.

These findings tend to refute the contention of former publisher Richard A. McCune. McCune feels that the publication has let its readers down in editorial matters since he left in 1969 (2). From a professional point of view, there can be little doubt that the publication has suffered editorially, but there is no evidence that subscribers to Outdoor Times have noticed this lack of professionalism or cared if they have. This situation could be attributed to the possibility that subscribers to the publication are more interested in information on outdoor activities per se than they are in the attractiveness of the newspaper or columns by polished professionals. Since more than half of the respondents said that they keep each issue of the newspaper in their home for at least two weeks, many of them might consider Outdoor Times as more of a guide in determining where to spend a future weekend than the type of publication that is read for enjoyment and entertainment. Therefore, it is possible that McCune over-estimated the desires of his readers when he was
publishing *Outdoor Times*. Perhaps subscribers then, as they seem to be now, would have been satisfied with less.

Areas for Further Study

One area for future study could concern the format change that *Outdoor Times* underwent in August of this year. The newspaper is now on a biweekly publishing schedule. Since this study indicated that the timeliness of *Outdoor Times* was important to its subscribers, it would be useful to see if the new format hurts circulation. Will subscribers be content with reading accounts of hunting and fishing that are two and three weeks old? Will they be willing to pay the same subscription rates for half the number of issues per year? This could be determined by conducting another survey once the new publishing schedule has been in effect for a few months.

Another area for possible future study could deal with the correspondents for *Outdoor Times*. Each of the regular contributors to the newspaper also write for other outdoor publications. It would be interesting to learn if these men have had any formal professional training. It could also be determined how these individuals perceive their roles as correspondents for various outdoor publications, what their working agreements are with the various newspapers and magazines, and whether or not their outdoor writing is a full time job.
The study could also determine how these correspondents got their start in the freelancing of outdoor articles, how much time they spend at this work if it is not full time, and the nature of agreements they might have with manufacturers of outdoor recreational products and those who own or operate outdoor recreational facilities such as resorts.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


Dear Outdoor Times Subscriber:

Your help is needed in conducting a readership survey of the Outdoor Times.

This research is being conducted as partial fulfillment of the thesis requirement for a Master of Arts degree in Journalism at North Texas State University. Also, your opinions are highly valued by the staff of Outdoor Times, and your views on the publication will be considered by them in an attempt to serve you better.

The enclosed questionnaire is intended to gather data about subscribers of Outdoor Times and their opinions of the publication. Of course, all answers will be held in absolute confidence, and you are not to sign the questionnaire.

Please take a few minutes to complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the postage-paid, addressed envelope. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

R. D. Cameron
Graduate Student, NTSU
Respondents for this survey were randomly selected from the subscription list of the *Outdoor Times*. Please check only one response for each question.

1. **What is your age?**
   - 1. 15 - 19
   - 2. 20 - 25
   - 3. 26 - 35
   - 4. 36 - 45
   - 5. 46 - 55
   - 6. Over 55

2. **Sex**
   - 1. Male
   - 2. Female

3. **Race**
   - 1. White
   - 2. Black
   - 3. Brown
   - 4. Other

4. **What is the highest level of education you have attained?**
   - 1. Grades 0 - 8
   - 2. Grades 9 - 12
   - 3. Attended college
   - 4. Graduated from college
   - 5. Post graduate work

5. **What is your yearly income?**
   - 1. Under $5,000
   - 2. $5,000 - $10,000
   - 3. $10,000 - $20,000
   - 4. Over $20,000

6. **If married, how many children do you have?**
   - 1. None
   - 2. One
   - 3. 2 - 4
   - 4. Over 4

7. **How long have you subscribed to the *Outdoor Times?***
   - 1. Less than one year
   - 2. 1 - 3
   - 3. 3 - 6

8. **How did you become interested in subscribing to the *Outdoor Times?***
   - 1. Advertisements about *Outdoor Times*
   - 2. Heard about it from a friend
   - 3. Saw it by chance on a newstand

9. **How much of *Outdoor Times* do you read each week?**
   - 1. Less than 25 per cent
   - 2. About 50 per cent
   - 3. Almost all

10. **How much time per week do you spend reading *Outdoor Times?***
    - 1. Less than one hour
    - 2. 1 - 2 hours
    - 3. More than 2 hours

11. **How long do you keep each issue of *Outdoor Times* in your home?**
    - 1. Less than one week
    - 2. 1 - 2 weeks
    - 3. 2 - 4 weeks
    - 4. More than one month

12. **How many people other than yourself read at least some of each issue of your *Outdoor Times?***
    - 1. None
    - 2. One
    - 3. 2 - 3
    - 4. More than three

13. **What is your major interest in *Outdoor Times?***
    - 1. Hunting
    - 2. Fishing
    - 3. Camping and Travel
    - 4. Archery

14. **What area of *Outdoor Times* are you least interested in?**
    - 1. Hunting
    - 2. Fishing
    - 3. Camping and travel
    - 4. Archery

15. **What outdoor activity do you spend the most time at?**
    - 1. Hunting
    - 2. Fishing
    - 3. Camping and Travel
    - 4. Archery
    - 5. Other
16. What is the main reason you subscribe to Outdoor Times?
   1. read for relaxation
   2. read for local information
   3. read for advertisement
   4. Other

17. Besides Outdoor Times, do you subscribe to any other outdoor publications?
   1. yes
   2. no

18. If answer to above is yes, please list the publications to which you subscribe.
   a. ___________________________
   b. ___________________________
   c. ___________________________
   d. ___________________________

19. If you read or subscribe to other outdoor publications, why do you also subscribe to the Outdoor Times?
   ___________________________
   ___________________________
   ___________________________
   ___________________________

20. Do you find products advertised in Outdoor Times that you don't see in other newspapers and magazines?
   1. almost never
   2. Sometimes
   3. Frequently
   4. Almost always

21. What types of advertising in Outdoor Times interests you the most?
   1. Fishing products
   2. Hunting products
   3. Boats or boating accessories
   4. Recreational vehicles and accessories

22. How important are the ads in Outdoor Times to your interest in the publication?
   1. Not important
   2. Fairly important
   3. Important
   4. Very important

23. How many advertisements do you look at in each issue of Outdoor Times?
   1. almost none
   2. less than half
   3. more than half
   4. almost all

24. What kind of job do you feel that Outdoor Times does in reporting current conditions on outdoor activities in your area?
   1. poor
   2. fair
   3. good
   4. excellent

25. Do you feel that the number of photographs in Outdoor Times are:
   1. too few
   2. about right
   3. too many

26. What is your opinion of the overall writing in Outdoor Times?
   1. poor
   2. fair
   3. good
   4. excellent

27. What kind of job do you feel that Outdoor Times does in reporting legislation and legal matters that pertain to sportsmen?
   1. poor
   2. fair
   3. good
   4. excellent

28. Do you read the outdoor page of a daily newspaper in your area at least once a week?
   1. Yes
   2. No
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


Articles


Reports

Interviews
