

Understanding Media Usage Trends in 10 Populous UK District Areas

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Project Background

Media landscape is an ever-changing environment. With the development of the Internet, Broadband in-home access reached rates that have never been seen before in human history. There is good evidence of news articles and media reports that highlight that non-linear Broadband-based technology, such as, Video-on-Demand, Catch-up TV, Internet Television, and Online Music Streaming, are gradually gaining popularity and soon will completely overtake traditional television viewing. Therefore, this research aimed to breach two key knowledge gaps; understanding of relationships between socio-demographics and media usage in the United Kingdom and understanding of which socio-demographic groups drive the popular media shift from television to Broadband.

Data and Methods

In this research time-series cross-sectional panel data were collected on adults for the time period between October 2016 and March 2018. The geographical locations of individuals were 10 populous UK postcode districts across England, Wales, and Scotland. The districts were Brighton (BN2), Bristol (BS5), Cardiff (CF24), Croydon (CR0), London (E17), Edinburgh (EH11), Liverpool (L4), Leicester (LE2), Leeds (LS6), and Nottingham (NG7). Study participants were a National Broadband Provider's loyal customers who either subscribed to a triple package or a dual package, and held each respective product for more than 730 days with the provider.

In addition to, a non-probability sampling technique – convenience sampling was used to select the study subjects, while also employing the random effects model to produce data analysis.

Key Findings

RQ1: how do socio-demographic variables relate to Television and Broadband usages across 10 populous UK district areas?

It was found that television viewing goes up with an increase in age, while Broadband consumption goes down. Lifestyle category psycho-graphic information is negatively associated with both products and 'digital divide' of media access is not seen among Britons. Croydon residents are the biggest enthusiasts of Broadband, whereas Liverpool (L4) and Edinburgh (EH11) districts experience the greatest television use.

RQ2: how do socio-demographic variables relate to changes over time in Television and Broadband usage across 10 populous UK district areas?

Descriptive statistics part demonstrated that, indeed, television usage is declining and broadband consumption is increasing in the country. These trends are primarily driven by younger age groups, who have the necessary digital skills to use non-linear media devices in comparison to older generations. Affluent Achievers, the top group of the lifestyle social ladder, from one month to the next experience the highest drop in TV usage, while Urban Adversity and Financially Stretched, the bottom groups of the lifestyle social ladder, are the most responsible for the nationwide trend of Broadband growth due to their high-level of media dependency. Finally, the Croydon area experiences change at the fastest pace for both products as the locals switch toward more broadband usage. Additionally, the Bristol and London sample areas are moving away from Television consumption at a significantly higher rate than other regions. Contrarily, Liverpool's (L4) slope of Broadband access is rising at the highest speed and the area is predicted in the future to reach the same high usage levels of Broadband as of Television in the past.

Value of the Research

Beyond the findings related to the research questions, two trends were observed that may contribute to a wider understanding of media usage in the future.

Firstly, it was forecasted that, if the media industry is going to stay the same, there will be a wider knowledge gap of media services among 'high level' and 'low level' consumption users. Secondly, although the study demonstrated that age, lifestyle type, and geographical location can all well explain media usage trends, it was argued that age is by far the most effective media predictor.