An empirical study of the impact of Internet news on the habit of newspaper reading and watching TV news

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Abstract

The contemporary view about media uses and needs is an audience-centered view that assumes that media behavior is purposive, goal-directed and motivated, people select media content to satisfy their needs or desire, social and psychological dispositions mediate that behavior and the media compete with other forms of communication. Audiences are not the same and they seek and consume media based on their choices. Media on the other hand comes in different formats and provides different uses to its users. A survey was conducted on Indian adult consumers of news media, having access to Internet, who have a greater exposure to media sources and a cosmopolitan lifestyle from four-metropolitan cities in India to investigate the impact of reading Internet news on reading print newspapers and watching TV news. The study confirms that there is a difference in the way the Indian audience consume news from the three different media. A distinct difference was confirmed in the newsgathering habits from print newspapers and TV news in this study amongst Internet newsreaders.
The media business is changing on a massive scale, driven by a fundamental transformation that enables people to get any information at any time and publish their own content at will due to the Internet. The cause is technological, but the impact is behavioral. Consumers are eagerly substituting faster, cheaper, fresher, simpler and at times more laborious solutions to gather information they once obtained through newspapers.

As a result, people’s media consumption habits are changing, particularly among the young and there is a widespread belief that the Internet, as a new media form, is replacing the newspaper for accessing updated news and views.

In typical disruptive fashion, the new avenues of newsgathering often provide lower quality in depth or comprehensiveness, but offer attractive tradeoffs such as lower cost, real-time information, multimedia and anytime access. Further, they can focus on niche subjects in ways general interest newspapers can't match.

Newspaper companies in most countries are suffering in the face of this disruption and it becomes necessary through research to look at the markets in new ways to seize opportunities. However in India, the current media situation appears to contradict these trends and speculations, primarily as a result of literacy levels going up. This growth spurt has however been mostly in small towns and villages, whereas there is a dip in circulation within metro cities.

This study attempts to identify whether there is any difference between the perception of consumers of news towards the three media namely Internet news, print newspapers and TV news within the Indian audience, followed by group-wise (readers and non-readers of Internet news) test for the same purpose.

**Audience and News**

All audiences are not the same and therefore they use (Katz, 1959) and perceive media in a manner, which is influenced by their social and psychological background. Audiences seek and consume media content including news for various reasons. They are active, know the media content and also which media to use to meet their requirement (McQuail, 1983). Almost any consideration of media from uses and gratifications standpoint unequivocally asserts as its central maxim the idea of an active, rational, goal-seeking audience (Windahl, 1981). In the Internet environment, users are more actively engaged communication participants, compared to other traditional media (Ruggiero, 2000).

Audiences consciously and rationally choose a certain media over others, based on their needs and thus there is competition in making media choices to satisfy individual needs. Further, the media compete with other information sources for audience’s need satisfaction (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974; 1974a). Traditional mass media and new media continue to provide people with a wide range of media platforms and content and therefore it is necessary to investigate why audiences choose to be exposed to different media channels (LaRose, Mastro & Eastin, 2001).

There are different kinds of audience with different kinds of needs and media preferences and have varied reasons for using a certain media instead of others (Wilson, 1998). Perceptions
and past experiences regarding utility in a particular situation (Becker, and Shoenbach, 1989), exposure as well as social and cultural contexts (Levy and Windahl, 1989) all play a role in this selection process. Media is also used by individuals for satisfying their need for self-esteem, social utility functions from a need for social affiliation and escape function to release tension (Katz, et. al 1974). News consumers now have too many other options available - television, radio, Internet, magazines, etc. - to simply "rely" upon newspapers as their only source of public information (Stempel III and Hargrove, 1996; Blumler, 1979). The expectations and gratifications obtained from media is dependent upon media effects like knowledge, dependency, attitudes, perceptions of social reality, agenda setting, discussions and politics (Rayburn, 1996). The news audience wants their news to inform, explain, persuade, interpret and entertain and thus media has to provide the news narrative (Severin and Tankard, 1992). Moreover, demographic attributes, also play a role in creating media preferences (Rubin and Perse, 1987). The audience can have two orientations towards news - an instrumental orientation or a ritualised orientation. When it is associated with an instrumental tendency it reflects a media-use process that is motivated by more specific cognitive needs and goals like excitement to find new news or entertainment and requires more involvement and affinity towards the medium. Whereas audience activity related to a ritualized orientation implies a media use process that is motivated more by habit and satisfies more diffusive and affective or emotional needs and goals. In such cases there is less selectivity or intentionality in the minds of the audience (Blumler, 1979; Hawkins and Pingree, 1981; Morris and Ogan, 1996). Media use pattern after adoption of a new communication technology is also dependent on the uses and gratifications that it brings to its user (Perse and Courtright, 1993).

There are studies suggesting that news on the Internet will be complimentary to reading news on the newspaper (Vyas, Singh and Bhabra, 2007; Nyugen and Western, 2007; Douglas, 2006). A US based study (Patterson, 2007) has suggested that given the current trends, not only will newspapers lose out to Internet, but even online newspapers will lose out to other sources of news on the Internet suggesting a tremendous competition in this segment.

**Research questions**

Research has further shown that Internet users watch less TV than non-users but are more likely to read newspapers (Neustadl and Robinson, 2002). Drawing upon this argument, this study examines the Internet as a new medium of news against the backdrop of two traditional media – print newspapers and TV news, whose basic functions are very similar to the ones provided by the Internet – information and entertainment to explore its impact on the newsgathering habits of people through the following research questions:

**R1**: Is there a difference in the news acquiring habits of the Indian audience from the three media – namely Print newspapers, TV news and Internet news?

**R2**: Is there any difference in the news gathering habits of people from Print newspapers and TV news between the groups who read Internet news and those who do not read Internet news?

**R3**: Is there any difference in the news gathering habits of people from Print newspapers and TV news, within the group of non-readers of Internet news?
R4: Is there any difference in the news gathering habits of people from Print newspapers and TV news, within the group of readers of Internet news?

Research Hypotheses

The contemporary view about media uses and needs is an audience-centered view that assumes that media behavior is purposive, goal-directed and motivated, people select media content to satisfy their needs or desire, social and psychological dispositions mediate that behavior and the media compete with other forms of communication – or functional alternatives – such as interpersonal interaction for selection, attention and use. Audiences are not the same and they seek and consume media based on their choices. Media on the other hand comes in different formats and provides different uses to its users. Within the audience who have access to print newspapers, TV news and Internet news in India it is necessary to know whether there is a difference in the newsgathering habit from different media and that will answer the first research question through the following hypothesis H1.1:

**H1.1**: There is a difference between groups of audience with respect to newsgathering habit from Print newspapers, TV news and Internet news.

Mathematically,

\[ H_0 : \mu_p = \mu_t = \mu_i \text{ against } H_a : \mu_p \neq \mu_t \neq \mu_i \]

Further, amongst this audience, some read Internet news and some don’t. Between readers and non-readers of Internet news and also within the groups of readers and non-readers of Internet news, it is necessary to see whether there is a difference in the newsgathering habits from print newspapers and TV news which leads to the research questions R2, R3 and R4. This will provide a better understanding about the preferences of these groups and for that hypotheses H2.1, H2.2 (to answer R2), H3.1 (to answer R3) and H4.1 (to answer R4) have been posited.

**H2.1**: There is difference in the news gathering habit from Print newspaper between the groups of Internet news readers (A) and non-readers (B).

Mathematically,

\[ H_0 : X_{PN}(A) = X_{PN}(B) \text{ against } H_a : X_{PN}(A) \neq X_{PN}(B) \]

**H2.2**: There is difference in the news gathering habit from TV news between the groups of Internet news readers (A) and non-readers (B).

Mathematically,

\[ H_0 : X_{TV}(A) = X_{TV}(B) \text{ against } H_a : X_{TV}(A) \neq X_{TV}(B) \]
H3.1: There is difference in the news gathering habit from Print newspapers and TV news within the group of non readers of Internet news (B).

Mathematically, 

\[ H_0 : \text{XPN}(B) = \text{X TV}(B) \quad \text{against} \quad H_a : \text{XPN}(B) \neq \text{XTV}(B) \]

H4.1: There is difference in the news gathering habit from Print newspapers and TV news within the group of Internet newsreaders (A).

Mathematically, 

\[ H_0 : \text{XPN}(A) = \text{X TV}(A) \quad \text{against} \quad H_a : \text{XPN}(A) \neq \text{XTV}(A) \]

Methodology

A survey was conducted on Indian adult consumers of news media, having access to Internet, who have a greater exposure to media sources and a cosmopolitan lifestyle from four metropolitan cities in India-Kolkata, Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai on 500 randomly selected respondents. The population is represented by students, professionals, unemployed individuals, teachers, retired persons and others who did not fit into the above category and had at least some formal education.

To test the hypothesis H1.1 a one-way ANOVA has been performed to examine whether there is any difference between groups in newsgathering habits from the three different media. To identify, where the difference lies between the news acquiring habits from the three media mentioned, Tukey’s HSG multiple comparative test has been performed subsequently.

\( t \)-test has been performed to test whether there is any significant difference in the means of news gathering habit from Print newspapers and TV news between Internet news readers and non-readers ( hypotheses H2.1 and H2.2).

\( t \)-test has also been performed to test whether there is any significant difference in the means of newsgathering habit from Print newspapers and TV news within the group of non-Internet newsreaders and within the group of Internet newsreaders.(hypotheses H3.1 and H4.1).

Respondent profile

There were 481 completed questionnaires, yielding a response rate of 96.2 percent. There were an almost equal proportion of male (50.3%) and female (49.7%) respondents. The respondents were aged 19-62 years and the mean age was 35.7 years. There was also an almost equal proportion of representation from respondents earning below 4,000,00 INR a year (47.4%) and earning above that amount (52.6%).
**Results and discussion**

To test the first hypothesis H1.1: *There is a difference between groups with respect to newsgathering habit from Print newspapers, TV news and Internet news*, a one-way ANOVA has been performed and the results have been presented below in Table 1.

**Table 1 : Results of ANOVA performed on the data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>d.f</th>
<th>M.S</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between groups</td>
<td>1639.01</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>819.51</td>
<td>172.86</td>
<td>&lt;0.001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within groups</td>
<td>6637.12</td>
<td>1400</td>
<td>54.74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8276.13</td>
<td>1402</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note : * P< 0.001, SS=sums of squares , df=degrees of freedom , M.S=SS/df

The F value, which has been presented in the table, is highly significant for the sample data. Thus the hypothesis (H1.1) mentioned earlier has been confirmed, leading to the conclusion that *there is a difference between the news acquiring habits of the population between Print newspapers, TV news and Internet news.*

Further it is necessary to identify, where the difference lies between the news acquiring habits from the three media mentioned here. For this purpose, Tukey’s HSG multiple comparative test has been performed to identify where the differences lie. Results of this test have been presented below in Table 2:

**Table 2 : Results of the Tukey’s HSG multiple comparative test between Print newspaper, TV news and Internet news**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Print newspapers</th>
<th>Internet news</th>
<th>TV news</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internet news</td>
<td>17.45</td>
<td>&lt;0.001*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV news</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>0.001*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV news</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>0.001*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet news</td>
<td>13.65</td>
<td>&lt;0.001*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note : * P< 0.001

Table 2 confirms that there is significant difference in the news acquiring habits of people from and between Print newspapers and TV news, Print newspapers and Internet news and Internet news and TV news. It can thus be inferred that all these media are distinct and people use them differently for different needs.
To test the next two hypotheses:

**H2.1** : There is difference in the news gathering habit from Print newspaper between the groups of Internet news readers (A) and non-readers(B)

**H2.2** : There is difference in the news gathering habit from TV news between the groups of Internet news readers (A) and non-readers(B)

The sample has been divided into two groups based on whether they read news on the Internet or not. Then t-test has been performed to test whether there is any significant difference in the means of news gathering habit from Print newspapers and TV news. The results are presented in Table 3 below.

**Table 3: t –statistics for weekly Print newspaper readership and TV news viewer ship between readers and non-readers of Internet news.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Print newspapers</td>
<td>-0.87</td>
<td>0.386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV news</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.669</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note : * p  < 0.05

From Table 3, we find that in the cases of both newsgathering habit from Print newspapers and watching TV news (in days), between the readers and non-readers of Internet news the t value is not significant at the desired level for the sample data. That is **neither the hypotheses H2.1 nor the hypothesis H2.2 is confirmed in this work.** Hence there is no significant difference between the news gathering habits of readers and non-readers of Internet news with respect to the print newspapers or TV news.

The next two hypotheses that have been tested are H3.1 and H4.1.

**H3.1**: There is difference in the news gathering habit from Print newspapers and TV news within the group of non-Internet newsreaders (B).

**H4.1**: There is difference in the news gathering habit from Print newspapers and TV news within the group of Internet newsreaders (A).

To test the hypotheses H3.1 and H 4.1, the sample has been divided into two groups based on whether they read news on the Internet or not. Then t-test has been performed to test whether there is any significant difference in the means of newsgathering habit from Print newspapers and TV news within the group of non-Internet newsreaders. To test the hypothesis H4.1, t-test has been performed to test whether there is any significant difference in the means of newsgathering habit from Print newspapers and TV news within the group of Internet newsreaders and the results are presented in Table 4 below.
Table 4: t- statistics for weekly print newspaper readership and TV news viewing within the groups of non-readers of Internet news and readers of Internet news

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Readers of Internet news</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>0.010*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-readers of Internet news</td>
<td>-0.41</td>
<td>0.683</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * p < 0.05

Results suggest that within the group of non-readers of Internet news, the test statistic is not significant and hence the hypothesis H3.1 is not confirmed in this work. So it is concluded that there is no significant difference in the news gathering habits of non-readers of Internet news users with respect to Print newspapers and TV news. However, from Table 4, the results suggest that there is a significant difference in the news gathering habits from Print newspapers and TV news within the group of readers of Internet news and hence the hypothesis H4.1, as mentioned earlier has been confirmed in this work and it may be concluded that there is difference in the news gathering habit from Print newspapers and TV news within the group of Internet newsreaders.

Summary of findings

It has been confirmed in this study that there is a difference in the way the Indian audience consume news from the three different media and all the media are distinct. No significant difference was found between the groups of Internet newsreaders and non-readers with respect to the news gathering habits from print newspapers or TV news. However, amongst Internet newsreaders a distinct difference was confirmed in the newsgathering habits from print newspapers and TV news in this study, whereas, no such difference was confirmed in the population that did not read Internet news.

Conclusion

The study of the impact of Internet as a medium of news clearly indicates that the Indian metropolitan audience considers Internet a separate medium of news. Internet newsreaders have shown a significant difference in the way they gathered news from print newspapers and TV news. It may thus be concluded that there is not just one news and information market, but multiple markets since media choice and usage is based on the user’s experience and perception of need satisfaction through a media.

Implications of the study

This study should be useful for journalists, content designers, media planners, Internet news portal managers, as well as managers working in print newspapers and TV news.
References used


