# CHARACTERISTICS AND FUTURE OF MOBILE NEWS ALERTS IN PAKISTAN

*Bashir Memon*[*]
*Faiza Otho*[†]

## Abstract

*This paper highlights the characteristics of mobile phone news alerts due to which they are preferred to be received and consumed. For data collection a cross-sectional survey was conducted having administered a pre-structured close-ended questionnaire. The sample was determined with having followed the systematic sampling with a random start technique. And the location of the survey was an urban of District Hyderabad. Thus, the study came up with the findings regarding the perceptions of mobile phone holders about the importance, convenience, and replace-ability of the news alerts.*

**Keywords:** *News alerts, Mobile phone, Importance, Replace-ability, Convenience*

## Introduction

As the latest communication technology has provided an opportunity that now people can receive news and information everywhere and anytime by overcoming the geographic and time constraints. Thus, the current news and information environment is depicted as that the way we access, consume, and share information has got changed in past few years (Havelka, 2013). Because, the age of digital media is seeing innovation and fundamental change in all aspects of journalism as found Franklin, B. (2014). We have become able to receive information wherever we like. And that is a great transformation (Alexander, & Sullenger, 2014). In this regard, Chyi H. I. and Chadha M. add that technological advances have made possible for news consumers to have news on multiple devices; the audiences are currently no longer restricted to newspaper, television or radio. Rather, they can access the same news content via their

---

[*] Professor, Department of Media & Communication Studies, University of Sindh, Jamshoro.
[†] Student, Department of Media & Communication Studies, University of Sindh. Jamshoro.

computer tablets, cell phones, podcasts, e-readers and other mobile devices (See Chyi & Chadha, 2011). Whereas, according to Westlund, O. (2013) nowadays many people have an approach to updated news in any place and at any time. Therefore, many citizens have changed their attention and media spending away from legacy media. Hence, this study assesses the importance, replace-ability and convenience of the mobile news alerts compared with other media.

**Mobile news alerts 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 by sending news alerts to the customers on their mobile phones. In the beginning, the news channels provided news alerts to their clients free of cost, for a few months. However, when consumers became habitual the news channels then began to charge the cost from their mobile credit. In this way, now mobile phone news alerts are part of daily routine. Further, regarding the merits of mobile news alerts it is elaborated that through mobile news alerts people receive first information of any news everywhere via news alerts. And people need not to wait for hourly news on TV or for morning newspapers. Now many areas and cities have their own news alerts' services to inform the public of the concerned area. Additionally, news alerts provided through mobile service networks do not need wired internet connectivity or wi-fi. As mobile phones work on batteries, therefore if we are not in a position to watch TV or read newspaper but we get news alerts via mobile. In Pakistan, some of the conventional news organisations offering news alerts include Dawn news, ARY news, Geo news, Express news, CNN, BBC, and BBC Urdu service.

### Objectives and Research Questions

The main objectives of this study were to assess the characteristics due to which the mobile phone holders like to receive and read the mobile news alerts. Thus, the opinions of the respondents were sought about the importance, replace-ability and convenience of the mobile news alerts.

### Methodology

This study is a quantitative and exploratory in nature. Therefore, a cross-sectional survey was undertaken for the collection of data by administering a questionnaire, consisted of close-ended questions. The participants were resident of Qasimabad sub-division an urban area in district Hyderabad, Sindh province, Pakistan. They ranged in age from young to old, both male and female. And professionally they constituted as students, government employees, private organization workers and households. To have a representative sample *systematic sampling with a random start* technique was used. Accordingly, out of the total of more than 500 houses every fifth house was selected to administer a survey instrument upon one available family member from each selected house. Moreover, it was determined and followed that the selected family member had or used a mobile phone. As such, this study provides some insights about holding smartphone set and the patterns of interactivity with mobile phone news alerts. Finally, the data was analyzed by using the data analysis software SPSS version 20.

**Results and Findings**

**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 presents data about the demographic characteristics of the sampled respondents of this study. So firstly, in terms of gender the major proportion (62.4%) of the respondents was male; however, in contrast, the remaining proportion of over than one third (37.6%) was female. Secondly, in perspective of age, it was found that the great majority (70.3%) was up to 30 years old or less; whereas, the remaining proportion of over than one fourth (31.7%) of the respondents stood over than 30 years. Additionally, of occupation it was observed 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, the remaining third proportion of 15.8% was non-governmental staff and 12.9% were household. Finally, in the regard of education, it was found that the good majority proportion (68.3%) had sought either an undergraduate degree or less; however, the remaining proportion of over than one fourth (31.7%) had education at graduate level. In this way, summarily, it was found that the typical survey participant was male, up to 30 years old, and he is occupationally student and already having education maximum at undergraduate level.

### 2: *Importance, Replace-ability and Convenience of the Mobile news alerts*

### Table 2: Importance, Replace-ability and Convenience of the Mobile news alerts

| *Variables* | **Number** | **Percentage%** |
|---|---|---|
| **News alert important than other media?** | | |
| Yes | 26 | 49.1 |
| No | 27 | 50.9 |
| **News alert replacing other media?** | | |
| Yes | 32 | 60.4 |
| No | 21 | 39.6 |
| **News alert convenient than other media?** | | |
| Yes | 8 | 15.1 |
| No | 13 | 24.5 |
| To some extent | 32 | 60.4 |

See table 2 presenting data about importance, replace-ability, and the characteristics of being convenient of news alerts. In this regard first about the importance of news alerts compared with other media it

was found that out of the total of 53 respondents half proportion (49.1%) said that the news alerts received on mobile phone are more important than other media. However, the remaining slightly over than half proportion (50.9%) considered to the news alerts not important compared with other media. Thus, it was deduced that the respondents were almost equally divided about that the importance of the news alerts compared with other media. Second, about the ability of mobile news alerts to replace other media the majority proportion (60.4%) of the respondents expressed that the news alerts would replace to other media. However, the remaining proportion of almost two fifths (39.6%) did not consider so. Hence, it was known according to the findings that the news alerts have potentiality to replace other media. Third, regarding the mobile news alerts being convenient than other media the majority proportion (60.4%) of the respondents viewed that "To some extent" news alerts are convenient than other media, and the proportion of 15.1% said that the news alerts were completely convenient than other media. However, against it the remaining proportion of almost one fourth (24.5%) of the respondents was of the point of view that the news alerts were not convenient compared with other media. In this way, overall the proportion of three quarters (75.5%) of the respondents was on the side that the news alerts were convenient than other media.

**Table 3: Distribution of news alerts Importance by Demographic Variables**

| Variable | Important than other media | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | **Yes (%)** | **No (%)** | **Total (%)** |
| Male | 18 (69.2) | 20 (74.1) | 38 (71.7) |
| Female | 8 (30.8) | 7 (25.9) | 15 (28.3) |
| **Total** | **26 (100)** | **27 (100)** | **53 (100)** |
| **Age*** | | | |
| 30 years and under | 17 (65.4) | 25 (92.6) | 42 (79.2) |
| Above 30 years | 9 (34.6) | 2 (7.4) | 11 (20.8) |
| **Total** | **26 (100)** | **27 (100)** | **53 (100)** |
| **Education** | | | |
| Undergraduate | 16 (61.5) | 19 (70.4) | 35 (66.0) |
| Graduate | 10 (38.5) | 8 (29.6) | 18 (34.0) |
| **Total** | **26 (100)** | **27 (100)** | **53 (100)** |
| **Occupation$** | | | |
| Student | 7 (26.9) | 19 (70.4) | 26 (49.1) |
| Government employee | 9 (34.6) | 1 (3.7) | 10 (18.9) |
| Private employee | 5 (19.2) | 5 (18.5) | 10 (18.9) |
| Household | 5 (19.2) | 2 (7.4) | 7 (13.2) |
| **Total** | **26 (100)** | **27 (100)** | **53 (100)** |

*$\chi 2=4.42$, *P*.04,df=1;$\$\chi 2=13.21$, *P*.004,df =3.

Moreover, when the importance comparison between the mobile news alerts and other media was further cross-analyzed with the demographic variable (See table 3) then it was mentioned firstly, in the context of gender that among the male respondents the proportion of those who did not consider to the mobile news alerts more important than other media was higher (74.1%) than those who considered it important (69.2%). However, among the female respondents the proportion of those who considered to the mobile news alerts more important than other media (30.8%) was bigger than those who did not consider so (25.9%). Thus, it was found that on average the female respondents gave more importance to the mobile

news alerts than the male respondents.

Secondly, in the consideration of age, it was found that those respondents who were 30 years old or less among them the proportion of those who considered to the news alerts not important than other media was higher (92.6%) than those who considered it comparatively important (65.4%). In contrast, whereas those respondents who were above 30 years old among them the proportion of those who considered to the mobile news alerts comparatively important than other media (34.6%) was higher than those who considered it not important than other media (7.4%). In this way, it was known that on average those respondents who were above 30 years old accorded more importance to the mobile news alerts than those who were just 30 years old or less.

Thirdly, in the regard of education level of the respondents, it surfaced that those respondents who were educated maximum to the level of undergraduate among them the proportion of those who supposed to the mobile news alerts not important than other media was higher (70.4%) than those who considered it comparatively important (61.5%). But on the contrary, those respondents who were educated to level of graduation among them the proportion of those who said that the mobile news alerts were comparatively more important than other media (38.5%) was higher than those who did not consider to the news alerts comparatively important than other media. Hence, the findings mentioned that on average those respondents who graduated were higher in considering to the mobile news alerts more important than those who were educated maximum to the under-graduation level. Finally, subject to occupation of the respondents, it surfaced that those respondents who were students among them the proportion of those who did not consider to the mobile news alerts comparatively important than other media was higher (70.4%) than those who considered it important (26.9%).

## Table 4: Distribution of news alerts Replace-ability Characteristic by Demographic Variables

| Variable | Replacing other media | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender*** | **Yes (%)** | **No (%)** | **Total (%)** |
| Male | 18 (56.8) | 20 (95.2) | 38 (71.7) |
| Female | 14 (43.8) | 1 (4.8) | 15 (28.3) |
| **Total** | **32 (100)** | **21 (100)** | **53 (100)** |
| **Age$** | | | |
| 30 years and under | 22 (68.8) | 20 (95.2) | 42 (79.2) |
| Above 30 years | 10 (31.2) | 1 (4.8) | 11 (20.8) |
| **Total** | **32 (100)** | **21 (100)** | **53 (100)** |
| **Education** | | | |
| Undergraduate | 18 (56.2) | 17 (81.0) | 35 (66.0) |
| Graduate | 14 (43.8) | 4 (19.0) | 18 (34.0) |
| **Total** | **32 (100)** | **21 (100)** | **53 (100)** |
| **Occupation§** | | | |
| Student | 13 (40.6) | 13 (61.9) | 26 (49.1) |
| Government employee | 8 (25.0) | 2 (9.5) | 10 (18.9) |
| Private employee | 4 (12.5) | 6 (28.6) | 10 (18.9) |
| Household | 7 (21.9) | 0 (0.0) | 7 (13.2) |
| **Total** | **32 (100)** | **21 (100)** | **53 (100)** |

*$\chi2=7.67$, *P*.006,df=1;$$\chi2=3.92$, *P*.04,df =1;§$\chi2=9.10$, *P*.03,df=3.

Whereas, against it those who were government employees, private organization employees and households among them the proportions of those who considered to the mobile news alerts comparatively important than other media (34.6%, 19.2%, and 19.2%) were higher than those who did not consider so (3.7%, 18.5%, and 7.4%). Thus, overall it was found that on average government employee, private organization employee and households were higher in considering to the mobile news alerts more important than those who were occupationally students.

Additionally, when the ability of the mobile news alerts to replace other media was analyzed with the demographic variables (See table 4) then it came to the surface firstly, in the regarding of gender that those respondents who were male among them the proportion of those who considered that mobile news alerts will not replace to other media was higher (95.2%) than those who viewed that the news alerts will replace to other media (56.8%). However, against it among the female respondents the proportion of those who believed that the mobile news alerts will replace to other media was higher (43.8%) than those who did not believe so (4.8%). In this way, overall it was known that on average female mobile users and holders were more hopeful than male mobile users and holders that the mobile news alerts will replace to other media.

Secondly, in the context of age categories, it was found that those respondents who were just 30 years old or less among them the proportion of those who did not view that the news alerts will replace to other media was higher (95.2%) than those who viewed that the news alerts will replace (68.8%). Whereas, in the contrast those respondents who were above 30 years old among them the proportion of those who said that the mobile news alerts will replace to other media was higher (31.2%) than those did not say so (4.8%). Thus, it was found that on average those mobile users and holders who were above 30 years old believed more that the mobile news alerts will replace to other media than those who were just 30 years old or less.

Thirdly, subject to education level it was found that those respondents who were educated maximum to the level of under-graduation among them the proportion of those who did not think that the mobile news alerts will replace to other media was higher (81.0%) than those who thought so (56.2%). But, on the contrary, those respondents who were graduate among them the proportion of those who viewed that the mobile news alerts will replace to other media was higher (43.8%) than those who did not view so (19.0%). Hence, it

was deduced that on average those who had graduate level education believed more that the mobile news alerts will replace to other media than those who were educated maximum to the undergraduate level.

Finally, in the context of occupation it was observed that among the students and private organization employees the proportions of those who did not agree that the mobile news alerts will replace to other media were higher (61.9% and 28.6%) than those who agreed so (40.6% and 12.5%). Whereas, in the contrast those respondents who mentioned themselves as government employee and household among them the proportions of those who said that the mobile news alerts will replace to other media were higher (25.0% and 21.9%) than those who did not thought so (9.5% and 0.0%). Accordingly, it was found that on average those mobile phone users and holders who were government employee and household had more belief that the mobile news alerts will replace to other media than those who were students and private organization employees.

### Table 5: Direct Logistic Regression Result

| | | B | S.E. | Wald | df | Sig. | Exp(B) | 95% C.I.for EXP(B) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Step 1ᵃ | Gender1(1) | -2.567 | 1.104 | 5.403 | 1 | .020 | .077 | .009 | .669 |
| | age1(1) | 1.612 | 1.256 | 1.646 | 1 | .199 | 5.011 | .427 | 58.764 |
| | education1(1) | .665 | .819 | .658 | 1 | .417 | 1.944 | .390 | 9.682 |
| | Constant | 2.043 | 1.076 | 3.604 | 1 | .058 | 7.718 | | |

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Gender1, age1, education1.

Moreover, see table 5, Direct logistic regression was performed to assess the impact of a number of factors on the likelihood that respondents would report mobile phone news alerts' ability to replace other media. The model contained three independent variables (gender, age, and education). The full model containing all

predictors was statistically significant, $\chi2$ (3, N =53) = 16.56, *p* < .001, indicating that the model was able to distinguish between respondents who reported and did not report ability of the mobile phone news alerts to replace other media. The model as a whole explained between 27% (Cox and Snell R square) and 36% (Nagelkerke R squared) of the variance in replacing-ability, and correctly classified 71.7 % of cases. As shown in Table 5, only one of the independent variable made a statistically significant contribution to the model. This indicated that respondents who were male compared with female respondents (ref) are (OR = .08) less likely to believe that the mobile phone news alerts have ability to replace other media, controlling all other factors in the model.

**Table 6: Distribution of news alerts Convenience Characteristic by Demographic Variables**

| Variable | | Convenient than other media | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | **Yes (%)** | **No (%)** | | **Total (%)** |
| Male | 27 (67.5) | 11 (84.6) | | 38 (71.7) |
| Female | 13 (32.5) | 2 (15.4) | | 15 (28.3) |
| **Total** | **40 (100)** | **13 (100)** | | **53 (100)** |
| **Age** | | | | |
| 30 years and under | 31 (77.5) | 11 (84.6) | | 42 (79.2) |
| Above 30 years | 9 (22.5) | 2 (15.4) | | 11 (20.8) |
| **Total** | **40 (100)** | **13 (100)** | | **53 (100)** |
| **Education** | | | | |
| Undergraduate | 25 (62.5) | 10 (76.9) | | 35 (66.0) |
| Graduate | 15 (37.5) | 3 (23.1) | | 18 (34.0) |
| **Total** | **40 (100)** | **13 (100)** | | **53 (100)** |
| **Occupation** | | | | |
| Student | 20 (50.0) | 6 (46.2) | | 26 (49.1) |
| Government employee | 9 (22.5) | 1 (7.7) | | 10 (18.9) |
| Private employee | 7 (17.5) | 3 (23.1) | | 10 (18.9) |
| Household | 4 (10.0) | 3 (23.1) | | 7 (13.2) |
| **Total** | **40 (100)** | **13 (100)** | | **53 (100)** |

Finally, when the convenience of mobile news alerts compared with other media was analyzed with demographic variables then it was found according to table number 6 that in the context of gender among male respondents the proportion of those who said that the mobile news alerts were not convenient compared with other media was higher (84.6%) than those who viewed to the mobile news alerts as more convenient (67.5%). Whereas, against it among the female respondents the proportion of those who thought that the mobile news alerts were comparatively convenient than other media was higher (32.5%) than those who did not believe so (15.4%). Hence, it was deduced that on average female mobile phone users viewed more than male mobile phone users that the mobile news alerts were comparatively convenient than other media.

In the regard of age, the findings surfaced that those mobile phone users who were 30 years old or less among them the proportion of those who said the mobile news alerts were not convenient than other media was higher (84.6%) than those who said that the news alerts were comparatively convenient (77.5%). However, on the contrary those who were above 30 years old among them the proportion of those who believed that the mobile news alerts were convenient than other media was higher (22.5%) than those who said that the news alerts were not comparatively convenient than other media (15.4%). Thus, it was known that on average those mobile phone users who were above 30 years old believed more that the mobile news alerts were convenient than other media than those who were 30 years old or less. Moreover, subject to education level of the mobile phone users the data mentioned that those who were undergraduate among them the proportion of those who did not believe that the mobile news alerts were more convenient than other media was higher (76.9%) than those who believed so (62.5%). But on the contrary those who were graduate among them the proportion of those who said that the mobile news alerts were more convenient than other media was higher (37.5%) than those who did not view so (23.1%). Hence, overall it showed that those mobile phone users who were graduate believed

more that the mobile news alerts were comparatively convenient than those who were undergraduate.

Finally, in the context of occupation of the mobile phone users it was known that those who were student and government employee among them the proportions of those who viewed that the mobile news alerts were convenient than other media were higher (50.0% and 22.5%) than those who did not viewed so (46.2% and 7.7%). However, against it those who were private organization employee and household among them the proportions of those who said 'no' the mobile news alerts were not convenient than other media were higher (23.1% and 23.1%) than those who said 'yes' the mobile news alerts were comparatively convenient than other media (17.5% and 10.0%). In this way, overall the findings mentioned that those mobile phone users who were student and government employee believed more that the mobile news alerts were convenient than other media compared with those who were private organization employee and household.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

This study was conducted to know the perception of mobile phone holders regarding the importance, replace-ability and convenience of the mobile news alerts. In this way, summarily, it was found that the typical survey participant of this study was male, up to 30 years old in age, and occupationally he was student having education maximum at undergraduate level. Moreover, the participants irrespective of any context were equally divided about the importance of news alerts. However, in the respect of gender the female respondents gave more importance to the mobile news alerts than the male respondents. Age-wise those who were above 30 years old accorded more importance to the mobile news alerts than those who were just 30 years old or less. Finally, it was observed that those

who had more education gave more importance to the news alerts.

Additionally, the respondents generally viewed that the mobile news alerts have potentiality to replace other media. However, in this regard first compared with male the female respondents, second compared with those who were just 30 years old or less than those who were above 30 years old, third compared with undergraduates the graduates, and finally compared with students and private organization employees those who were households and government employees   were more hopeful that the news alerts will replace to other media.

Finally about the convenience characteristic of the mobile news alerts it was found that first compared with male the female respondents, second compared with those who were just 30 years old or less the above 30 years old respondents, third compared with undergraduates those who were graduates, and finally, compared with private organization employees and households the students and government organization employees viewed more that the mobile news alerts were comparatively convenient than other media.

## References

Alexander, B., and Sullenger, P. (2014). Libraries, Mobile Devices, and the Visible College. *The Serials Librarian*, 66 (1-4), 31-43, DOI: 10.1080/0361526X.2014.879635.

Chyi, H. I., and Chadha M. (2011). Examining Multiplatform News Consumption in the Digital Age. Paper presented at the 2011 International Symposium on Online Journalism, Austin, Texas, April 1-2, 2011.

Franklin, B. (2014). The Future of Journalism. *Digital Journalism*, 2(3) 254-272, DOI: 10.1080/21670811.2014.930253.

Havelka, S. (2013). Mobile Information Literacy: Supporting Students' Research and Information Needs in a Mobile World. *Internet Reference Services Quarterly*, 18(3-4) 189-209, DOI: 10.1080/10875301.2013.856366.

Westlund, O. (2013). Mobile News. *Digital Journalism*, (1)1, 6-26, DOI: 10.1080/21670811.2012.740273