Abstract

Title and Background

The case study titled “Dynamics of Co-relationship between Circulation and Readership: A Study of Selected National Hindi Dailies” is motivated by reconsideration of past Reports generated by the IRS and ABC. Since every year there is great discussion and discontentment rose about circulation and readership numbers published by these agencies becomes the cause of conflicts and since the entire media industry revenue model is based on these two pillars so the study has a lot of relevance for print media in current scenario. The latest e.g. is of IRS report Q4- 2013. There were many big publishers form all over the India who showed discontentment and dissatisfaction with the published numbers by the IRS/ MRUC.

So for the purpose of study five Hindi Dailies which were on the top five positions according to IRS Q4- 2012 have been selected and they cover almost more than seventy percent of the circulation and readership figures of total Hindi belt which consist of the entire north central India. These papers are considered to find the theoretically set relationship of circulation and readership and the changes which are coming between their relationships in the current time. The data for four years from 2008 to 2012 was taken for – Rajashtan Patrika, Dainik Bhaskar, Dainik Jagran, Amar Ujala and Hindustan for the purpose of study.

The circulation and readership is one of the most important aspects for newspaper business and image so the study has provided the detail comparative analysis for the same on selected newspapers. And also the study has provided difference between the correlation and RPC which is derived out of the division of Readership and circulation for these five newspapers on different levels.

The Circulation and readership has a unique relationship which usually is shown as readership is more than circulation but since this relationship has changed with the time so the research has tried to find the actual status of this relation with the help of study of selected five newspapers and also the concept of RPC has helped to bring more clarity on the same.
Objectives
So, For the purpose of study, the set Objectives of research were built
-To verify theoretical relation between circulation and readership in its practical application at combine national level.
-To understand and verify relationship between circulation and readership by conducting comparative analysis of circulation and readership of the selected newspapers at national level, regional level and local (editions) level.
-Verification of theoretical relationship of circulation and readership by conducting RPC (Readers per copy) analysis comparison of selected newspapers at National level, regional level and local (editions) level.
-Detection of major explanations primarily responsible for practical relationships of circulation, readership and RPC of selected newspapers.

Hypothesis
Further For the purpose of study certain Research question or hypothesis were developed to understudy the phenomenon of relation between the circulation and readership through exploratory research method which says that there is already prior work done on the same and still there were some areas unanswered on which the hypothesis was framed.
Although there is no hypothesis required under exploratory research method but some exceptions are permissible and on that basis certain hypothesis have been developed and tested under this case study and findings from hypothesis testing in exploratory research design can be taken as tentative conclusions which can be tested further in extensive researches

So for the purpose of study developed hypothesis are -
- Circulation and Readership are positively related.
- The relationship can be judged through the concept of readers per copy (RPC). RPC will not be same for every newspaper; it changes from place to place, edition to edition and as per demographic characteristics
- This variance or non-variance in RPC is not random; there are definite reasons for the same.
So, in this way the case study of 5 major Hindi dailies will provide a comparative analysis on the bases of circulation and readership.
Methodology

Research design – Exploratory case study method.
There is no hypothesis required under exploratory research method but some exceptions are allowed and on that basis certain hypothesis have been developed and tested under this study and whatever findings emerge from hypothesis testing in exploratory research design can be taken as tentative conclusions which can be tested in further extensive research.

Sampling Plan

Universe, Sample and Area of Study

a) Universe includes - Total number of registered publication in India which is 99,660 thousand. (KPMG-FICCI-2015 pg42, 48)
- Out of which 40% of total Hindi publication is 39,864 thousand, 47% of total vernacular publication 46,840 is thousand and 13% of Total English publication is 12,955 thousand.(KPMG-FICCI-2015 pg42,48)
- The Total circulation of Hindi publication 22.64 crore, Total circulation of vernacular 14.7 crore, Total circulation of English 6.44 crore. (KPMG-FICCI-2015 pg42, 48)
- Now from the above written base total number of Hindi dailies in India is 2098. (RNI - Press in India -2008-2012)
- And its total Hindi dailies readership is 17.22 crore. And total Hindi dailies circulation is 8 crore. (RNI - Press in India -2008-2012)

b) Sample includes- Top five newspapers under study (Dainik Jagran, Dainik Bhaskar, Amar Ujala, Hindustan and Rajasthan Patrika) out of the above mentioned total Hindi dailies in India. (RNI - Press in India -2008-2012)
- Combine readership of five Hindi dailies is 6.58 crore and the combine circulation of five Hindi dailies is 1.58 crore.( IRS-2012)
- Individual paper wise readership is – Dainik Jagran 1.66 crore, Dainik Bhaskar 1.39 crore, Hindustan 1.47 crore, Rajasthan Patrika 1.27 crore and Amar Ujala 0.78 crore.( IRS-2012)

c) **Area**- Includes all the states where the selected Hindi National dailies are having operation. (Hindi states and union territories of India – includes – Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Jammu and Uttar Pradesh). This covers entire Hindi belt of India. Geographical it comprise of whole North central area of India. (wiki/ Hindi/belt)

d) **Universe of decision makers of Hindi newspapers** -
- In all Hindi dailies of India around 100,000 plus employees are working.
- In selected five newspapers 35 thousand plus employees are working.
- Out of that it includes 100 people (decision makers) from the advertisement and circulation department of selected newspapers.
  (Based on the interviews and interactions with HRD departments of these newspapers)
  (Decision makers/ respondents - who belong to the category of National Head, deputy National Head, Asst. President, Associate president, Senior Wise President, Wise President, Asst. Manager, Associate Manager, Senior General Manager and Deputy General Manager, Senior Manager, Managers and so on from advertisement and circulation departments.)

e) **Time Frame**: The study time frame is form 2008 to 2012 for four years.

**Data collection ways**-

**Primary Data**- Were collected through questionnaires – (enclosed in annexure) (it was sent to all 100 decision makers via HRD department of 5 newspapers. In this exercise, 89 responses were collected, out of which 30 were selected for proper data analysis based on quality and sincerity validation). For this purpose a questionnaire is prepared which is divided in three major parts. Questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions and
other prompts for gathering information from respondents (decision makers), although they are often designed for statistical analysis of the responses.

**Secondary data-** It is sourced from audited circulation figures of ABC and secondly from certified readership numbers from Indian readership studies as conducted by MRUC (Media Research Users Council).
- Audited circulation numbers of ABC data wherever they were unavailable were sourced as the primary data from five newspaper decision makers.
- Readership figures wherever they were unavailable were sourced as primary data from five newspaper decision makers.

**Data analysis techniques-**
Karl Pearson formula for correlation, T-test for observed coefficient of correlation, ANOVA, T-Test for the Significance of the Difference between the Means of Two Independent Samples and Hypothesis testing for Proportions.

**Conclusion:**

Theoretically positive relationship of circulation and readership at combine national level could withstand empirical test and prove to be right however deeper analysis of raw data indicates towards fragile relationship between the two for example correlation between circulation and readership was 75% (0.75) but still there is 25% which is unexplained.

Theoretically positive relationship of circulation and readership could not withstand empirical test in the case of independent national level and regional level and also at comparative level as already explained in data analysis chapter.

Inter newspaper RPC analysis at national level is found to be consistent with all the papers but at regional level and local (edition) level it was discovered to be inconsistent as explained earlier in data analysis.

Major reasons for failure of theoretical relationship to stand are (faulty readership figures and ABC figures through vested human interventions) no marketing measures such as (Distribution of sample copies , Readership
promotion schemes, Organizing readers related events, Having outdoor advertising, Starting editorial drive and Promotional schemes for hawkers/agents) could emerge as independent dominant factors for artificial improvement in RPC.

**Insight from raw data and informal discussion with decision makers:**

The probable Reason of anomalies at **combine national level** can be firstly the newspapers provide their estimated circulation figures to the ABC for certification but due to rules, regulation and non acceptance of trade term and procedural reasons ABC does not recognized copies. However these copies are read by the readers. Net effect of this is that circulation decreases and readership increases.

Opposite to the above point, many a time artificial increase in circulation created by distributing copies to agents/hawkers but these copies never reach readers. Net effect is- readership does not increase but circulation increases.

So above factors create gap between readership and circulation. Also it is affecting the CAGR of circulation and readership.

For e.g. at the level of **National data** where all the five newspapers are taken independently for analysis it was found that the correlation for RajasthanPatrika is 47% for, DainikBhaskar it is -96%, for DainikJagran it is 19% for AmarUjala it is 53% and for Hindustan 99%.

It can be seen that in above case it is 53% for RajastahanPatrika, for DainikBhaskar it has negative value, for DainikJagran it is 81%, for AamarUjala it is 47% and for Hindustan only 1%, are still unexplained in terms of theoretically positive relationship between circulation and readership.

Similarly In terms of CAGR for RajasthanPatrika- readership is + 1% and for circulation it is +5% Which is still unexplained and probable reason can be that newspapers may have launched a new edition which has got counted in
circulation but could not be counted in readership due to their rules and regulations.

For DainikBhaskar CAGR of readership is +3% and for circulation it is –11% which is unexplained and probable reason can be that for few of the editions the paper has opted out of ABC certification. So empirically this created huge gap between readership and circulation.

For DainikJagran CAGR of readership is +0.04% and for circulation it is 3%. The probable reason was that there might be good schemes provided to the hawkers/agents since the paper went for expansion with few of their editions. Hence circulation increased without any impact on readership.

For AmarUjala CAGR of readership is +0.04% and for circulation it is +15%. The probable reason was expansion of paper in certain areas due to which circulation has increased without any impact on readership.

For Hindustan CAGR of readership is +7% and for circulation it is +9%. Since there was extension of paper in U.P. and the impact on readership was not assessed due to survey methodological challenges.

It is due to the survey methodology adopted by the readership agencies that even after the new launch of any edition it takes at least 6 months to 12 months to show resultant effect in surveys done by IRS.

So it is clear that CAGR for these newspapers is very different, some where it is negligible and for Dainik Bhaskar it is negative and even it shows an upside down trend in terms of CAGR between circulation and readership for others, which is quite unexpected.

On the third level where data were analyzed at regional level (with all available editions together) it was found that the correlation for RajasthanPatrika is 99%, for DainikBhaskar 98%, for DainikJagran 98%, for AmarUjala 54% and for Hindustan 97%.
For all the newspapers above it is only AmarUjala where 46% correlation is still unexplained.

Just similar to the national level when going deeper into the regional analysis, following scenario appeared-
For RajasthanPatrika CAGR of readership is 10% where as for circulation it is 16%
For Danik Bhaskar CAGR of readership is 15% where as for circulation it is + 3%
For Dainik Jagran CAGR for readership is 6% where as for circulation it is - 2%.
For Amar Ujala CAGR of readership is -8% for circulation again it is -8%
For Hindustan CAGR of readership is 5% where as for circulation it is -1%
At the RPC level it was found that Rajasthan Patrika & Hindustan are having a decreasing trend of RPC, Dainik Jagran or Amar Ujala are having stable trend and on the other hand DainikBhaskar is having a highly increasing trend of RPC on National level.

By having glance (RPC) of all the eight combinations for different editions at regional level it was found that for three pairs (Rajasthan Patrika- Dainik Bhaskar, Dainik Bhaskar- Dainik Jagran, Dainik Jagran- Amar Ujala) there was no variance found but for rest five pairs (Amar Ujala- Hindustan, Hindustan-Rajasthan Patrika, Rajasthan Patrika- Dainak Jagran, Dainak Jagran-Hindustan, Hindustan-Dainik Bhaskar) there is significant variance found in the RPC. It is because there was very high readership in combination with very low circulation. This was due to some major reasons which could be real one or can be due to methodological difference of survey and audit form IRS and ABC respectively.

It was found on local level where the variance in RPC was analyzed in seven pairs (place or city wise) for Rajasthan Patrika and Dainik Bhaskar - for Jaipur,Kota and Bikaner there is no variance found but for other places joudhpur+pali, Bikaner + Banswara there is significant variance found. For other combination of papers Dainik Jagran and Amar ujala - for places Kanpur and Varanasi significant variance was found.
Key words

Newspaper, readership, circulation, RPC (Readers Per Copy), correlation, variance, proportions, and ABC, IRS/MRUC.