



# Research Report

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BA Honours in Strategic Brand Communication

Title : Research Into The Relevance of Print Fashion Magazines in the Digital Era

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## **Chapter 1 - Introduction**

### **1.1. Introduction:**

The aim of this research is to investigate the relevance of print fashion magazines in the digital era and the factors that lead to a print fashion magazine's viability.

People are increasingly turning to the web to access information. This research aims to investigate if print fashion magazines can survive.

I believe that there is a need for different media in the media landscape, as different media provides different benefits. For example, the best place to watch a soccer match is on TV, Facebook allows us to connect with our friends and families and magazines provide beautiful glossy pictures that inspire us.

I will conduct primary and secondary research in order to gain insights. The aim of the primary research is to find out if readers still buy and read print fashion magazines. I will use the secondary research in order to investigate the print magazine industry.

### **1.2. Title:**

Research Into The Relevance of Print Fashion Magazines in the Digital Era.

### **1.3. Proposed Journal:**

I would like this research paper to be published in the African Journal of Marketing Management (JOMM).

The reason is that I see this research paper as an open dialogue and would like it to be discussed. Thus I aim to publish in a publication where it will have a large audience. JOMM is an open online journal that anyone can access.

The JOMM publishes various marketing research from all over Africa. Thus this research would add to the African marketing dialogue.

The specific audience of the research that I am aiming to reach includes people who are passionate about print media. It includes publishing entrepreneurs.

### **1.4. Research Problem and Questions:**

*The research problem is:*

The aim of this research is to investigate the relevance of print fashion magazines and the factors that lead to a print fashion magazine's viability.

*The research questions are:*

- Is there a market for print magazines?
- Are there strategies that print magazines can adopt which would increase the chances of their survival?

### **1.5. Rationale**

MacCullum (2013) writes that there has been a change in the way readers access information. Readers have moved from print to digital platforms. In 2013, print circulations and advertising declined (Gillespie, 2014 ). This follows the trend of the decline in the print media industry. This research aims to investigate whether print magazines are still relevant and if there are models print media publishers can use in order to remain viable.

The reason I chose this research problem is because I love books and magazines. I have a passion for print. I believe that print provides an experience that one cannot get on digital. In addition, I believe that libraries have a cultural significance. I believe that in order to preserve print, the people who love it have to speak up for it.

I believe that there is a way for print to continue to exist. I think we need to look at the magazines that are doing well in order to determine the reason for this. Because there are some publications that continue to thrive in the digital era. These include the fashion magazine, Vogue. This research will look at the factors that influence the continued success of these publications when other print publications are struggling. This research aims to gain insight into how these magazines continue to thrive when print magazines are said to be on the decline.

One of the factors I aim to look at is the brand. I aim to investigate whether the brand of the magazine adds value to the magazine and thus could contribute to making the magazine survive or even thrive, in the digital era.

## **Chapter 2 - Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1. The Rise of Digital Media**

Paul Hudson states that we can no longer deny that we are living in the Digital or Information Age (Intersperience, n.d.). The Merriem-Webster dictionary defines the Information Ages as, “the modern age regarded as a time in which information has become a commodity that is quickly and widely disseminated and easily available especially through the use of computer technology” (Merriem-Webster, n.d.).

A paper by the US Department of Labor stated that, “we are living in a new economy—powered by technology, fueled by information, and driven by knowledge” (US Department of Labor, 1991:1). The paper goes on to state that, “the influence of technology will go beyond new equipment and faster communications, as work and skills will be redefined and reorganized” (p. 1).

Humbert (1997:5) states that the developed world entered into the Information Age in the 1970’s. The result of the Information Age is that Information and Communications Technology (ICT) changed the way we live, relax and share information. The internet has been a big enabler of that change Humbert (1997:5).

Ekwugha et al. (2014:189) state that ICT has become an integral part of human communications. This resulted from the shifts in perception regarding mass communication that resulted from new media. New interactive media is gradually replacing traditional media, such as TV and newspapers.

The PC Mag website defines new media as ways of communicating in the digital world which can include CD’s, DVD’s and the internet (PC Mag, n.d.).

In the report, Digital, Social and Mobile in 2015, the group, We are Social, stated that out of 7.2 billion people in the world, 42% had access to the internet, 29% had active social media accounts, while 51% had mobile phones (We Are Social, 2015). This has led to choices on how we consume our information. This allows consumers to decide whether to read print or digital data.

## **2.2. Print vs Digital**

The rise in ICT has adversely affected print media. More people are moving from print to digital media consumption (Global Web Index, 2014).

A study by Global Web Index researched the usage of digital versus print media. The study was conducted on 17,000 people from 32 countries. This makes it the largest study conducted on digital media consumption in the world.

The study found that in the majority of the countries (26 out of 32), people are spending more time online as opposed to traditional media (Global Web Index, 2014). In the countries where traditional media is still largely consumed, which include Germany and the UK, the ratios between traditional and digital media are close (Global Web Index, 2014).

Deloitte predicts that ebooks will make up close to 20% of the book market in 2015 (Deloitte, 2015). The Mequoda Digital Magazine Market Study found that 20% of tablet users read digital magazines (Mequoda, 2014).

The rise in digital magazine circulation has coincided with a decrease in print magazine circulation. In an article called, "Magazines: The Decline of Print and the Rise of Digital," Jack O'Neill states that in 2012, the digital market rose by 44%, while the print magazine market fell by 11%. This is a trend that is expected to continue.

Current popular opinion states that printed magazines are on their way to becoming obsolete. K. Scott (2013), in his article, 'The State of Magazines: Is Print Media 'Virtually' Over?' states that "print magazines will simply fade into the annals of history as the last remaining stalwarts will shrink in number." Belia Yentob (2012), who writes for the FC Blog agrees. She states that it is not a matter of whether print magazines will become obsolete, but when. She goes on to state that the question is whether print will be obsolete in one or two generations.

Print and digital both provide different benefits. Digital magazines have an advantage in situations where immediate access to information is important (Tsirkas, 2015). For example, when new mothers need information on babies, they turn to baby websites. This has led to the decline in sales for magazines that are focused on babies. The same can be said for celebrity gossip magazines. Readers prefer the immediacy of the internet as opposed to waiting for weekly print magazines (Tsirkas, 2015).

But print has its own benefits. This is reflected by the fact that there are print magazines that are continuing to thrive. For instance, news magazine sales remain

stable. These magazines offer a “considered read and an authoritative voice for readers” (Tsirkas, 2015). Print news magazines also have the advantage of loyal readers and high subscriptions. Some women’s monthly magazines have also survived in the digital era. These include Glamour and Good Housekeeping.

### **2.3. The Magazine Industry**

The Association of Magazine Media publishes an annual study on the state of the magazine industry. In the 2015 study, they state that “magazine media continues to be the most trusted, inspiring and influential media, satisfying readers when, where and how they choose” (Association of Magazine Media, 2015).

The study shows that magazine audiences have grown by 10.2% in 2015 when compared to the first quarter of 2014. The top three media platforms are print, digital and mobile web. Mobile has shown the greatest growth at 7% quarter on quarter. The categories that showed the highest growth include women’s magazines and newsweeklies.

The study also showed that magazines works hand in hand with social media. Magazines provide content to social media. For example, 51.4% of Facebook users follow at least one magazine page. The study also found that brands derive greater value from advertising in print media than on TV or online. Magazine readers are also heavy smart phone users, which has made magazine apps one the top grossing categories on the Apple Store (Association of Magazine Media, 2015)..

#### **2.2.1. The Readers**

In their study of the magazine market, Hill Strategies Research (2011) found that spending on magazines is related to household income and education. The study found that only 25% of low-earning households buy magazines, as compared to 69% of high-earning households. In addition, the amount households spend on magazines per month increases with income. The study defines low-earning households as households that earn \$25,000 or less per annum, while high-earning households are households that earn \$150,000 or more per annum.

Education levels also influences the spending on magazines. 60% of people with a university degree buy magazines, while only 29% of people with a high school diploma buy magazines.

### **2.2.2. Revenue Streams**

The magazine industry derives 75% of its revenue from advertising (Barrell and Braithwaite, 1988: 117). Yentob (2012) states that print magazines will continue to survive as long as advertisers are willing to purchase advertising space. Since advertising revenue is the main revenue stream for magazines, all other income streams are seen as additional (Yentob, 2012). In other words, subscription revenues are additional revenues. In fact, many trade publications give away the print for free and make money off the advertising. Thus, the main aim of print magazines is to create the biggest audience for advertisers (Yentob, 2012). If they can continue to do this, while managing their costs (including distribution costs), print magazines might continue to remain relevant. Yentob (2012) states that “Revenue - Cost = Profits = staying in business.”

But print magazines are faced with the threat that advertising dollars are moving to digital platforms, which include, blogs and special interest platforms (Sebastian, 2014). Sebastian states that digital platforms offer the readers timeliness and convenience.

### **2.2.3. Industry in Transition**

The magazine industry is an industry in transition. The Economist (2012) states that the “print is dead” refrain has become commonplace in the industry. The industry has seen advertising dollars flowing from print to the web. The landscape is changing.

Paul-Bernhard Kallen, the chairman of Hubert Burda Media, a large German publisher, states that print magazines are critical for marketers when it comes to building brands, thus they still have a large role to play in the digital era (The Economist 2012).

The Economist states that the magazine industry was once a simple industry to navigate. If a company wanted to enter the market, all they had to do was to identify a group of people who shared a common interest and create a magazine that was aimed at those people. This has changed.

The dynamics of different magazine categories are no longer the same. Previously a news magazine could put out an issue on a weekly basis and find an audience for it.

This is no longer the case (The Economist, 2012). People can access the news on the web on a daily basis. The Economist (2012) goes on to state states that in the digital era, news magazines can either sell “cheap” news that appeals to a large audience or “expensive news” that is critical to a specific small market.

David Hearst, an executive at Hearst Magazines, believes that magazines will survive. He believes that people connect to the magazines that they read, which will ensure that advertisers continue to place ads in those magazines (Economist, 2012).

This explains why luxury magazines have continued to thrive. This is especially the case in emerging market countries where the middle class is growing. For example, in Brazil, a home-improvement magazine that is focused on new home-owners has become a big seller (The Economist, 2012).

Karlene Lukovitz (n.d.) of the Association for Magazine Media states that it is important to note that total revenues in the magazine sector have actually risen in total. Some advertising has moved from print to digital. Tablets have been big winners when it comes to winning advertising space. The advert on a tablet is better-placed than it would be on the web. This means that advertisers are willing to pay higher prices to advertise in tablets than they would pay for a magazine on the web.

#### **2.2.4. Adapting to Change**

Magazine publishers are adapting to the changes in landscape. They realize that their business models have to change. Many print magazines publishers have started to adopt new business models.

Some publishers have included a digital component to their print business model. We've already discussed that a magazine makes most of its revenue from advertising. McIlroy (2013) states that most publishers still need the print advertising revenue in order to survive, even when they are active in the digital space.

When magazines move to a digital platform, it gives them a chance to innovate. They can create different formats and they can also include interactivity in their magazines. Some publishers create web-based magazines that are similar to the printed magazines, while others take the opportunity to create dynamic, interactive magazines.

Some magazine publishers are trying to diversify their revenue stream. For example, some Travel magazines take a cut of the revenue when readers buy from the adverts they have on the web (The Economist, 2012).

The changing magazine environment has mad some magazine editors creative in coming up with new business models. For example, *XXI*, which is a French magazine does not run any advertisements and they do not have a digital presence. The magazine is only sold in bookshops. The magazine capitalizes on its niche market (intellectuals in Paris), its niche product (an intellectual magazine) and the loyalty they have built with their readers (Economist, 2012)

Some magazines have adopted the trade magazine business model which means giving magazines away for free and making generating revenue through advertising (The Economist, 2012). An example of a magazine that uses this model is, *Landlust* magazine from Germany. The magazine features articles on connecting with nature and gives advice on how people can simplify their lives. The magazine has a circulation of 1 million people (The Economist, 2012).

### **2.3. The Fashion Magazine**

Fashion magazines have been in existence since the 18th century (Ritchie, 2012). At the time, the function of the magazine was to present Parisian fashion trends to the world. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, magazines, such as *Vogue* and *Hapers Bazaar* showcased the sketches of Parisian fashion (Ritchie, 2012).

Fashion magazines evolved with fashion. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, fashion was seen as an art form. Fashion magazines were seen as fashion's catalogues (Ritchie, 2012). In addition, fashion magazines seemed to be the perfect place to show the lifestyles of the rich and famous (Ritchie, 2012).

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, fashion magazines provide a number of functions. Women read them in order to receive fashion, beauty and accessory suggestions. Some women read them in order to get suggestions on buying luxury items (Conde Nast, n.d.). In her article, "Why Fashion Magazines Matter," Tanya Basu states that today's fashion magazines also provide commentary about social issues, they are partly responsible for the democratization of fashion by ensuring that fashion is accessible to more people and not just the rich and famous. They have achieved this by celebrating

different fashion genres, including, street style, normcore and basic fashion (Basu, 2015).

Zhengiiia et al. (2012) state that the success of fashion magazines resulted from an increase in female incomes. This in turn resulted from the women getting more educated (Zhengiiia et al, 2012). Wu (2006) states that fashion magazine readers are usually highly educated, financially stable and they love fashion.

Ferry (2003) states that the media plays a big role in marketing fashion magazines. Feng et al. (2008) states that fashion magazines are important advertising channels for luxury goods and services. Seltzer (2014) states that print magazines offer women an enjoyable experience. They can buy their favourite magazines, sit in their favourite place, page through the magazine and dream.

#### **2.4. The Framework**

I am going to use Aaker and Joachimsthaler's (2000), Brand Identity Planning Model as a framework. The model can be used in order to investigate whether a strong brand identity would assist a print magazine in order to survive. I will use the model to investigate the brand identity of an existing print magazine.

Aaker and Joachimsthaler's (2000) state that, "a strong brand should have a rich, clear brand identity – a set of associations the brand strategist seeks to create or maintain. In contrast to brand image (the brand's current associations), a brand identity is aspirational and may imply that the image needs to be changed or augmented. In a fundamental sense, the brand identity represents what the organization wants the brand to stand for."

Brand identity consists of a number of brand associations that the brand aims to create and maintain (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000). These associations provide customers with a promise from the company. Aaker and Joachimsthaler's (2000) state that a brand identity should have texture and depth.

The brand identity model is constructed around four perspectives: the brand is seen as a product, an organization, a person and a symbol. This perspective can help determine different brand patterns and elements which can then be used to understand, enrich and provide differentiation to a brand's identity.

In addition, the brand identity model includes a core identity, the extended identity and the brand essence. The core identity represents the essence of the brand. It contains the brand elements that are unlikely to change as the brand grows. The elements contained in the extended identity provide fill in the picture of the brand and provide texture. The brand essence is “a single thought that captures the soul of the brand” (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000).

The elements of the brand identity system create a value proposition to the client. This can include functional, emotional and self-expressive benefits. In addition, the brand identity system has a relationship element. In order for a brand to achieve longevity, it has to create a relationship with its customers. Relationships create brand loyalty.

## **2.5. Vogue Magazine and Brand Identity**

Vogue is the most successful fashion magazine in the world (Lifestyle Lounge n.d.). Vogue is a US magazine which has been in existence since 1892 (Lifestyle Lounge n.d.). It is regarded as the “world’s most influential fashion magazine” (Lifestyle Lounge n.d.). Vogue is published in 23 countries.

We are going to use the Brand Identity Planning Model to unpack Vogue’s identity. The core identity of Vogue includes being aspirational, trendsetting, elegant, and ahead of the curve (Mohnani, 2013).

We are going to look at Vogue’s extended identity. Vogue as a person is sophisticated, trendy, stylish, elegant and fashionable (Conde Nast, n.d.). Vogue magazine state that they work with the best in the business, in terms of make-up artists, photographers and writers, in order to create a magazine that is in a league of its own. In a study by Conde Nast, they found that 81% of their readers get their fashion and beauty tips from Vogue, 67% use styling tips they get from Vogue and 72% trust the advertising they see in Vogue (Conde Nast, n.d.).

Vogue has a large global appeal. The editor of Vogue UK stated that the Vogue reader consisted of “anybody of any age who is interested in fashion, style and contemporary culture” (Davies, 2009). The Vogue print magazine is read by 12.7 million people worldwide (Conde Nast, n.d.). The Vogue website has average traffic of 6 million people and 5 billion impressions a month (Conde Nast, n.d.).

Vogue has many attributes that have allowed them to remain successful. They are consistent in producing quality content (Landor, 2012). This encompasses all the processes and touch-points; from the editorials to the website. They are innovative. Vogue created the “high-low” trend, which entails mixing expensive and affordable clothing (Landor, 2012). The US Vogue editor, Anna Wintor, likes breaking rules. Her decision to begin featuring celebrities on the cover of the magazine, is said to have led to the end of the supermodel era (Landor, 2012).

Vogue stands for more than fashion, they are also involved in charities that benefit the arts. Vogue raises money for the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Costume Department. Wintor, also believes in developing young talent. She constantly features young designers in the magazine (Landor, 2012).

Vogue’s brand essence is “the fashion bible” (Landor, 2012). Readers read Vogue in order to stay informed about fashion.

Vogue’s strong brand identity has allowed them to stay relevant. In over 120 years of its existence, Vogue has consistently grown its market. Their biggest issue was in 2008, and contained 840 pages (Kelly, Keith. J, 2015). In February 2015, Vogue won the Magazine of the Year award at the National Magazine Awards in the US (Kelly, Keith. J, 2015). Vogue beat digital magazines to win the award. In the period, from 2002 to 2013, their subscriptions have increased by 23% (Webb, J., 2013).

The print fashion magazines that continue to attract advertising revenue have strong brand identities. For example, Vogue gets a lot of traction from their brand. In his article, ‘Vogue’s Print Ad Rise Has Very Little to Do with Print, Lots to Do with Branding, Research, and Competitive Action,’ Dr Joe Webb (2013) espouses the value of branding and knowing one’s customers as one of the reasons Vogue’s print advertising revenue continues to perform well. In 2014, Vogue’s famous September issue had 631 pages of advertising. This was 4.8% down from 2013, but the 2013 number was the third highest advertising pages number in the entire 120 year history of Vogue (Seward, 2014). This means that after the 2008 recession and the resultant change in consumer spending, Vogue still increased their advertising revenue.

Vogue was not the only magazine that did well in terms of advertising in 2014. In fact, of the top five fashion magazines in the US in terms of advertising, Vogue was

the only magazine whose advertising pages decreased from 2013, all other magazines advertising pages grew. These magazines include other well-branded titles, like Elle. The advertising pages grew from 303 to 631 (Seward, 2014).

## **2.6. The Future of Fashion Magazines**

In order to remain relevant some fashion magazines, like Vogue, invest in research. Vogue spent \$1 million in research in 2013 (Webb, 2013). The insights they derived from the research led them to do things that cannot be done on digital media. They found out that readers liked glossy paper, good page design and good photography (Webb, 2013). Vogue took action on the insights and they have focused on high quality images, folded images and greater focus on page design (Webb, 2013). The product they put out is based on deep insights into the demographics of their brand. This allows them to create a relationship with their customers.

In a recent poll by Media Life, consumers were asked about the future of print magazines. Thirty-two percent of the respondents (the largest percentage) thought fashion magazines would survive the digital era (Seltzer, 2014). Part of this was due to the fact that reading a print fashion magazine is a better experience than accessing the fashion magazine online. One respondent stated "People like to hold onto things and fashion is a great example. You get a better feel for items through printed pages."

Yentob agrees that print magazines will not completely disappear. But he believes that they will be niche products in the future with expensive prices. The problem is that a fashion magazine will not make money if they only serve a small audience.

## **2.7. Beauty Standards in Magazines**

Serdar writes that mass media, including fashion magazines perpetuate a standard of beauty that is unattainable and unhealthy (n.d.). He states that the majority of the models we see in magazines and television are below what is considered the "healthy body weight" (Serdar, n.d).

Dittmar et al. state that the media portray the ideal woman as "tall, white, and thin, with a tubular body, and blonde hair (2004). Thompson et al. state that in a study, 83% of teenage girls spent 4.3 hours each week, reading magazines (1999). Tiggermann states that women read magazines in order to get information about beauty, style, grooming and fitness (2003).

Magazines market themselves as tools which will help women look better (Tiggermann, 2003). Women buy magazines in order to learn from them and thus feel better about themselves (Tiggermann, 2003). Serdar (n.d.) states “Marketing strategies lure women into purchasing these forms of media, and most have the potential to be a powerful influence on women’s sense of self and satisfaction with their appearance.”

## **2.8. Case Studies and Success Stories**

Mau (2013) states that magazine circulation has declined. But advertising sales have increased for some magazines. Mau argues that fashion magazines can still remain viable if they incorporate a digital platform. He states that while print readership has declined, for some brands, that reflects the migration of readers from print to digital. He makes the example of Cosmopolitan, whose digital subscription increased by 33% in 2014.

Mau (2013) goes on to state that a business model that mixes a print and digital platform and offers fresh content is a recipe for success.

The French Magazine, Stylist, uses the free model in order to remain viable. They hand out their fashion magazines for free (Mau, 2013). On Thursdays, attractive young men and women set up stands in select metro stations and hand out the magazines to specific commuters.

The Stylist Editor in Chief states that, “in the beginning, I thought our mode of distribution was weird. O.K., you’re a woman with a rich and young vibe. Here, take a magazine.’ It’s such super-targeted distribution. We don’t give to guys in their 40s from the suburbs” (Mau, 2013).

Stylist distributes 400 000 magazines on a weekly basis. This number is 250 000 more copies than Vogue sells in a month in France. The magazine is distributed in 10 cities, including Paris. Like Vogue, Stylist aim to create a quality fashion magazine, with quality articles. Thus, they also attract premier brands in terms of advertising. Their advertisers include Kenzo, Lancome and Dior (Mau, 2013).

In order to create quality content, the magazine hires staff who have worked with the top fashion magazines, including Glamour and Vogue. Stylist’s Syndicate Director

states that, “for consumers, the boundaries between free and paying don’t exist.” In other words, the magazine provides the added benefit of human contact and free quality paper to the internet generation, who are used to accessing media for free (Mau, 2013).

One of the founders stated, “our simple logic was, you can make a free magazine that’s the same quality as a paid-for one. The strange thing is that some media is free and some isn’t. There’s no logic to it. No one says Facebook is free so it’s no good. Magazines are just as relevant to young people, but they don’t buy them the way they used to” (Mau, 2013).

Stylist aim to introduce their magazine to a new country every year. They have already introduced it to the United Arab Emirates (Mau, 2013).

Other publishing companies have taken note of this model. In April 2014, Hearst Magazine began handing out free copies of TrendingNY to different neighbourhoods in New York (Mau, 2013).

### **3.1. Research Question and Research Objectives:**

**The research objectives are:**

1. To determine if a market for print still exists?
2. To determine the factors that lead to a viable print magazine?
3. To determine if branding affects a magazine’s value.
4. To investigate whether there are models that print magazine publishers could employ in order to remain in the print business.

### **3.2. Hypothesis:**

**The hypothesis:**

- Print fashion magazines are still relevant.
- Good, quality print fashion magazines will sell.
- There are models that can save the print model.

### **4. Research Design and Methodology:**

#### **4.1. The Research Method:**

The research is designed to investigate relevance of print fashion magazines and the factors that lead to a print fashion magazine's viability. I will be using the qualitative research methodology. Widd et al. (2011:85) states that qualitative is the "collection, analysis and interpretation of data that cannot be meaningfully quantified, that is, summarized in the form of numbers." I chose qualitative research as it is less structured, provides large amounts of detail and can use smaller sample sizes.

Qualitative methods provide detailed descriptions which is important in order for me to understand whether print fashion magazines were still relevant and the factors that would lead to their viability.

#### **4.2. Research Design**

I conducted secondary research. I studied academic journals, articles and book in order to understand the problem. This also allowed me to tap into the existing research. For example, there was a lot of material on the "print vs digital" debate.

I also conducted surveys and interviews. I placed a survey on social media, including Facebook and LinkedIn. I also sent out the survey on e-mail. In addition, I conducted interviews.

Conde Nast states that 87% of fashion magazine readers are women and 13% are men. When conducting interviews, I interviewed 9 females and 1 male. 48 people responded to the surveys. 92% of the respondents were female with ages that ranged from 22 – 48 (Conde Nast, n.d.).

#### **4.3. The Interview Process**

7 out of the 10 interviews took place at the participant's place of work, 2 interviews were conducted at the participant's homes and 1 was conducted in a coffee shop.

The interviews were no longer than an hour and 30 minutes in length. The interview began with a request for demographic information, including age and place of residence.

The interview was a mixture of open-ended questions and semi - structured questions. The semi-structured question included options. There was always an

option for “other” in order to allow the respondent freedom in answering the questions.

#### **4.4. Data Analysis**

I used a spreadsheet to compile the data from the surveys. This allowed me to gain insights.

I organized the data from the interviews into themes. Some of the answers were already organized as part of the interview questions were formatted in terms of options. I then used this information to gain insights.

#### **4.5. Pilot**

I conducted a pilot study in order to determine whether I was on the right track. I conducted interviews with 5 people. Since the research stated that fashion magazine readers are usually educated and financially independent, I chose people in the corporate environment. The respondents ages ranged from 25 to 37. They were all female.

I went to the places of work.

I found that 20% of the respondents bought fashion magazines. While the remaining 80% had an interest in fashion, they did not buy fashion magazines. All respondents stated that they used the web in order to access fashion and beauty information.

20% stated they would be interested in buying a fashion magazine if the quality was good, while another 20% stated that they did not feel fashion magazines represented the South African fashion landscape.

#### **4.6. Participants**

The participants will included males and females. The survey was answered by people from different countries, including Jordan and South Africa. The sample will be drawn from different income levels, races and occupations. I did not aim at specific ages.

### **5. Analysis and Findings:**

#### **5.1. Print vs Digital**

The research showed that people are definitely moving from print to digital. A study by We Are Social found that 42% of the world population have access to the internet (We are Social, 2015). The Emarketer website (2015) states that 15% of the world population will use a tablet in 2015. People who own tablet have a higher probability of reading e-books or e-magazines than people who do not own tablets (Emarketer, 2015).

E-readership is growing (Pew Research Centre, 2014). In 2013, US readers who read e-books grew by 5% from the previous year to 28%. But the growth in e-readership has not replaced print. 70% of Americans read print books in 2013. Most people who read e-books also read print books (Pew Research Centre, 2014).

Freeport conducted a survey in 2014. They found that 25% of their respondents had read 5 or more magazines the previous month. Only 1.8% had read digital magazines. The survey found that readers of print engaged more with the content than digital magazine readers. 50% of print magazine readers stated that they spent at least 30 minutes on a print magazine compared to 12% of digital readers.

In the survey I conducted, 60% of the respondents said they still read print magazines. 59% stated that they prefer print magazines to digital magazines. And while the majority of respondents stated that they prefer print to digital, only 28% still buy print magazines. They stated that they can access the fashion and beauty information on the web easily.

## **5.2. Market for Print Fashion Magazines**

Fashion magazine circulation is on the decline worldwide. In 2013, Mau (2013) states that while advertising in fashion magazines increased for the biggest 7 magazines in the world, their circulation declined. The circulation for Glamour declined by 28.8%, Cosmo declined by 24%, In Style by 19% and Vogue by 10.4% (Mau, 2013).

In the survey, I conducted, only 28% of the people stated that they would buy a print fashion magazine. Some of the reasons included the fact that magazines were costly. And while people loved the experience of magazines, they also felt that the web provided more variety, is more cost-efficient and is easily accessible.

## **5.3. Are Print Fashion Magazines Still a Viable Medium?**

Print fashion magazines will remain viable as long as readers continue to read them and advertisers place adverts in them.

While magazine readership is declining, people still read magazines. AARP The Magazine has a readership of close to 22 million people. Readers Digest is read by over 5 million people and People magazine is read by 3.5 million people. In addition, every copy of People is read by 12 people. In other words, People magazine has a pass along rate of 12 (Drummond, 2013). The Vogue print magazine is read by 12.7 million people worldwide. (Conde Nast, n.d.)

The big fashion magazines that have digital magazines still sell more copies of their print editions as opposed to the digital magazines. Vogue UK sells 192,763 print copies and only 8,314 digital copies. Good Housekeeping sells 410,981 print magazines compared to 3,561 digital magazines (Mau, 2013).

The magazine industry derives 75% of its revenue from advertising (Barrell and Braithwaite (1988: 117). Yentob (2012) states that magazines will continue to exist as long as advertisers buy advertising space in them.

Advertisers are continuing to advertise in fashion magazines as shown in the September issues of the big fashion magazines. Vogue US's 2014 September issue had 631 pages of advertising.

A study conducted by the Association of Media Magazines (2015) states found that magazines are important as they still add value to brands. The study found that:

- Magazines scored higher than TV or the internet in terms of engaging people.
- Readers trust and believe in magazines. They are more receptive of the advertising in magazines as part of the brand experience.
- Magazines motivate people into taking action. Over 60% of magazine readers were motivated to take action after seeing the adverts on magazines.
- Magazines have high penetration into the youth. Studies show that magazines reach more people who are under 35 than TV.
- Magazines are compatible with social media. 69% of people have shared magazine articles on Facebook, while over 60% have shared the content in magazines, while they were chatting on Facebook.

- Magazine readers are the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> most influential media users across 60 product categories. They also have a higher tendency to influence friends and family to buy products, based on adverts they've seen in magazines.
- Studies have shown that allocating more money to advertising on magazines in the media plan improves Return on Investment across many product categories.

The primary research corroborated the influence of advertisements on consumer spending. All ten people, I interviewed stated that they have bought products based on

#### **5.4. Do Alternative Models Make Print Magazines More Viable?**

Print is still viable (Karlene Lukovitz, n.d.) of the Association for Magazine Media states that like any industry, the print magazine industry has experienced an increase and a decrease in sales at different times. He makes the example of television. He states that television shows have come and gone and no-one has said that that was the end of television. He states that the optimal business model for magazines in the digital age is a combination of a print and digital model. He quotes media analyst/author Thad McIlroy: "Few magazine publishers could survive the loss of ad revenue if they discontinued their print versions. While they are becoming increasingly adept at generating revenue from their Web sites, Web-only publishing models cannot supplant a print and Web model" (Lukovitz, n.d.).

Guenther (2011) states that magazines will remain viable for years to come. He states that "magazine content and brands still resonate with consumers around the globe, but the means of delivery and methods of consumption are moving to the digital world in a measured yet relentless march" (Guenther, 2011).

He states that magazines need to find different hybrid models. They need to have a presence in both print and digital. He states that publishers can achieve high returns on digital based on unique content and the brand equity that was developed in the print magazines.

He goes on to state that digital provides its own unique value. He states that in creating new business models, publishers have to learn from the web. Publishers can create experiences on the web, which readers and advertisers can appreciate.

They can also exploit the low costs of digital publishing in order to improve their margins.

Print magazines provide “an end-to-end, bundled experience of extremely high value.” Digital can provide “customized” plans. For example, in a family who have different interests, the digital magazine can offer “access any magazine content, at any time, on any device in the home.” Digital can also offer customized magazines which only has articles of interest to the reader.

Giving out magazines for free has also proved to be successful business model, as can be seen by Stylist’s case. This model provides value for advertisers in that it gives them a large number of readers. And as can be seen in the Stylist case, specific readers can be targeted.

## **6. Summary**

The aim of the research was to investigate the relevance of print fashion magazines and the factors that lead to a print fashion magazine’s viability. I aimed to do this by looking at factors that include the market for print magazines, what readers look for in a print magazine and whether print publishers can use other models in order to survive in the digital age.

The reason I embarked on this research is because I am passionate about print media. I wanted to find out if it has a future.

The research is divided into 5 chapters. Each chapter deals with different aspects of the research. The first chapter is the Introduction. It contains the research problem, the reason I chose this subject and the context of the research.

The second chapter contains the literature review and the theoretical framework. This chapter details all the secondary research I conducted into the fashion magazine industry. It also details the Brand Identity Planning Model which is the framework I used to analyse whether brand identity affected the magazine’s viability.

The third chapter deals explains the methodology I used. I conducted primary and secondary research. The primary research included interviews and a survey. The secondary research included academic journals, books and articles.

In the fourth chapter, I analysed the findings from the research. I found that print fashion magazines are still relevant in the digital age. The primary research showed that, while print readership has declined, people still appreciated it. The respondents stated that print provided an experience that one could not get from digital.

But most respondents get their fashion information online, thus the best business model for publishers is a hybrid of print and digital. Print can provide the advertising revenue, while digital provides dynamic and easily accessible content.

The last chapter is the conclusion, where I will conclude the research and discuss my recommendations.

## **7. Delimitations**

While I have mentioned it, I will not delve into detail into beauty standards, such as weight, and the ideal beauty image. This research aims to determine the relevance of print fashion magazines in South Africa.

## **8. Ethical Considerations and Procedures:**

I will inform all participants who I am and the reason I am conducting research. I will also assure all respondents on the confidentiality of any information collected.

## **9. Timescale:**

Key Dates:

<b><u>Due Date</u></b>	<b><u>Activity</u></b>
11 March	Proposal
21 May	Research Report Draft
27 May	Challenge
3 June	Activation Proposal
1 July	Alchemy Presentation
8 July	Final Activation
8 July	Final Research Report

## **10. Resources**

I will draw up and distribute the survey questions. I will also collect the survey answers. I will bear any costs that are related to the research.

## **11. Conclusion and Recommendations**

Print fashion magazines are still relevant and viable in the digital age. This means that publishers who are moving to print magazines to a digital only model are making a mistake. This model does not normally work. Publishers should either have a hybrid print and digital model or find alternative models of selling their print.

Print fashion magazine still have a market in the digital age. Vogue magazine has a readership of 12.7 million people worldwide. This means that print publishers need to innovate just as much on print as they do on the digital space. In addition, since consumers engage more with print, it might be profitable for digital magazines to also have print magazines in order to secure additional advertising revenue.

In order for print to thrive in the digital age, publishers have to utilize creative business models. The few models that are currently existing include the hybrid print and digital model, the model where magazines are handed out for free, targeted distribution (where magazines are given to a specific target market). But there is no question, publishers need to innovate in this space.

Quality is not necessarily a factor in the sale of fashion magazines. People buy magazine for the experience of paging through a magazine. But a big factor that does lead to sales is brand identity. Magazine publishers have to create strong brand identities for their magazines. This creates brand loyalty.

My recommendation is that there needs to be more research done on how to get more people to buy print fashion magazines.

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