

Ingredient Branding as a Branding Strategy for News Channels in India

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ABSTRACT:

Purpose – News anchors and talk show hosts are ingredients to the overall news channel brand. While there has been some bit of branding around the news anchors in India, it still is in the early stages. This paper investigates the role that news anchors play in audience's choice of a particular news channel. It also goes on to decipher whether a news channel mirrors personality traits of a news anchor and loyalty towards news channel.

Research Gap – While there has been some research done on Ingredient Branding, it is largely restricted to Product Brands with little to no reference to Service Brands. There is also sparse research on establishing news anchors as a major ingredient of the news channels offering.

Research Methodology – The study was conducted with the help of extensive literature review from the western world and through a primary research of the local audience. Primary research was conducted by collecting responses from a defined TG. Statistical analysis was undertaken using ANOVA, crosstab and rank test amongst others.

Findings – Findings suggest that news anchors can play an important role as ingredient brands for the news channel, thus creating a differentiation against the competition. However, news anchor branding as part of ingredient branding must be used with caution for the reasons explained in the paper.

Practical implications – This paper will help Brand Managers in Service industries, especially news and broadcast space, to conceive and implement Ingredient Branding Strategy for their Brand while being cognizant of its efficacy and impact. Understanding of role and impact of news anchors within framework of Ingredient Branding can bring in learnings from more researches together for effective real-time application

Keywords – Differentiation, Ingredient Branding, Service Brands, News Channel Branding, News Anchors

1. INTRODUCTION

News channels introduced the concept of 24x7 reporting format starting with NDTV in 1990s. In spite of the day long format, every news channel strives for supremacy within its segment during prime time, which is the time between 19:00 and 22:00 in India (BARC, 2017). Clearly, no news channel can afford to not have their best programmes and anchors during this time of the day as it is the most contested as well as the most profitable airtime for news channels in the day.

It is, hence, obvious that a certain amount of publicity and brand building in terms of strategy, effort and money should be spent on these programmes and their star anchors. Barkha Dutt's 'The Buck Stops Here' and 'We the people' were the shining jewels for NDTV that attracted a large audience and helped Dutt, and NDTV, build a loyal fan base. The 'Newshour' on Times Now shot Arnab Goswami to fame and made him a household name in the India. His rise as a belligerent debate show host and a news anchor fuelled his venture of launching a new news channel, Republic TV, after leaving Times Now. Interestingly, he too started his TV news career through NDTV in 1995 (Firstpost, 2016). Another jewel in India's TV news channels space was 'The World This Week' that was hosted by Prannoy Roy on NDTV. Prannoy Roy was the co-founder and executive co-chairperson of New Delhi Television (NDTV).

Clearly, role of news anchors in India has played an important part in the rise of the prime-time news channel viewing and more so, making news more interesting than the traditional

format. However, there is limited research undertaken in terms of differentiation and association impact that news anchors have on the respective news channels. Though there has been some research done on anchors and their role in international news channels, there is limited work done in this area for Indian news channels, especially within the framework of branding. Also, there has not been any research that builds upon the aspect of looking at the news anchors and hosts as ingredients to the overall news channel brand, taking into consideration the 7Ps of Service Marketing Mix, which enlists People as one of the building blocks of service.

2. EVOLUTION OF NEWS CHANNELS IN INDIA

News and Television news channels are omniscient with their pervasive reach in India, which is a result of proliferation of media channels. News channels have grown to have an expansive coverage which has engulfed the common man, making him both, the beneficiary and a victim of this information typhoon. While there are various genres of TV channels that cater to the Indian tastes and needs, the news channels genre has played a key role since early 1990s. Journalism has often been termed as the fourth pillar of Democracy, and rightly so. It plays an important role in nation building as the other three pillars – Legislature, Executive and Judiciary (Saini, 2015). To add, its influence on politics cannot be overstated. Political parties and its leaders communicate with their target audience through news media that they do not (directly) control (Ansolahehere, Behr, & Iyengar, 1992).

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Politicians try to create favourable news about themselves which affect their candidature and image positively. This is largely influenced by carefully curated events and interaction between the politicians and their target audience (Zaller, 1999). The significance of news media in a politician's image building has been one of the critical factors in the expansion of TV news media.

This reach is supported by the number of households in the country which have access to TV sets. As per a report from (FICCI & E&Y, 2018), there are about 197 million households with TV sets, which represents almost two-third of all 300 million household in India (Jha, 2018). The TV news segment in India has had a meteoric rise in post liberalisation era. While Television was introduced into India in 1959, the news segment was monopolised by the state run Doordarshan. The news was liberated from the state control with the launch of New Delhi Television (NDTV), which went on to produce 'The World This Week' in 1988 (Indian Media Studies, 2017). The first 24x7 news channel began in 1998 (Bajpai, 2016) while currently there are 383 TV news channels listed as Permitted Private Satellite TV Channels as per Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB 2019).

The rapid growth that news channels in the country experienced could be factored to various reasons like – (i.) advancement of new technologies, (ii.) India's thriving democracy, (iii.) falling barriers to entry because of liberalisation, and (iv.) declining capital cost of launching a news channel (Roy P. , 2013). However, these conducive factors have also made the industry crowded. Presence of multiple news channels has created a red ocean in terms of profitability and individual market share for news channels. (Roy P. , 2013). In order to create a more profitable business and fend off competition, there have been various initiatives which are undertaken by the news channels. Content and programme formatting are such areas. During the early days of the news channels, news used to be a part of the programming content only for a half an hour show (Singh J. , 2015), this has changed with the 24x7 broadcast of news content now.

There has been a significant change when it comes to the format and content that is delivered by the news channels over a period of time. This is a factor of changing consumer preferences and evolving competitive landscape. For example, from an in-depth analysis of 10-15 stories every day, news channels have now moved towards a format that covers 90-100 stories a day.

A shrinking control of the state over television and increasing commercial pressures have essentially changed the character of news channels in the country (Singh J. , 2015). Challenges posed by newer formats of content like online broadcast has made it even difficult for TV news channels to arrest the decline in its following and audience, especially in the much important, younger segments. Television news channels, hence, need to overcome these challenges to stop the continued erosion of traditional television viewing and the meteoric rise of online video and digital media. (Nielsen & Sambrook, 2016). It is imperative that TV news channels work towards creating a strong differentiation for themselves and create strong associations with the audience in order to become a preferred destination for news content.

3. NEED OF BRANDING NEWS CHANNELS

Changing business scenarios and rising competitive pressures have made it necessary for businesses to take help of branding which can allow them to have a sustainable differential advantage. As per (Doyle, 1989), such a branding effort involves one or more of the following levers – quality, service, innovation and differentiation.

Building a right brand image in the minds of audience for a business creates a sustainable differentiation for a brand, leading to heightened brand awareness, association and preference. Marketers must convince consumers that there is a significant and meaningful difference between brands. Establishing a positive brand image in consumer memory—strong, favourable, and unique brand associations—goes hand-in-hand with creating brand awareness to build customer-based brand equity (Keller 2008) Customer Brand Equity in turn, is known to influence the profitability and market share for a brand (Aaker D. , 1991). Hence brand image can be directly linked to the profitability (Kapferer, 2008), which makes it important for the businesses to create the right identity which is perceived positively as a favourable brand image in consumers' minds. It should however be noted that the differentiation is established only when it is found as valuable and unique by the consumers (Trout, 2008).

The significance of building a useful differentiation through brand management practices is applicable to all businesses that exist in a competitive marketplace (McDowell, 2004). Proliferation of news channels drove the change from the old monopolistic preoccupation kind of landscape (especially in India) to a cut-throat competitive one (Chan-Olmsted & Cha, 2007).

Hence as (McDowell, 2004) cited, brand management finds a right place in the Indian news channel segment, especially when journalism practices are undergoing drastic transformations (Holton, Coddington, & Homero Gil de Zuniga, 2013). This has led to news channels and journalists themselves, trying to create differentiation by blending the traditional tenets of journalism with the newer tools of engagement like branding. While traditionally, the brand identity propagated by the news anchors and journalists were not consciously projected but were built more organically over a period of time, today the individual branding of content and anchors (journalists) themselves is carefully curated (Holton & Molyneux, 2015).

Consumers are attached to a differentiated brand identity which helps them in decision making (Williams, 2019). The ultimate utility of a differentiated brand with positive associations is to improve brand attitude and increase brand loyalty (Chan-Olmsted & Cha, 2008). The loyalty thus creates helps in building an economic and emotional attachment in consumers. This in turn created a drive-in consumer to buy and/or share the product with the others (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Branding for news channels is practiced over a wide spectrum in terms of avenues for branding, ranging from the promotion of individual content to an organization's mission (Molyneux & Holton, 2015). Interestingly, there also have been calls for commercial brands to behave like journalism companies in order to attract and retain customers (Pulizzi , 2012). Branding television channels helps in creating a relationship with the target audience (Singh S. , 2004).

Abundance of choices has necessitated the need to differentiate their products logically through functional attributes such as content features and programme packaging. However, the fragmentation of audience with an ever-rising interest in different genres and sub-genres of content have made it more difficult for news channels to attract audiences solely on the basis of product attributes. This has also made it important for news channels to think beyond the traditional ways of differentiating themselves, which are considered more tactical than strategic. TV news channels have to contemplate ways for establishing distinctive and meaningful brand images in the minds of news audiences (Chan-Olmsted & Cha, 2008).

Role of branding also comes into picture on the commercial side. Branding helps a news channel reach to a set of audience which acts as a curate audience for brands to advertise or promote themselves in an effective way (Heyer, 1999.).

For example, Fox News in the US has drawn viewers of certain political ideologies through many of its opinions based signature programs that tend to project an image of conservatism (Kurtz, 2005). This makes Fox news a credible platform for advertisers who are looking to promote their products to an audience bearing traits demonstrated by the audience curated by Fox news.

While branding helps in propagating a favourable brand personality to its target audience, it is equally important to zero in on the personality that the brand wants to propagate. (Haigood, 1999) proposed that humans regard those products to be having a favourable personality which they find more familiar, more comfortable, and less risky. Hence, news channels must conceive a brand identity for themselves that connect positively with the target audience, helping them to form the intended brand image in their minds (Kapferer, Brand identity and positioning 2008).

With little differentiation to offer in the core product, especially in case of TV news channels, where the issues and news remain same for all the channels, news channels have to think beyond traditional methods of branding around the content and packaging. It is with this challenge in sight that brands seek to add value to their offerings going in for strategic alliance with other brands. Strategic alliance not only enhances the overall brand equity of the combined offering, it also prevents the external brand to join hands with the core brand's competitor (Shocker, Srivastava, & Ruekert, 1994). Co-branding, where two brands come together to form a strategic alliance (Rao & Ruekert, 1994), creates a long-term relationship where both the firms try to leverage their respective brand name with a hope to create a combined branded entity which has a higher brand equity than the individual brand (Aaker D. , 1991).

4. INGREDIENT BRANDING AS A CO-BRANDING STRATEGY FOR NEWS CHANNELS

Brands aim at leveraging their brand equity to create a differentiation for a sustainable competitive advantage against their competitors. 'Brand Leverage' helps in creating a strong brand which can sustain for a long term based on strong associations created with the target audience (Ghodeswar, 2008). Brand leveraging as defined by (Keller, 2008) is combining the brand with another entity (which is also branded) that creates a new set of associations while affecting the existing brand associations in a way that helps the existing

brand. Ingredient Branding has been used as a potent tool to leverage a component brand name in order to enhance the differentiation of the host brand (core brand).

Ingredient branding is a strategy where a key attribute of one brand (ingredient brand) is incorporated into another brand (host brand), with the objective to add to the overall brand value of the host brand (Keller & Desai , 2002). Hence, Ingredient branding is essentially a brand collaboration that highlights a distinct component or brand attribute of an ingredient brand to enhance a product or service that can potentially become a category point-of-parity. This in turn creates higher visibility for the brand, heightened brand awareness, and a relevant differentiation (Uggla & Filipsson, 2008).

Researchers have shown that the presence of an ingredient brand in a host brand leads to favourable association of the host brand and has a positive impact on consumer evaluations of an unfamiliar product. It also helps in improved quality perception and attitude toward the host brand, while controlling the costs associated with the branding and perception building among the consumers (Vaidyanathan & Aggarwal, 2000; Keller & Desai , 2002 ; Rid & Pfoertsch, 2013; Butnariu, 2017). Researchers have also conducted experiments to show differential impact of ingredient branding on the ingredient brand and the host brand, based on the strength of the two brands and also with respect to extent of involvement by the customer in the product category (Radighieri , Mariadoss, Grégoire, & Johnson, 2013; Ponnamm, S., & Balaji, 2015). Irrespective of the extent of the impact of ingredient branding, it has been firmly established that ingredient branding positively affects the ingredient brand and the host brand, albeit in different magnitude. Hence, it is a win-win strategy for both the brand partners irrespective of the individual brand equity of the two brands (Washburn, Till, & Priluck, 2000).

However, it is crucial to understand what qualifies as an ingredient for an end product and how an ingredient should be chosen to create a branding proposition on its basis. (Norris , 1992) suggested that the ingredient which is the core behind the ingredient branding strategy must be the one which offers substantial innovation, have an advantage over other alternatives in the same category and most importantly critical to the functioning of the end product. The differentiability of the ingredient and its contribution towards the value of the overall product has also been highlighted by (Kotler & Pfoertsch, 2010) as a major condition to implement ingredient branding concept. Kotler et al went on to suggest that the higher the importance of the ingredient component in the overall product, the more impactful is the ingredient branding strategy. Clearly, for a potent ingredient branding strategy, an ingredient should be – (i.) differentiable, (ii.) sustainable, and (iii.) core to the end product.

News channels are branded to create a differentiation against their competitors by propagating a favourable brand identity based on a positive brand personality (Chan-Olmsted & Cha, 2007) A wide range of ingredients come together in a news channel to complete the overall product package which is offered to its audience. Channels use ingredients like visual identity, individual content, programme packaging etc (Singh S. , 2004) and who delivers the content the anchors and show hosts. Audience form a perception about the channel through these elements. From the consumer point of view, the expected

end product is news which is expected to be delivered in a convincing yet interesting manner.

From the news channel's point of view, key ingredients of its end-product are – (i.) the content (and all that goes behind curating that content), and (ii.) its anchors who deliver this content.

Technological advancement and democratisation in content thus brought about, has diluted the difference in content among news channels. This has rendered differentiation around the product and features as useless. Hence, news channels have started branding themselves on the basis of the other critical ingredient – it's Anchors. People, identified as one of the seven P's of the Service Marketing mix, refers to those who deliver the services to the end consumer. They are the ones with whom lies the onus of keeping the brand promise made by the company to the customers (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). Clearly, people play an important role in the delivery of services.

Ingredient branding on the basis of people, or the anchors who deliver the news to the audience is beneficial in more than one way. Unlike on content, a differentiation created on the unique personality and content delivery style of the anchors is more difficult to imitate. A competitive advantage thus created is harder to duplicate and adds greater value to the brand (Schultz & Sheffer, 2012). This suggests that personality associations created for the channel which are based on human personalities (created with the help of anchors) are enduring and inimitable (Aaker D. , 1996). While, brand personification has been often discussed in terms of products, (Hadjicharalambous, 2013) argued that services brands are seen no differently when it comes to the brand personification and emotional association with the brand.

Audience tend to associate with brands which somehow reflect their own self-image and (Chan-Olmsted & Cha, 2007) hence, it is beneficial for a brand to propagate a favourable personality to build stronger associations.

An anchor's personality is an easy handle for a news channel to assume a favourable brand personality, since it has been suggested that a host's personality often mirrors the broadcast channel's personality (McDowell, 2004). This is in line with the research conducted by (McCracken, 1989) which suggested that a brand's personality is built by the personalities of people who are associated with the brand (through the 'meaning transfer' perspective³). Since television news content is delivered by its anchors, there are definitive opportunities for a TV news channel to cultivate a favourable brand personality (Chan-Olmsted & Cha, 2007) for itself with the help of its anchors.

Ingredient branding based on anchors also bestows a sustainable advantage since the news anchors who are delivering the content on the news channels can never appear simultaneously on another channel. This exclusivity adds to the lure of employing ingredient branding based on anchors and hosts in order to create a sustainable differentiation for the channel⁴.

5. HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Importance of news anchors for news channels

Audience choose a particular news channel on the basis of multiple factors like – content, anchors, theme and alliances that the news channel hitch with partners. People, or the workforce, which delivers the end service to the customer is critical in service industry. People, hence, is an important part of the extended marketing mix, often called the service marketing mix (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). However, with multiple other aspects in existence, audience may or may not consider anchors as an important aspect of the overall news channel brand. It is pertinent for the news channel to assess the importance of news anchors as ingredient, as perceived by the audience. Hence,

H1: News anchors are not considered an important factor for patronising a news channel by the audience

5.2 News anchors as differentiators

Hyper competition in the area of news channels has made it imperative for news channels to find levers to differentiate against each other. (McDowell, 2004) cited the significance of branding for creating differentiation in competitive landscape. Changing journalistic practices too have amplified the need of differentiation and branding has been touted as a potential. However, channels need to be very careful in trying to create differentiation which are effective and long lasting. A differentiation, however, is what the audience see and not what the brand perceives. Hence it is important to understand whether or not and to what extent can news anchors be relied upon for curating differentiation against competition. Hence.

H2: News anchors do not provide a differentiating advantage to the news channels

5.3 News anchor and news channel personality

Associations between the audience and the brand is a factor of what brand reflects. People choose to associate with brands which are closer to their own self-image (Chan-Olmsted & Cha, 2007). This makes it pertinent for the news channels as the host brand with anchors as the ingredient brands to reflect a favourable personality. (McDowell, 2004) posited that a news channel host's personality and the broadcast channel's personality are perceived to be related by the audience. (McCracken, 1989) argued that in any set up where the brand is built and the brand promise is delivered by the people, brand's personality is built by the personalities of people who are associated with it.

However, TV news anchors are not directly dealing with individual customers (in this case the audience) in terms of delivering individualised or customised services. Hence, the existence of, and extent of personality mirrored by the TV news channel as a factor of anchors cannot be certainly established. In order to restrict the dimensions of personality that can be attributed to the news anchors as well as news channels (post personification), the dimensions of personality offered by (Aaker J. L., 1997) have been used in this context. Aaker concludes the paper by positing five dimensions that consumers perceive brands to display – Sincerity, Excitement,

³A "meaning transfer" perspective suggests that properties (traits/attributes) are shown to reside in the celebrity and to move from celebrity to consumer good and from good to consumer (McCracken 1989).

⁴In the US, CNN Fox News and MSNBC rely on the star power of their anchors Peter Jennings, Tom Brokaw, and Dan Rather for creating a differentiation for themselves (Hickey, 2003) tool for the same. (Holton, Coddington and Homeo Gil de Zuniga, 2013).

Competence Sophistication and Ruggedness. Hence,

H3: There is no significant effect of news anchor's personality perception on the news channel's personality as perceived by the audience

5.4 Loyalty and advocacy of audience towards news anchors

It not uncommon for the audience to identify with a news anchor, and even with the associated news channel. Strength of the association between the anchor and the audience is an important parameter for the news channels. It helps the news channel create strategies keeping into consideration how loyal the audience is to the anchor. Consumers often consider brands as an extension of themselves, which lead them to recommend and advocate for the brands they choose. It is essential to understand extent of this association between the news anchor and audience. Hence,

H4a: There is no significant loyalty towards news anchors among the audience

H4b: There is no significant sense of advocacy towards news anchors among the audience

6. RESEARCH DESIGN

This research aims to assess the role of news anchors as a differentiating ingredient brand where news channels as the host brand. It goes on to study the impact of news as anchors on the news channels and also touched the loyalty aspect towards the news anchor from the audience's perspective.

6.1 Pilot

Pilot study was run with 25 respondents in order to understand the ease of absorbing the questions by the respondents. Since the questionnaire was personally administered, the feedback was recorded and incorporated in the final questionnaire. The pilot was done in a physical set up in a closely monitored environment.

6.2 Main Study

6.2.1 Subjects and procedure

The questionnaire was restricted to Indian respondents with a majority of respondents (all offline) being in Mumbai. In order to restrict the incomplete and incorrect responses the survey was a strictly personally administered one for offline responses which also formed the majority of responses (more than 80%). This was preceded by questions on the news consumptions habits and preference for the language of news channels etc. The questionnaire was handed over/shared with only those respondents who said that they watched English news channels at least once in a week. This not only resulted in correct, but also quality responses which were all considered for the final analysis.

Out of the total 100 valid responses 82 responses were collected through offline medium while 18 were collected through online medium. Gender mix for the responses was 72:28 (Male: Female), while 92% of all respondents fell in the age group of less than 40 years (which comprises about 70% of the India's total population). About 50% of respondents had an affiliation to the highest income bracket of INR 10 lacs per annum or more, and about 80% had a household income of more than INR 5 lacs per annum. Almost three-fourth of all

respondents had the highest education of Post-graduate and above while 98% of all respondents at least had a graduate degree.

6.2.2 Measures

Depending upon the depth and width required in the survey response for testing each of the hypotheses, there were question(s) designed for the questionnaire. News consumption was expressed in terms of the time slot(s) in which news is watched, time spent in watching news each day and the news channels which are watched by the respondent. Importance of various aspects of the four major factors related to news channels (content, people, theme and alliance) were measured on a 4-point Likert scale (Brown, 2010) to produce an ipsative (forced choice) measure (Bertram, 2016). The differentiation as perceived by the respondents that is being created by news channels is recorded through ranks associated with each of these factors. The role played by news anchors and their importance was measured through a five-point Likert scale which had a neutral response. Similar Likert scale was used for the questions related to the personality of news anchors and news channels, as well as for the loyalty that is expressed by the audience towards news anchors.

6.2.3 Results

Since the respondents were chosen through judgment sampling with a screening that allowed only those who watched English news channels to respond to the questionnaire, all respondents watched English news channels. Almost all respondents (96%) also accessed digital medium to access news (websites, apps etc). Newspapers and OTT also formed a significant source for accessing news for the respondents. Prime time (including late prime time) which is the 7 pm to 11pm slot had three fourth of the respondents as the audience. 80% of audience watch news channel for less than one hour a day while almost half of these watch it for less than 30 mins a day only.

NDTV and Times Now were cited as the most watched channels by the audience among English news channels while ET Now and CNBC were close competitors in terms of Business News channels in English. Frequency distribution was used to establish the range of responses for the demographic questions. Following this, the hypotheses were tested. H1 proposed news anchors are not considered an important factor for a news channel by the audience. This was tested in two ways through weights assigned to each of the factor that makes up the news channel and through ratings assigned to various aspects under each of the said factors.

Out of the four factors assessed, while content has been cited as the most important factor for a news channel by the audience (Mean weight assigned to content, $M=46.6$), anchors associated with the news channel received the second highest weight ($M=24.56$). Theme of the channel and alliances that a channel has did not find much importance as per audience in their perception towards news channels. The one-sample t-test was used to determine whether news anchors associated with the news channel are an important aspect as per the audience, The findings do not support H1 with ($M=3.01$ "where important" = 3; $t(99)=0.724$) as the news anchors are considered important for a news channel.

A univariate ANOVA with dependent variable (No difference

⁵<https://www.populationpyramid.net/india/2017/> (referred as on 15/5/2019)

between news channel), Fixed factor (Anchor is an important part of the news channel) and co-variate (Time spent in watching TV per day) was conducted. The test revealed that while 75% of all respondents agreed that anchors are important for news channel, the response was not a factor of the number of hours of news channel watching by the respondents each day ($P > 0.05$). Another univariate ANOVA considering gender and age demographics revealed that while gender did not have a significant effect, but age group was a differentiating criterion for respondents to believe if the anchor is a striving force behind the success of a news channel.

H2 proposed that news anchors do not provide a differentiating advantage to the news channels. A rank assessment of the factors and a perception assessment on Likert scale was conducted to test the given hypothesis. Friedman Rank's ranks test suggested that while the content is clearly the highest rank aspect of a news channel to create differentiation, 'people' that comprises of news anchors is a clear second rank aspect ($M = 2.20$, $t(3)$, $P < 0.05$) with a significant difference between the ranks. The one-sample t-test was used to determine whether news anchors associated with the news channel can be a significant source of differentiation for news channels. The findings do not support H2 with ($M = 4.13$ "where important" = 4; $t(99) = 15.11$) as the news anchors are considered important for a news channel.

However, the results shows that anchors are neither considered striving force for the success of a news channel ($M = 3.89$ "where important" = 4; $t(99) = 10.04$, $P < 0.05$) nor do people watch news channels only for their anchors ($M = 3.59$ "where important" = 4; $t(99) = -1.161$, $P < 0.05$). This pointed towards other factors at play which are also considered important along with the anchor.

H3 proposed that there is no significant effect of news anchor's personality perception on the news channel's personality as perceived by the audience. A comparative assessment was conducted on the personality perception of the two entity to show if such an association. The paired-sample t-test was used to compare the perceived personality traits of the most watched news anchor with the perceived personality traits of the news channel based on the personality dimensions as proposed by (Aaker J. L., 1997).

There weren't major commonalities on the basis of personality dimensions between the news anchors and news channel (except for 'sophistication' where ($M = 3.44$ for anchors and $M = 3.57$, "where neither agree nor disagree" on personality trait = 3; $t(99) = -1.226$, $P > 0.05$), which suggest that there were commonality on the 'sophistication' aspect but not very strong. However, more importantly, in all other four personality trait assessments (as per Aaker), the news anchor received a mean score significantly higher than the mean score received for that personality trait for the given news channel where $M = 4$ suggest respondent's agreement over the personality type of user (News Anchor/News Channel: Sincerity – $4.02/3.87$ ($P < 0.05$), Excitement – $M = 4.1/3.80$ ($P < 0.05$), Reliability – $M = 4.16/3.86$ ($P < 0.05$), Ruggedness – $M = 3.81/3.57$ ($P < 0.05$)). Clearly, a news anchor's personality is perceived more strongly than that of the news channel's personality on the given personality dimensions with the difference in personality between the news anchor and news channel being significant ($P < 0.05$).

H4 was to test the loyalty and advocacy that audience reflect

towards the news anchors (with H4a and H4b). H4a was to test that there is no significant loyalty towards news anchors among the audience. The one-sample t-test was used to test this hypothesis. The findings support H4a with all statements related to loyalty of the audience toward scoring mean of less than 3 ($M < 3$, "neither agree nor disagree" = 3). While H4a cannot be rejected, there is propensity of audience to watch new programmes and news channel with their preferred news anchor ($M > 3$, "neither agree nor disagree" = 3).

H4b was to test that there is no significant advocacy towards news anchors among the audience. The one-sample t-test was used to test this hypothesis. The findings do not support H4b, as respondents seem to agree to discussing about their favourite news anchors within their circle ($M = 3.48$ "Neither agree nor disagree" = 3; $t(99) = 5.122$, $P < 0.05$). However, they do not necessarily recommend or follow these anchors on social media ($M = 3.08$ "Neither agree nor disagree" = 3; $t(99) = 0.775$, $P > 0.05$) and ($M = 3.12$ "Neither agree nor disagree" = 3; $t(99) = 5.122$, $P > 0.05$).

A cross tab analysis between the perceived importance of news anchor for the news channel and the propensity to discuss the news anchor within circle revealed that about 50% of all respondents who consider news anchors to be important for a news channel also discuss the news anchors in their closed circle.

7.0 DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATION

Audience is inundated with options for consuming news and related programmed on TV news channels. This has made it imperative for news channels to differentiate their offerings. The most direct differentiation thus achieved is based on functional attributes such as content features and programme packaging. However, the extreme fragmentation of audience based on various demographic segregation, and an ever-rising number of competitors have made it critical for news channels to look beyond the traditional ways of differentiating themselves. While content is still the most important offering of a news channel, lack of differentiating content, courtesy technological advancements bringing in democratisation of news, has forced news channels to look elsewhere for differentiating against their competitors.

The concept of Ingredient Branding comes in handy in this scenario. News channels have lately adopted the concept with 'own' ingredient brands in their news anchors. News anchors as ingredient brand can act as a potent tool to leverage its brand strength in order to enhance the differentiation of news channel as the host brand. While many researches have previously shown that the presence of an ingredient brand in a host brand leads to favourable association of the host brand, they have been restricted to product brands with a branded component of another company.

This paper has tried to explain the role of an 'own' ingredient brand in service (a news anchor in a news channel) and how does it impact the overall consumer perception towards a news channel. The importance of news anchors extends to the points where they are able to offer a differentiation to the news channel which helps in branding the news channel around the given news anchor hence gaining some much-needed differentiator. However, it must be noted that news anchors

aren't considered the most important offering of the news channel and it trails the news content of the news channel, while it is still perceived as an important and differentiating factor. While, this finding is an important one, but it must also be considered that while the news content is a very important factor, there is a limited differentiation that can be created around it due to technological advancements and fair amount of standardization. Hence, a more brand-able factor like news anchors become more critical for branding the news channel.

The analysis showed that the importance of news anchors was not a factor of the time spent by the respondents in watching TV news each day. This suggests that irrespective of new channel watching habits and attitude (serious or non-serious), news anchors are considered to be an important factor in the overall news watching experience.

A critical finding that emerged was regarding the strength of various personality dimensions of the news anchor as compared to the news channel. News anchors received higher association in all but one dimension of personality. Clearly, on the same personality traits audience respond much better with the anchor than the news channel. This could be due to the personality dimensions being traits which are easier to associate with humans than with unanimated things like a channel. This is good and bad news both for the news channel. Good news because it means that the audience is able to relate with the news channel's 'own' ingredient brand much easily and hence, news anchors could be a credible plank for differentiation. Bad news because, it could be an indication of the news anchor brand becoming bigger than the news channel brand. The news channel brand in that case may suffer heavily with the exit of the branded news anchor (Case in point: Arnab Goswami leaving Times Now for Republic. Republic subsequently became the most watched English news channel in India).

While there is no significant advocacy that could be explained in terms of recommendation given out by people on their preferred anchor, the propensity to discuss the preferred news anchors in public is high. This is especially interesting as it was found that for people who found news anchor to be an important aspect of the news channel, there was a high propensity among them to discuss the news anchor in their circle. This could easily mean that higher number of people who feel that the news anchor are important may lead the discussions in their circle and hence encourage non-watchers and fence sitters to watch the content, which may positively affect the trial and adoption by non-users. This may lead to a surge in viewership for the channel in turn. News anchors form the core of the service offering of the news channel and offer a potent avenue for branding news channels, thus creating differentiation for a competitive advantage. Clearly, branding a news channel based on news anchor creates a strong exclusive alliance between the host (news channel) and ingredient (news anchor). However, the strategy must be used with caution as the news anchor brand may become bigger than the news channel brand and might even hurt the news channel if the news anchor decides to leave the news channel with all his or her brand power, leaving the news channel with a confused identity at best, and no viewer at worst.

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