

CONSUMPTION PATTERNS OF MOBILE NEWS ALERTS IN PAKISTAN**Dr. Bashir Memon***Professor Department of Media & Communication Studies,
University of Sindh Jamshoro***Faiza Otho***BS Degree Student, Department of Media & Communication Studies,
University of Sindh Jamshoro***ABSTRACT**

As in this era of digital age everything has picked up speed. In the vein the phenomenon of mobile journalism also has surfaced with the pace of mushroom. Thus, all over the world, the news business companies have started to deliver news and information over mobile phone set to the news consumers. In this way, this study, hence, is an attempt to know that at what level, national or local, which type, sports, current affairs, weather or general news, and by what source mobile news alerts or traditional news media people satiate their thrust news and information. The data was collected by applying a systematic sampling with a random start technique which encompasses in probability sampling technique. Whereas, the findings are presented in tabular form and then the data findings in table have been described. The key findings of the study show that mobile alerts due to their quick delivery are consumed by the mobile users and they stood as the first source of information in comparison with the traditional news media. Additionally, the findings also mentioned that the mobile holders for the most part read national level news alerts and further in comparison with sports and weather the news alerts of current issues and affairs are more popular among the surveyed mobile phone holders.

Key words: Mobile phone, news alerts, news alerts level, news alerts type

INTRODUCTION

It is observed that in today's digital savvy society, audiences, demand news in real time (Inmarsat, n.d.). On the other hand, the means of communication are constantly changing from many means like printing press to radio or television, to internet, mobile and much. Similarly, many Nordic studies have explored how mobile technology has created new possibilities for journalism. They (mobile phones) are revolutionizing journalism from a quite long period (Umair Sajid,

2016). The rise of mobile digital devices has already altered the environment of local news and information (Purcell K., Raine L., Rosentiel T., and Mitchell A., 2011).

Thus, news has become omnipresent (Purcell K., Raine L., Mitchell A., Rosentiel T., and Olmstead K., 2010); because, mobile technology allows people to get news anywhere (Mitchell A., Rosentiel T., Santhanam H. L. and Christian L., 2012). For almost everyone, mobile technology is a way to get breaking news. People use both mobile devices (tablets and smartphone) heavily for checking headlines (ibid). In addition, the speed of mobile phone adoption has outstripped that of other forms of communication technology so far (Cameron, D., 2011). The relevant statistics show that both the sale of mobile devices and the consumption of information through them have increased every day (Newman N. and Levy A. L. D., 2013). Professor Karen Mitchell, is cited that the future of journalism was shifting, and “becoming more and more (focused on) mobile” (Quinn S., 2010). As mobile journalism today is competing with other social networks for attention from viewers (Umair Sajid, 2016). Like SMS, news services exist around the world. Many larger media outfits as the BBC and CNN have been offering SMS news alerts in the last few years as well for urgent updates or topical news on specific subjects (Verclas K. & Michael P., 2008).

Thus, in the context of such current challenges, media are paying particular attention to mobile devices (Canavilhas J. & Seixas L., 2014). It is rather said that the future of journalism lies in mobile platforms (Ibid). Additionally, mobile journalism is also becoming an important area of study, particularly as mobile media continues to reach out globally in a way that other rapidly changing digital technologies, still largely reliant on wired infrastructure (Cameron, D., 2011). The emergence of smart phones, along with digital technology and Wi-Fi, has deeply changed and continues to change journalism (Aljazeera Media Training & Development Centre, n.d.). Thus, this study assesses the consumption patterns of mobile news alerts in Pakistan.

Mobile News Alerts and Their Delivery in Pakistan

Mobile phone news alerts can better be defined as important information about recent events delivered via electronic wireless handheld device. When mobile phones became common, then many

newspapers and media channels started their business via mobile phones. In the start, the news organisations and companies supplied news alerts without any cost, for some period. However, when the receivers developed a habit of reading them, then they began to charge the cost. Thus, now mobile news alerts are part of daily routine. Moreover, some of the merits of mobile news alerts enlisted are that people get first information of any event via news alerts. Now in various areas and cities there are news alert services to inform the public of the concerned area. In Pakistan, some of the conventional news organisations offering news alert services include ARY news, Dawn news, Express news, Geo news, CNN, and BBC Urdu service.

OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The objectives of this study were to assess which level of mobile news alerts, whether national or local, what type of news alerts whether sports, current affairs, weather or general, respondents are interested more. Finally, do the respondents prefer first to receive latest news through mobile news alerts on the cost of traditional news media?

In this way, the opinions of the respondents were sought about what level of mobile news alerts are they interested more. The option was national/local news about sports, current affairs, and general news. At last, it depends upon the audience preferences whether they want latest news first by mobile news alerts or by traditional news media.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is a quantitative and exploratory. In this way, a cross-sectional survey was conducted for the collection of data by administering a research instrument consisted of close-ended questions. The respondents belonged to Qasimabad sub-division, an urban area in Hyderabad district, Sindh province, Pakistan. The reason behind choosing this area was that the researcher had approach and acquaintances in this area, hence the data collection became facilitating. The age categories of the respondents ranged from young to old, both male and female. In addition, professionally they were students, government employees, private organization workers and households.

Moreover, to get a representative sample they used *systematic sampling with a random start* technique for this study. Accordingly,

out of more than 500 houses every fifth house was selected to deliver a survey questionnaire to one available family member from each selected house. Additionally, it was must that the selected family member had or used a mobile phone. Finally, the data was analyzed using data analysis software SPSS version 20. In addition, chi-square the statistical test was applied to check the significant relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

RESULTS AND FINDS

3. 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

TABLE-1

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Demographic variable	Number	Percentage%
Gender		
Female	38	37.6
Male	63	62.4
Age group		
30 years and under	70	70.3
Above 30 years	30	31.7
Occupation		
Student	43	42.6
Governmental employee	29	28.7
Non-governmental employee	16	15.8
Household	13	12.9
Education		
Undergraduate and below	69	68.3
Graduate	32	31.7

See Table-1 that present demographic information of the survey respondents; thus, firstly, while analyzing in terms of gender, it was found that the major proportion (62.4%) of the respondents was male; whereas, in contrast, the remaining proportion of over than one-third (37.6%) was female. Secondly, about age, it was observed that the great majority (70.3%) was up until 30 years old; however, the remaining proportion of over than one-fourth (31.7%) was above than 30 years old. Furthermore, of occupation it surfaced that the first highest proportion of more than two fifths of the respondents (42.6%) was student and the second highest proportion of over than one-fourth (28.7%) was a government employee. Whereas, among the remaining

number of respondents, the proportion of 15.8% was non-governmental staff and 12.9% were household. Lastly, in the regard of education, it was found that the good majority proportion (68.3%) had sought either an undergraduate degree or less; whereas, the remaining proportion of over than one-fourth (31.7%) had education at the graduate level. Thus, summarily, it observed that the typical survey respondent was male, up to 30 years old, and he is still a student and already having education at undergraduate level or less than that.

3.2: Consumption Patterns of News Alerts Level, Type and Preference

TABLE-2

NEWS ALERT LEVEL, TYPE AND PREFERENCE

<i>Variables</i>	Number	Percentage%
News alert level		
National	34	66.7
Local	17	33.3
News alert type		
Sports	13	24.5
Current affairs	31	58.5
Weather and general news	9	17.0
News alert preference		
Yes	46	86.8
No	7	13.2

See table 2 that shows findings first in the context of level of news alerts; thus the proportion of two-thirds (66.7%) of the respondents expressed that they read news alerts which are about national level news. Whereas, the remaining proportion of one-third (33.3%) of the respondents mentioned that they read those news alerts which were regarding local level news. In result, it deduced that the majority of the mobile news alerts consumers are interested more in receiving and reading those news alerts, which are of national level. Second, regarding the type of news alerts it was known according to the findings that almost the proportion of three-fifths (58.5%) of the respondents read news alerts about current affairs. In addition, the second highest proportion of nearly one quarter (24.5%) said that they read news alerts regarding sports. Whereas, the remaining proportion of 17.0% of the respondents mentioned that they read those news alerts, which were, related to weather and general news. In this way,

the findings showed that the majority of the news alerts receivers are interested more in those types of news alerts, which are about current affairs.

Finally, as far as preferring between first to receiving information either through mobile news alerts or traditional news media is concerned, then in this regard the clear majority of the respondents (86.8%) said that they first receive latest information through mobile news alerts rather than traditional news media. Thus, such findings mentioned that in this digital era, mobile journalism is getting preference, as audiences are more interested to get latest information as quick as possible.

TABLE-3
DISTRIBUTION OF NEWS ALERTS LEVEL
BY DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Variable	News alert level		
Gender	National (%)	Local (%)	Total (%)
Male	23 (67.6)	13 (76.5)	36 (70.6)
Female	11 (32.4)	4 (23.5)	15 (29.4)
Total	34 (100)	17 (100)	51 (100)
Age			
30 years and under	26 (76.5)	14 (82.4)	40 (78.4)
Above 30 years	8 (23.5)	3 (17.6)	11 (21.6)
Total	34 (100)	17 (100)	51 (100)
Education			
Undergraduate	20 (58.8)	13 (76.5)	33 (64.7)
Graduate	14 (41.2)	4 (23.5)	18 (35.3)
Total	34 (100)	17 (100)	51 (100)
Occupation\$			
Student	19 (55.9)	5 (29.4)	24 (47.1)
Government employee	7 (20.6)	3 (17.6)	10 (19.6)
Private employee	3 (8.8)	7 (41.2)	10 (19.6)
Household	5 (14.7)	2 (11.8)	7 (13.7)
Total	34 (100)	17 (100)	51 (100)

\$ $\chi^2=7.859$, $P.049$, $df=3$.

Moreover, see table 3 that show that when the level of news alerts level was further analyzed, first, in the context of gender then it was found that among the male respondents the consumption of those news alerts which were about local news on average was higher

(76.5%) than those which were regarding the news of national level (67.6%). Whereas, in contrast, among the female respondents the consumption of those news alerts which related to national level on average was higher (32.4%) than those, which were about local level (23.5%). Secondly, in the regard of age categories, it was observed that the respondents who were up till 30 years old or less among them the consumption of news alerts related to local news on average was higher (82.4%) than those which were of national level (76.5%). However, on the contrary those respondents who were above 30 years old among them the consumption of national level news alerts was on average higher (23.5%) than those news alerts, which were about local level news. Further, in the perspective of education, it surfaced that the respondents who had education up till undergraduate level among them the proportion of consumption of those news alerts which were about local news on average was bigger (76.5%) than those which were regarding national level news (58.8%). In contrast, however, among the graduate level educated respondents, the proportion of national level news alerts on average was greater (41.2%) than the consumption of local level news alerts (23.5%).

Finally, in the context of occupation of the respondents, it was observed according to the analyzed findings that those who were students among them the consumption proportion of national level news alerts on average was bigger (55.9%) than local level news alerts (29.4%). Similarly, among those respondents who were households, the proportion of national level news alerts consumption on average was higher (14.7%) than the consumption proportion of local level news alerts (11.8%). Moreover, it was seen that the respondents who were government employees among them the consumption of national level news alerts on average was greater (20.6%) than the consumption of those news alerts which were of local level news alerts (17.6%). However, against it among those respondents who were private organization employees among them the consumption of those news alerts which about local news on average was higher (41.2%) than the news alerts regarding national level news (8.8%).

Thus, summarily, it concludes that the male respondents read more the news alerts about local level news; however, against it the female respondents on average read more those news alerts, which were regarding national level news alerts. As far as age of the respondents is concerned, then it was found that those who were up till

30 years old or less consumed more news alerts related to local news; whereas, those respondents who were above 30 years old were interested more in the consumption of those news alerts which were regarding national level news. Additionally, in the perspective of education, it surfaced that the respondents having undergraduate education consumed more news alerts about local news, however, in contrast those respondents who had education at graduate level consumed more those news alerts which were regarding national news. In the last, it surfaced that the occupation of the respondents also had impact about the consumption of news alerts level; as those respondents who were students, government employees and households found consuming more those news alerts, which were about national news. However, against it the respondents who were private organization employees found having more interest in the news alerts regarding local news.

TABLE-4
DISTRIBUTION OF NEWS TYPE BY DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Variable	News type alert			Total (%)
Gender*	Sports (%)	Current affairs (%)	Weather/ General (%)	
Male	13 (100.0)	18 (58.1)	7 (77.8)	38 (71.7)
Female	0 (0.0)	13 (41.9)	2 (22.2)	15 (28.3)
Total	13 (100)	31 (100)	9 (100)	53 (100)
Age				
30 years and less	12 (92.3)	23 (74.2)	7 (77.8)	42 (79.2)
Above 30 years	1 (7.7)	8 (25.8)	2 (22.2)	11 (20.8)
Total	13 (100)	31 (100)	9 (100)	53 (100)
Education				
Undergraduate	10 (76.9)	18 (58.1)	7 (77.8)	35 (66.0)
Graduate	3 (23.1)	13 (41.9)	2 (22.2)	18 (34.0)
Total	13 (100)	31 (100)	9 (100)	53 (100)
Occupation				
Student	8 (61.5)	14 (45.2)	4 (44.4)	26 (49.1)
Govt. employee	2 (15.4)	8 (25.8)	0 (0.0)	10 (18.9)
Private employee	3 (23.1)	3 (9.7)	4 (44.4)	10 (18.9)
Household	0 (0.0)	6 (19.4)	1 (11.1)	7 (13.2)
Total	13 (100)	31 (100)	9 (100)	53 (100)

* $\chi^2=8.135$, $P.017$, $df=2$

In the regard of news type when analyzed further, see table 4 showing findings, first, in the context of gender that the male respondents on average consumed more news alerts about sports (100.0%) than current affairs (58.1%) and weather/ general news (77.8%). However, in contrast, the female respondents on average read more news alerts about current affairs (41.9%) than weather/general news (22.2%) and sports news (0.0%). Second, in the perspective of age of the respondents, it was observed that the respondents who were up until 30 years old or less on average read more news alerts about sports (92.3%) than currents affairs (74.2%) and weather/general news (77.8%). Whereas, the respondents who were above 30 years old on average read more news alerts about current affairs (25.8%) than weather/general news (22.2%) and sports news (7.7%). Thirdly, in the view of education it was found that the respondents who were undergraduates on average were interested more in the news alerts regarding weather/general news (77.8%) and sports news (76.9%) than current affairs (58.1%). Against it, however, the respondents who were graduates on average had more interest in the news alerts about current affairs (41.9%) than sports news (23.1%) and weather/general news (22.2%). Finally, in the perspective of occupation, it surfaced that the respondents who were students on average had more interest in the news alerts about sports (61.5%) than current affairs (45.2%) and weather/general news (44.4%). However, those who were government employees and households on average read more news alerts about current affairs (25.8% and 19.4% respectively) than sports news (25.8% and 0.0% respectively) and weather/general news (0.0% and 11.1% respectively). Whereas, the respondents who were private organization employees on average were more interested in the news alerts about weather/general news (44.4%) than sports news (23.1%) and current affairs (9.7%).

Summarily, it found that the male respondents had more interest in those types of news alerts, which were about sports news. However, in contrast the female respondents on average were interested more in those news alerts, which were about currents affairs. Additionally, those respondents who were up till 30 years old on average read more those mobile news alerts which were about sports news; however, those respondents who were above 30 years old on average were interested more in the new alerts about currents affairs. Moreover, the undergraduate respondents on average read more news alerts about

weather/general news and sports news; however, the respondents who were graduates on average read more those mobile news alerts, which were about current affairs. Finally, the students on average were interested more in the news alerts about sports news, government employee and households on average read more news alerts about current affairs; whereas the private organization employees on average were interested more in the news alerts regarding weather/general news.

TABLE-5
DISTRIBUTION OF NEWS ALERTS PREFERENCE BY
DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Variable	News alert preference		
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total (%)
Gender			
Male	32 (69.6)	6 (85.7)	38 (71.7)
Female	14 (30.4)	1 (14.3)	15 (28.3)
Total	46 (100)	7 (100)	53 (100)
Age			
30 years and under	36 (78.3)	6 (85.7)	42 (79.2)
Above 30 years	10 (21.7)	1 (14.3)	11 (20.8)
Total	46 (100)	7 (100)	53 (100)
Education			
Undergraduate	30 (65.2)	5 (71.4)	35 (66.0)
Graduate	16(34.8)	2 (28.6)	18(34.0)
Total	46 (100)	7 (100)	53 (100)
Occupation			
Student	21 (50.0)	5 (46.2)	26 (49.1)
Government employee	10 (22.5)	0 (0.0)	10 (18.9)
Private employee	8 (17.4)	2 (28.6)	10 (18.9)
Household	7 (15.2)	0 (0.0)	7 (13.2)
Total	46 (100)	7 (100)	53 (100)

Moreover, see table 5 showing analyzed data about preferring to receive news and information first from news alerts rather than traditional media, so first in the context of gender it was found that the male respondents on average preferred more first to receive news and information through traditional news media (85.7%) than mobile news alerts (69.6%). However, in contrast the female respondents on average preferred more first to receive news and information through mobile news alerts (30.4%) than traditional news media (14.4%).

Second, in the regard of age, it was observed that the respondents who were up till 30 years old or less on average preferred first to receive news and information through traditional media (85.7%) than mobile news alerts (78.3%). However, against it those respondents who were above 30 years old they mentioned that on average they preferred to have news and information more first through mobile news alerts (21.7%) than traditional news media (14.3%). Thirdly, in the perspective of education the data showed that the respondents who were educated up till undergraduate level or less on average preferred more to get news and information first through traditional news media (71.4%) than mobile news alerts (65.2%). Whereas, on the contrary those respondents who had education at graduate level on average preferred more to get news and information first by mobile news alerts (34.8%) than traditional news media (28.6%).

Finally, in the perspective of occupation of the respondents, it was seen that those who were students, government employees and household on average preferred more to receive news and information first through mobile news alerts (50.0%, 22.5% and 15.2% respectively) than traditional news media (46.2%, 0.0% and 0.0% respectively). Whereas, on the contrary those who were private organization employees on average preferred more to have news and information first through traditional media (28.6%) than mobile news alerts (17.4%).

In this way, summarily, the analyzed data mentioned that the male respondents on average liked more to have news and information first through traditional news media than mobile news alerts; however, the female respondents on average preferred to receive news and information first through mobile news alerts than traditional news media. Second in the context of age it surfaced that the respondents who were up until 30 years old on average preferred more to receive news and information first through traditional news media. Whereas, those who were above 30 years old on average liked more to get news and information first through mobile news alerts. Thirdly, in the regard of education it was found that the undergraduate respondents on average preferred more to receive news and information first through traditional news media, whereas the respondents having graduate level education on average like more to get news and information first through mobile news alerts. Lastly, in the perspective of occupation of the respondents those who were students, government employees and

households on average preferred more to receive news and information first through mobile news alerts than traditional news media. However, the respondents of private organization employee on average preferred more to get news and information first through traditional news media than mobile news alerts.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Mobile news alerts are an important piece of news and information delivered and received via wireless mobile phone sets considering and availing the quickness of this digital era. In this way, this study sought to know that what level of news alerts, whether national or local, what type of news alerts whether sports, weather, current affairs or general news are received more in Pakistan by mobile phone holders. As such, findings will help to the alert sending companies to have knowledge about the choice of mobile alert readers. Finally, the purpose was to know that what was the first source of news and information of the surveyed respondent's mobile news alerts or traditional news media. Thus, it surfaced out of the findings that, first, in the perspective of level of mobile news alerts it found that the sampled respondents were fonder of consuming those mobile news alerts, which were of national level rather than local level. Second, in the context of news type it stood that the respondents consumed more to those mobile news alerts, which were about current affairs rather than related to sports and weather/general news. Finally, it found that the respondents got news and information first from mobile news alerts than traditional news media.

REFERENCES

- Aljazeera Media Training & Development Centre (n.d.). Mobile Journalism http://institute.aljazeera.net/mritems/Documents/2017/3/9/e60d6cf73db74eb7ab55b0f24a8836a8_100.pdf
- Cameron, D. (2011). Mobile Journalism: A snapshot of current research and practice. In A. Charles & G. Stewart (Eds.), *The end of journalism: News in the twenty-first century*. London: Peter Lang.
- Canavilhas J. & Seixas L. (2014). Journalism and Mobile Devices Introduction, *About Journalism* Vol. 3, Issue 2.
- Inmarsat (n.d.). Powering Mobile Journalism, <https://www.inmarsat.com/powering-mobile-journalism/> accessed on 08/10/2017
- Mitchell A., Rosentiel T., Santhanam H. L. and Christian L. (2012). *Future of Mobile News*, Pew Research Center.

- Newman N. and Levy A. L. D. (eds.) (2013). Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2013, Tracking the Future of News, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford, URL: <http://www.ictliteracy.info/rf.pdf/Digital-News-Report-2013.pdf>
- Purcell K., Raine L., Mitchell A., Rosentiel T., and Olmstead K. (2010). Understanding the Participatory News Consumer, Pew Research Center.
- Purcell K., Raine L., Rosentiel T., and Mitchell A. (2011). How Mobile Devices are Changing Community Information, Pew Research Center, Internet and Technology.
- Quinn S. (2010). Mobile Journalism (mojo) and Journalism Education. A Paper Prepared for the WJEC, South Africa.
- Umair Sajid (2016). Mobile Reporting and Journalism for Media Trends, news Transmission and it Authenticity, *J Mass Communicate, Journalism*, an Open Access Journal, 6 (9) doi: 10.4172/2165-7912.1000323
- Vercas K. & Mechael P. (2008). A Mobile Voice: the Use of Mobile Phones in Citizen Media: http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pnadm040.pdf
