
Factors Affecting Popularity of A News Channel

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Abstract

TV industry is major contributor to the mass media industry in terms of revenue. News channels have also mushroomed in recent times. This mushrooming has led to intense competition and subsequent positive and negative effects. There are many factors which help a customer to decide which news channel to watch. The study was conducted to analyze the factors that affect the news channels brand image and the factors that attract viewers to news channels.

Keywords: Mass Media, Brand Image, News Channels.

Introduction: Mass media in India has seen wonderful growth rates. Price water house Coopers in its "Indian entertainment and media outlook 2009" reported that it has consistently outpaced growth in GDP. TV media is the fastest growing segment of the industry. It is also the main contributor to the revenue of the industry. Television industry is projected to continue to be the major contributor to the overall industry revenue pie.

It is both a good sign as well as a bad omen. It's a good sign because most of the growth is coming from the contribution of private sector. It is a bad omen because due to intense competition News channels have to outperform their competitor which has its own side effects. Like the distinction between news and views or news and propaganda is becoming blur. Also, since the private players work on profit basis so the priority of media houses is profit over content. And this is why issues like paid news or paid content crop up.

News is a serious mode of information; people who watch a news channel have a serious mindset. Such viewers desire to get information from all corners of the world. At the same time not only this information has to be authentic but also presented in an interesting manner. If such is not the case the channel may lose its viewership. TV channels also face a paradoxical problem of the time distribution between advertisements and news features. Many channels are accused of showing more advertisement than news. This can also change the viewership. Media houses in India are constantly trying to increase audience involvement with news and various ways are utilized to achieve this objective. As media managers are being constantly pushed to garner more TRP a question of credibility always arises. This can affect the brand image of the channel as well.

Keeping all these things in mind, the study was conducted to analyze the factors that affect the news channels brand image and the factors that attract viewers to news channels.

Review of Literature: Western and Indian authors have given different definitions of news. Evolving them Shamsi (2005) defines news as any accurate fact or idea that will interest large number of readers; and of two stories the accurate one that interests the greater number of people is better news. Along with this emphasis on accuracy the definitions also focus on timeliness, information or current events (Gupta, 2006).

Most of the literature has consensus on the fact that it is multi dimensional which include novelty, proximity, prominence, conflict and human interest. These media professionals describe it more as processes and therefore do not focus on them as products of media organizations. They argue that the processes are so that it limits the influence of personal and organizational values on news messages, as proof that they are mirrors that merely reflect events and issues in society (Harrison, 2006). Sociologists and scholars on the other hand give it a social construction dimension and as Fowler puts it "News is a social institution and a cultural discourse which exists only and meaning only in relation to other institutions and discourses operating at the same time" This social construction aspect has implications as it effects the functioning of the industry. Mainstream journalism treats news as a commodity to be bought and sold in the market place of information (Verma, 2010)

As discussed earlier credibility of a news channel is very important aspect. Credibility studies relating to media can be divided into three parts. Media channel credibility refers to the audiences' perceptions of a news channel's

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believability, as distinct from the believability of the individual journalists and sources, media organizations, or the content of the news itself (Bucy, 2003). Researchers have recognized the overlap between source credibility, medium credibility, and media channel credibility and have noted the importance of distinguishing between these concepts to avoid theoretical and empirical confusions” (Kioussis, 2001). Source credibility refers to the judgment made by an audience about the expertise and trustworthiness of a communicator (Self, 1996); medium credibility is the relative credibility of media channels that sources use in sending messages (Metzger, Flanagin, Eyal, Lemus & McCann, 2003); while media channel credibility, the concept salient to this study, refers to the believability of a specific media outlet (Bucy, 2003).

Research Methodology:

Objectives:

- 1) To find out the factors that influence news channel's brand image.
- 2) To study the significant features of news channel, which, enhances popularity among viewers.
- 3) To find the most preferred news channel among the viewers.

Hypothesis:

H1: Authenticity of news will have a significant effect on the channels brand image.

H2: Wide coverage on variety of news plays a significant role in enhancing popularity of a news channel.

Sample: Convenience sampling was used. Sample size was 120. Students in the age group of 20 25 were selected.

Tools for Data Collection: Data was collected by administering self developed questionnaire.

Data Analysis: The data was analyzed using frequency, percentage and Chi Square test.

Analysis and Results:

Most preferred news Channel

CHANNEL	SCORE	RANK
AAJ TAK	181	1
NDTV INDIA	230	2
STAR NEWS	309	3
IBN7	524	4
INDIA TV	703	6
ZEE NEWS	629	5
OTHERS	758	7

In the sample Aaj Tak is ranked as most preferred national news channel followed by NDTV India.

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In the sample Aaj Tak is ranked as most preferred national news channel and followed by NDTV India.

Most preferred business news channel:

CHANNEL	SCORE	RANK
NDTV PROFIT	139	1
CNBC	213	2
CNN IBN7	327	3
ZEE BUSINESS	456	4

In this sample NDTV PROFIT is ranked as the most preferred business news channel whereas ZEE BUSINESS is ranked as the least preferred business news channel.

Most preferred local news channel:

Local News Channel:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Digi News	101	84.9	84.9	84.9
	Bhaskar TV	13	10.9	10.9	95.8
	Others	5	4.2	4.2	100.0
	Total	119	100.0	100.0	

In the sample 84.9% respondents prefer to watch digi news. 10.9% watch bhaskar TV, 4.2% watch other channels.

Most reliable news channel:

CHANNEL	SCORE	RANK
AAJ TAK	181	1
NDTV INDIA	230	2
STAR NEWS	309	3
IBN7	524	4
INDIA TV	703	6
ZEE NEWS	629	5
OTHERS	758	7

In the sample Aaj Tak is ranked as most reliable news channel again followed by NDTV India.

Most frivolous news channel:

CHANNEL	SCORE	RANK
AAJ TAK	755	6
NDTV INDIA	792	7
STAR NEWS	571	5
IBN7	261	2
INDIATV	119	1
ZEE NEWS	331	3
OTHERS	500	4

In this sample INDIA TV is ranked as the most frivolous news channel whereas Aaj Tak as the least frivolous channel.

Authenticity:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Chi-Square
Valid	Important	103	86.6	86.6	63.605a
	Neutral	16	13.4	13.4	
	Total	119	100.0	100.0	

The chi square value of 63.605 is significant at 0.01 level with df equals to 1. It means the responses are not normally distributed. Further 86.6% respondent think that authenticity of the news is very important whereas 13.4% respondents think that authenticity of the news is important.

Popularity:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Chi-Square
Valid	Important	107	89.9	89.9	75.840
	Neutral	12	10.1	10.1	
	Total	119	100.0	100.0	

The chi square value of 75.840 is significant at 0.01 level with df equals to 1. It means the responses are not normally distributed. Further 89.9% respondent think that authenticity of the news is very important whereas 10.1% respondents think that popularity of the news is neutral.

Reporters and News Casters:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Chi-Square
Valid	Very Important	29	24.4	24.4	31.269
	Important	90	75.6	75.6	
	Total	119	100.0	100.0	

The chi square value of 31.269 is significant at 0.01 level with df equals to 1. It means the responses are not normally distributed. Further 84.4% respondent think that reporters and newscasters are very important whereas 75.6% respondents think that they are important.

Coverage on National News:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Chi-Square
Valid	Important	98	82.4	82.4	131.513
	Neutral	18	15.1	15.1	
	Not so important	3	2.5	2.5	
	Total	119	100.0	100.0	

The chi square value of 131.513 is significant at 0.01 level with df equals to 2. It means the responses are not normally distributed. Further 82.4% respondent think that news coverage on national news is very important, 15.1% respondents think that is neutral whereas 2.5% respondents think that it is not so important.

Coverage on Local News:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Chi-Square
Valid	Neutral	33	27.7	27.7	23.605
	Not so Important	86	72.3	72.3	
	Total	119	100.0	100.0	

The chi square value of 23.605 is significant at 0.01 level with df equals to 2. It means the responses are not normally distributed. Further 27.7% respondent think that coverage of local news is neutral whereas, 72.3% respondents think that it is not so important.

Coverage on International News:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Chi-Square
Valid	Very Important	14	11.8	11.8	92.084
	Important	89	74.8	74.8	
	Neutral	16	13.4	13.4	
	Total	119	100.0	100.0	

The chi square value of 92.084 is significant at 0.01 level with df equals to 2. It means the responses are not normally distributed. Further 11.8% respondent think that coverage on international news is very important, 74.8% respondents think that it is important while 13.4% respondents think that it is neutral.

Share Market:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Chi-Square
Valid	Important	8	6.7	6.7	94.504
	Neutral	89	74.8	74.8	
	Not so Important	22	18.5	18.5	
	Total	119	100.0	100.0	

The chi square value of 94.504 is significant at 0.01 level with df equals to 2. It means the responses are not normally distributed. Further 6.7% respondent think that information on share market is important, 74.8% respondents think that it is neutral while, 18.5% respondents think that it is not so important.

Sports Segment:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Chi-Square
Valid	Important	70	58.8	58.8	3.706
	Neutral	49	41.2	41.2	
	Total	119	100.0	100.0	

The chi square value of 3.706 is significant at 0.01 level with df equals to 1. It means the responses are not normally distributed. Further 58.8% respondent thinks that sports segment is important, whereas 41.2% respondents think that it is neutral.

Health Information:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Chi-Square
Valid	Very Important	18	15.1	15.1	108.824
	Important	93	78.2	78.2	
	Neutral	8	6.7	6.7	
	Total	119	100.0	100.0	

The chi-square value of 108.824 is significant at 0.01 level with df equals to 2. It means the responses are not normally distributed. Further 15.1% respondent think that health information is very important, 78.2% respondents think that health information is important while 6.7% respondents think that it is neutral.

Sensational News:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Chi-Square
Valid	Important	87	73.1	73.1	84.924
	Neutral	18	15.1	15.1	
	Not so Important	14	11.8	11.8	
	Total	119	100.0	100.0	

The chi square value of 84.924 is significant at 0.01 level with df equals to 2. It means the responses are not normally distributed. Further 73.1% respondent think that information is important, 15.1% respondents think that sensational news are neutral whereas, 11.8% respondents think that it is not so important.

Reliability:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Chi-Square
Valid	Very Important	83	69.7	69.7	18.563
	Important	36	30.3	30.3	
	Total	119	100.0	100.0	

The chi-square value of 18.563 is significant at 0.01 level with df equals to 1. It means the responses are not normally distributed. Further 69.7% respondents think that reliability of the news is very important whereas 30.3% respondents think that reliability of the news is important.

Conclusions: The major findings of this study highlight Aajtak as the most preferred and reliable news channel. NDTV emerged second in this ranking. On the other hand India TV emerged as the most frivolous news channel. Authenticity and reliability of news and popularity of newscasters and reporters emerged as determining factors that affected viewer's inclination towards a certain news channel.

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