

## Gender Differences in News Media Consumption: A Repertoire Approach

### *Abstract*

*Pakistani television has gone through enormous growth and significant structural change since 2001. There are certain factors such as the increased number of channels, the establishment of overseas channels, increased reliance on advertising, more diversified programming, and heightened market competition etc. which have created the new multi-channel media environment which has the potential to reshape patterns of news media consumption and in turn affect the motivation level of consumers. The researcher used two approaches, Uses and Gratification and Rubin (1984) motivational scale for measurements of multiple news media consumption. Using simple random probability sampling with digital dialing, the researcher has successfully completed the survey with 506 people. The result of the study shows that individual factors influence the media repertoire size and the frequency of the media type usage. Demographic variables play a significant role in building the media repertoires; specifically gender has an effect on the new media usage among Pakistani nationals. Females tend to build their repertoire based on entertainment and soft social news and males tend to build their repertoire on learning motivations. Males have a larger repertoire than females and a greater frequency of using different media for various news contents.*

**Keywords:** *Uses and Gratifications, New Media, Media Repertoire, advertising*

### INTRODUCTION

Mass communication research on gender and media usage focused exclusively on the viewing habits of women and men indicates the differences in viewing patterns of males and females and the motivation which drives them to use media for gratification. The relation linking gender and media is a concern with few speculative conditions in mass communication research. Many studies are more inclined towards how the female is being portrayed in media as compared to men (Ularu, 2014). From the structural viewpoint several studies were performed to expose gender differentiation in self-representations. With the advent of New Media technology

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both male and female are engaged in making and engendering identity through different available online tools such as weblogs, photo galleries, fan pages, focus group discussions etc. Each one of these tools provides a chance to articulate our preference associated with different fields of our lives. From the functional perspective, the focal point on media users is to explain how the audience uses media. Research showed that personal-level distinctions, for instance, social and economic positions along with a political stance is accelerating to achieve an important position as the consumers of news in the rapidly shifting media settings (Shehata & Strömbäck, 2011). Considering the abundance of outlets in the current news media, it is easy to assume that an individual will engage in the active selection of their news outlet. Diddi and LaRose (2006), whose study looked at news consumption habits among college students, show an opposite phenomenon. According to the theory of media audience (LaRose, Lin & Eastin, 2003), when supplied with an overabundance of options to choose from, the consumers tend to fall into habitual forms of media consumption.

Individuals usually seek out information online to supplement their print news, not to replace it. (Althaus & Tewsbury, 2000). This supplementary idea is also supported by Yuan (2011) where Chinese audiences choose traditional media and new media for their gratification. The researcher confirmed the withdrawing position of national newspapers in the overall news setting and shifts from paper to small screen. Internet news is currently equivalent in weight to TV news as the most useful overview news medium. (Schröder & Steeg Larsen, 2010). Diddi and LaRose's (2006) explored that students selected Internet and cable TV to satisfy their surveillance, escapism and entertainment needs and as a part of a habitual practice. Diddi and LaRose's (2006) research further illustrated that internet portal sites were among the most frequently consulted news source, second only to campus newspapers. Diversity between women's and men's answers to computer technology is important in advanced education, where internet activities are increasingly becoming a central aspect of the syllabus in a variety of departments. A lot of studies of college students reveal the differences in male and female students of the internet and perception of computer technology (Sherman et al., 2000).

The present research intends to collect visible news utilization with gender difference roles. It posits that male and female news users combine various media podiums in order to develop individual news gathering for their own news usage. The current media settings with the bundle of media agency choices range from traditional news media to new media. This approach permits us to observe how gender differences examine and identify the entire variety of media in order to provide data on the existing situation in accordance with motivation and gratification. These compose the inner style of personal news repertoires, and reveal the relationship with media

utilization. They studied distinction of the structural design of personal news repertoires connected with different motivation and gratification between news customers in the current news settings. Among the major academic propositions, uses and gratifications are frequently functional and study media selection (Diddi & LaRose 2006; Yuan 2011). The main purpose of the uses and gratifications hypothesis is examining, elucidating, and comprehending the elementary emotional requirements that inspire and figure out discrete causes for selecting a certain medium (Rubin, 1983). Uses and gratifications facilitate persons to motivate and participate in certain media use. Another purpose of the theory of uses and gratifications is to study the various methods in which the audience use media to satisfy the requirement of the theory, and to classify the positive and negative consequences of individual media use (Lin, 1996). The U&G posits that viewers choose different types of medium and forms of programs that satisfy the scrupulous social and emotional requirements (Katz et al, 1973).

Previously the uses and gratification research examined the use of a specific form of media and programs for certain gratification. For instance, in instrumental function such as looking for information and incorporating it into the socio-political order, newspapers were used, while for escapism and entertainment, televisions were more frequently used (Katz et al. 1973). Berelson (1949) found newspapers used mainly for information surveillance. Palmgreen and Rayburn (1985) found that learning communication was mostly fulfilled by television and comes under the supplementary gratification usage. Greenburg (1974) in his study found television was a source of learning for children. Perse, E. M. (1986) found females have more fondness towards soap operas than males Papacharissi (2002) found internet as information retrieving and social learning for gratification of audience. Hinnant (2008) investigated and found differences in online activities in ages 18-26 years old for males and females and recommended that those with a higher level of schooling and of a rich background use the internet for further “capital enhancing” actions.

News audiences combine traditional and new media resources and make patterns for news media use. These patterns reflect the persons’ individual design of media repertoire. The differences in news repertoire based on different news agenda in audiences in the current media environment (E Yuan, 2011). Demographic characteristics are found to play a role in influencing news consumption due in part to their relationship with different motivations for consuming news. (Lee, 2013). When the mass media use the study with social systems the results indicate that with high social and economic status segments obtain information and gather surveillance at a faster rate than the lower status group (Van Deursen & Van Dijk, 2014). The study by Nathanson, Perse, & Ferguson, (1997) found instrumental and ritualistic viewing patterns among females and males with males having a more goal oriented viewing

style and selective use of television, rather than females who have a ritualistic and relationship oriented style of watching for emotional satisfaction. The Pew Internet Project surveyed by Fallows (2005) showed that men are more involved in the world of technology and interested in devices and new systems when compared with women and they are more confident in their roles as techies and geeks. Communication patterns are also affected by demographic and socioeconomic factors including income, education, age as well as awareness, concern, and perceptions of ecological issues among differing community groups (O'Keefe, Ward, & Shepard, 2002). The survey showed that mature women tend to make greater use of the web communication methods, while elderly men are inclined to utilize the online media for getting information (Jackson, Ervin, Gardner, & Schmitt, 2001) whereas another and later research by the Pew Research Center, Groden (2015) showed that technology and social media are an integral part of a teenager's social life.

The study found persistent differences in the use of technology by teenage girls and boys wanting to socialize and individuals who use multiple media channels for diverse purposes (Lai & Tang, 2015). A research on the Dutch population observed that individuals with lower education levels along with disabled people use web for multiple hours in a single day as compared with individuals with a higher level of education and working people (Van Deursen & Van Dijk, 2014). A study by Jackson et al (2001) observed that females utilized electronic mails more than males, and females described computer uneasiness and lower competence in the computer use whereas males are found to be friendly with computer. Similarly in Singapore where mobile phones and internet saturation is amongst the highest in the world, older people suffer from social exclusion because of the unfamiliarity with new expertise in technology, thus creating a socially charged digital divide (Lim & Tan, 2003).

Oscar Westlund (2012) has examined news consumption through the mobile phone. He states that many people today have access to news through the rapid emergence of ICT worldwide. Media selection with gender differences proposed in the present study theorizes news consumption behavior as a complex pattern of media usage as compared with particular media choice. It identifies differences in the patterns and sizes of repertoires in males and females and examines how the diversity in news repertoires connects with the users' motivation and socioeconomic characteristics in the present intricate and complex news media environment. For the present study the following research questions were formulated:

RQ1: What are the gender differences in media selection of news consumer's media repertoires?

RQ2: What are the differences in the frequency of news media usage and repertoire sizes of males and females?

RQ3: How are the motivational determinants for news consumptions influenced by gender?

Heeter (1985) was the first to develop the repertoire method for media consumption and describe the channel-watching routines of television users. Edgerly, (2015) revealed the six distinct media selections in which ideologically driven repertoire and medium centric repertoire are bigger than others. O'Keefe (1998) explained multiple media selection by investigating the multiple news media podiums for health information. This study showed both accompaniment and congregate forms of several media usages for health news. Similarly, Chinese consumers used diverse information media platforms of various news genre including politics and sports and it was observed that there has been overlapping media usage for particular news genre and different news media used for different contents (Yuan,2011). Research showed that personal uniqueness such as social and economic status and devotion for political and current affairs genre are more important forecasters of news utilization in multimedia and digital media environment (Shehata & Strömbäck, 2011). Su, Akin, Brossard, Scheufele, & Xenos, (2015) in their research explained science news consumption and examined viewers' repertoires of science media utilization, and the outcome of these consumption patterns on public perception about science and technology.

Yuan, (2011) observed that females have larger media repertoire than males. Another research has documented that females and older viewers have a greater affinity for television (Kim & Viswanathan, 2015). Individuals' characteristics are also a major determinant of their media use (Coffey & Cleary, 2011). Repertoires are also influenced by institutional conditions; (e.g., incentives, trust, and physical proximity) situational conditions (e.g., urgency, task, etc.), and by the routine use of the media over time (Watson-manheim, 2007). Research suggests that personal determinants (e.g., concentration, enthusiasm, gratification, habits) and structural features (e.g., audience accessibility, ease to digital media use) predict the size and creation of multiple medium repertoires (Kim, 2016; Yuan & Webster, 2006). The study also investigated that those who have more interest and a higher frequency of using multiple media have broader repertoires than users who use media less frequently (Yuan, 2011). Individual preferences reflect micro level approach in media consumption and the outcome of an individual's requirements and inclination.

A leading approach in media choice such as *uses and gratifications* (U &G) specified that active audiences are mediators who use media to satisfy their personality desires and needs (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1963; Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2007). Personal determinants regarding inspirations include entertainment, leisure and friendship, information getting behavior, habit, hobby and escape. Uses & Gratification used to explain the selection of multiple media platforms and different

and divergent media content. The study has discovered that gratification is connected with conventional media podiums like newspapers, print media, television media (Rubin, 1983), and digital media like the web and social media (Ferguson & Perse, 2000). Uses & Gratification includes genre gratification studies for instance soap operas (Perse, 1986), news series and news shows (Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1985), TV reality shows (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2007) and internet based social websites such as Facebook and Twitter (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2010). Rubin (1984) classified screening stimulus into two wide ranges - 'ritualistic' and 'instrumental' in small screen viewing. Ritualistic means a lesser active and a greater passive approach in using media, linked with motivational determinants, relaxation and time killing (Rubin, 1984).

Instrumental use as opposed to the ritualistic approach refers to goal-oriented consumption, for instance viewers seek out specific information due to certain requirements, like, the desire for information (Rubin, 1984). U & G research recognizes precise viewing motivations in explaining the attention of diverse content genres. Instrumental motivations explain sports, where consumers watch television for information rather than habit (Cooper & Tang, 2012). Gantz & Wenner (1995) also suggest that viewers watch sports for instrumental motivation. Wonneberger et al. (2011) studied the news viewing patterns and discovered that an increase in television news viewing is associated with political interest and inclination towards news programs. In comparison, habitual viewing of TV is associated with screening the entertainment contents such as soap operas or reality TV shows, thus confirming ritualistic motivations approach for media consumption. Other studies have explained the uses and gratifications scheme and have given hypothetical explanations regarding when and why medium consumers select specific types of media podiums or content genres (Waterman, 1992; Wildman & Owens, 1992). Based on these arguments, the following hypothesis have been formulated:

H1: Men have larger news media repertoire than women.

H2: Learning motivation for men is associated with the use of information-oriented news.

H3: Women's relaxation motivation is positively related to the use of entertainment-oriented news.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The overall rationale of using the quantitative survey approach in this research was to collect data from a huge population of Pakistani society, their nature of media usage and how they build their news media repertoire. The data for the current study was gathered through a computer-based telephonic survey carried out in November 2016 from viewers in Pakistan. The research used random digit-based dialup, the researcher successfully collected data from 506 respondents who were media consumers of age 18 and older, who replied completely to the questionnaire. The collective response percentage was 56 per cent. The results show that there were 52% male respondents and 48% female respondents in the sample. The median monthly personal income was 15,000 to 25,000 rupees, and the median respondent education was matriculation.

A question was asked of the individuals about the number of days in a week they consume any medium for news information. The result described that on average, news audience checks news every day. Various questions were asked of the respondents to classify the type of media they normally use for any genre of news. There were six media types including newspaper, magazines, TV, radio, internet, and social websites. The combination of five-point Likert scale questions ('Never', 'Rarely', 'Sometimes', 'Usually' and 'Always') inquired how regularly people spend time on each medium for diverse type of news. The research investigated the six news genre groups: current affairs/politics, business and finance, entertainment (news about entertainment celebrities and fashion), social news (sensational news and reenactments), news about sports and general news (like information about city traffic and climate, etc.). The questionnaire includes 36 questions in total (six news genres by six news media). For example: A survey question was 'How much time do you spend reading newspapers for politics and current affairs related news?' The researcher has analyzed a participant's motivation for using multiple media through ten questions. The questions have been taken from an earlier research on media usage for motivations by Rubin (1983).

## **RESULTS & ANALYSIS**

Research question number 1 asked how gender differences in media selection evolve the people media repertoires. Table 1 shows the chi square results for each media type against gender categories. Findings show that males and females' choice of media selection is significantly different in television, newspaper, internet and magazines. Males and females have consumed radio, mobile phones and social media with no significant difference.

**Table 1** *Chi-Square Association Test*

Media Type	Pearson Chi-square		P value
	value	d.f	
Television	13.31	4	0.01
Newspaper	22.72	4	0.00
Radio	6.69	4	0.15
Internet	12.91	4	0.02
Mobile phone	3.42	4	0.49
Social Media	8.225	4	0.08
Magazine	13.86	4	0.008

The above table shows the independent sample t-test for television, newspaper, social media, and internet and magazines usage in any given day. Levene's test for equality of means and variance indicate that the television viewing and newspaper reading is gender dependent. The F value for television is 13.443 with p value (0.00) indicates that males spend more time in watching television. Similarly, the F value for newspaper is 8.311 with p value (0.004) indicating that males have greater tendency to read newspapers as compared to females.

**Table 2** *Levene's Test for Equality of Variances*

Media usage in a Day	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Television	13.443	.000	1.833	504	.067	.182	.099
Newspaper	8.311	.004	3.055	504	.002	.222	.073
Social media	1.192	.275	-	504	.056	-.222	.116
Internet	2.265	.133	-	504	.176	-.162	.119
Magazines	.207	.650	-1.03	504	.918	-.008	.077

Social media, internet and magazine reading are not significantly different for gender category. The equality of variance test (F test) and (t test) results are not significant for social media, internet and magazine's reading.

**Table 3** *Levene's Test for Equality of Variances on Gender*

Media Usage In a Week	Equal variances assumed	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Time in a day	Equal variances assumed	4.121	.043	2.284	504	.023
	Equal variances not assumed			2.279	495.363	.023
Time in a day	Equal variances assumed	4.831	.028	.981	504	.327
	Equal variances not assumed			.967	430.773	.334