A Preview of the Mobile Marketing Research

by

Daniel-Claudiu Paraschiv

“Babes-Bolyai” University from Cluj-Napoca, Romania
danielcparaschiv@yahoo.com

Abstract. The purpose of this paper is to have general overview over the mobile industry from the marketing research point of view. This paper aims to highlight the importance of the mobile marketing research and to understand the evolution trend of mobile technology for future marketing research projects. The potential of the mobile technology is making mobile marketing research win more terrain in the detriment of the classic, but still intensively used, marketing research tools. The preview is based on the few papers which are approaching this new but fast growing niche. There is the need of having a general guideline for the mobile marketing research but the existing literature is falling short on creating the framework for the mobile marketing research. There are few papers which are approaching this area of interest, creating an inconsistent and a fragmented description of probably the main direction of the marketing research development.

Key words: Mobile Marketing Research, Mobile Research

JEL classification: M31

1 Introduction

The mobile phone industry had in 2013 his 40th birthday party. Four decades ago, the first mobile call was made from a mobile device and since that historical moment, the mobile phone has undergone radical changes. In February 2014 there were over 6.7 billion mobile subscriptions worldwide (Global mobile statistics 2014 Part A: Mobile subscribers; handset market share; mobile operators, retrieved on April 27th 2014 from http://mobithinking.com/mobile-marketing-tools/latest-mobile-stats/a#subscribers), from which around 4.5 billion mobile subscribers – (as many people have several subscriptions for different devices) and the mobile industry became one of the most expansive industries in the recent history. The mobile phone became a crucial tool in everyday life and due to the latest available technologies this device can become the control center for most of your daily activities. The mobile device can even be used for mobile payments carried out through a mobile payment application such as mobile credit, mobile wallet or even directly from the bank account (Tomi Dahlberg, Niina Mallat, Jan Ondrus, Agnieszka Zmijewska, 2008). Even that the main purpose of the mobile phone is to have phone calls, these days the main activities for which the mobile phone is used are texting and accessing social networks (84 % of the users activities are directed to these) (Infographic: Tracking the Evolution of the Mobile Phone, retrieved on April 14th 2013 from http://www.mobilmarketingwatch.com/infographic-tracking-the-evolution-of-the-mobile-phone-31303/). Due to the transition from occasionally phone calls to constant need for communication and connection to the social networks and the increasing popularity of social platforms and video responses in discussion forums instead of text messaging (Shelley Buchinger, Simone Kriglstein, Sabine Brandt, Helmut Hlavacs, 2011), the researchers saw it as an opportunity for following much more closer the consumer and introducing the mobile marketing research. Every mobile phone owner has a constant need for checking his phone for any news, updates or notification. Every thirty minutes, one in four mobile phone users checks his phone and every ten minutes we have one out of five users. More than that, four out of five mobile phone users are checking their phone in the first fifteen minutes after they wake up (Infographic: Tracking the Evolution of the Mobile Phone, retrieved on April 14th 2013 from http://www.mobilmarketingwatch.com/infographic-tracking-the-evolution-of-the-mobile-phone-31303/). Due the fact that the prices of
Data traffic are having a downward trend and the mobile accessibility to internet is increasing, consumers are perceiving the new data devices and services more useful and easy to use (Gerpott, T.J. 2012), and will most likely increase the amount of time they spend online via their smartphones (Ajax Persaud, Irfan Azhar, 2012). Now we can understand that it is not hard to get the mobile’s phone user attention. So the general framework for the marketer is already set. The only thing that remains is to focus on collecting the needed information through mobile marketing research. With the introduction of the smartphone, the marketer can develop a high variety of studies which can be deployed through the mobile device. The early studies and mobile marketing were based on a SMS practice and were using simple, reply based techniques (Barnes S.J., Scornavacca E., 2004). The smartphone has the capability to have a more friendly interaction with the user-consumer with substantially greater level of convenience, flexibility, efficiency and personalization. However, this technology also has the potential to be intrusive and annoying (Ajax Persaud, Irfan Azhar, 2012). With the existing and future capabilities of the smartphone, the marketer can enrich his insights and also has the opportunity to have a complex communication with the consumer and to use rich media like pictures, audio recordings, videos, research diaries or interactive applications. The smartphone is seen as the key point of the future of the research and mobile marketing research is the evolution of the marketing research due to the available technologies and capabilities of the smartphone.

3 Mobile Marketing Research – concept and classification

What is Mobile Marketing? Mobile Marketing is a set of practices that enables organizations to communicate and engage with their audience in an interactive and relevant manner through and with any mobile device or network (MMA Updates Definition of Mobile Marketing, retrieved on April 27th 2014 from http://www.mmaglobal.com/news/mma-updates-definition-mobile-marketing). What is Mobile Marketing Research? Mobile marketing research is related to the mobile marketing due to information technology used and it is full applicable if there is pre-recruitment done on mobile platform (pre-mobile) or there is a post-online recruitment confirmation in online environment. Mobile Marketing Research is any marketing research done on a mobile device both passively and actively. This new environment is a new way to reach respondents wherever they may be: on the street, in the subway, on the bus, shopping, at home, in the office, out with friends, etc. Due to the fact that respondents are accessing the survey from a mobile device (smartphone, tablet, eReader, PDA, Portable gaming device, etc.), this type of surveys have special needs and requirements considering the screen available space (questionnaire design and usability), the limited and quite expensive internet traffic and also the operating system used on their mobile devices. The majority of the surveys are being held on a smartphone due to more worldwide coverage but the researcher also needs to take into consideration and the other types of mobile devices.

2 Research methodology

The research is based on journal reviews made through UEFISCDI (The Executive Unit for Financing High Education, Research, Development and Innovation), ANCS (National Authority for Scientific Research) and Anelis program (Electronic National Access to Scientific Research Literature), which are programs specially dedicated to PhD students in Romania. The literature search was limited to peer-reviewed journals and was based on the following keywords: mobile marketing research, mobile research, mobile survey and mobile study.

Despite that the existing literature on mobile marketing is in the early stage and there are few articles that approach this domain, the review is focusing mainly on marketing research that uses mobile technology.
Mobile studies are offering to marketing researchers special opportunities due to the personal nature of the surveys, the close interaction with the respondent and due to real time capture of opinions, emotions or any other feedback. Mobile platform is an ideal platform for integrating personalized messages, developing close relationship with the respondents and also perform direct marketing. Its two unique characteristics of interaction and target audience had made it as most effective medium of advertising (Muhammad Faheem Ashraf, Yasir Kamal, 2010). The mobile industry should be a part of the global marketing plan and should be considered as an independent technology niche, and not a small PC. Every marketer should constantly adapt his strategy to the industry’s demands and evolution, and should integrate it within other digital strategies (Mars, Alexandre, 2010).

Even that the mobile industry has a high rate of development and mobile marketing research has great perspective through this technology, the existing literature in this domain is in the early stage and it is highly inconsistent and fragmented (Kaan Varnali, Aysegül Toker, 2010) as it is the mobile marketing usage among researchers, but the mobile marketing practices will likely go through fundamental changes as technology continues to evolve (Karjaluoto H., Lehto H., Leppåniemi M., Jayawardhena C., 2008). Few papers are exploring this niche and the academic literature in this area is still at an infant stage and it is highly inconsistent and fragmented (Kaan Varnali, Aysegül Toker, 2010) as it is the mobile marketing usage among researchers, but the mobile marketing practices will likely go through fundamental changes as technology continues to evolve (Karjaluoto H., Lehto H., Leppåniemi M., Jayawardhena C., 2008). Even that there are authors who are classifying the mobile marketing research from the theoretical point of view, none of the papers are classifying the mobile marketing research from the production point of view. If we take into consideration how the data is collected, we can classify the mobile marketing research as follows:

- **Mobile CAPI** (computer assisted phone interview) – the interviewer is equipped with a mobile device on which a survey is installed. The respondent will be receiving detailed instructions before he will begin the survey or the marketer will guide him during the survey completion.
- **WAP Surveys** – Online surveys scripted to comply with the mobile devices specifics and limitations. This type of study is using a special application that is complying on the device specs and attributes in order to ensure the best interaction with the respondent. Since there are numerous mobile operating systems, the researchers have a more difficult task to reach the

### Table 1: Major Category of Research in Mobile Marketing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Sub Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Definition and conceptualization, Reviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>M-Marketing strategy, M-marketing tools and applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Consumer Behavior</td>
<td>M-Marketing Acceptance, adoption of M-marketing, attitude towards M-marketing, perception, M-satisfaction and loyalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Legal and Public Policy</td>
<td>Trust, Privacy, Legal and political issues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

respondents because they have to be able to adapt on each mobile device.

- SMS surveys – Short Online interview where the questions and answers are sent through SMS (Short Message Service). This type of survey is the pioneer of the mobile marketing research.

The mobile marketing research can be also based on an application support. Respondents are asked to download and install an application on their mobile devices and use that application for completing surveys. The marketer can be involved in the pre-recruitment part or in case of a post application survey. Here are some of the applications used on mobile devices in marketing research:

- Mobile Diaries and Ethnographies – The application is designed to capture open ended questions, closed ended questions, multimedia files or GPS data. For diaries, respondents may be asked to register multiple entries/data.

- Respondents are expecting the questionnaire browsing to be prompt and without any lags. If the completion of the questionnaire is taking too long, the mobile phone user will not have patience and usually end with closing the application (ZHANG Jing (张晶), HUANG Jinghua (黄京华), CHEN Junquan (陈俊全), 2010). The research can also have diary projects via web-browsing application (diary projects within a web-page application);

- Mobile Live – The mobile marketing research application is designed as a communication portal between respondents and a moderator; taking into consideration that in this case a moderator will be influencing the data collection, the completion period will be affected and will be directly about the moderator;

- Mobile Shopper and Audit – The applications is recording the real time experience of a respondent in certain situations or locations using real time feedback and multimedia uploads (the application is using the GPS coordinates captured from the mobile device);

- Passive Meter Insight – The application is running in background, is capturing information about respondent behavior regarding their usage of a device (internet use, SMS, phone calls, etc.) and transmits the data to a central unit administrated by the marketer.

4 Mobile Marketing Research – specifics

- The survey can be accessed only from a mobile device; special features in the background captures and checks if the respondent is coming from a mobile device or not;

- If the respondent is constantly connected on the internet each survey can be launched in every moment of the day, regardless of the time zone;

- The price and the coverage of the data traffic may influence the survey participation and response rate; some surveys may contain different multimedia files which can have a considerable size and will have a big impact over the mobile internet traffic; some surveys can be run through a wireless connection but this will not capture real experience of the respondent due to low area coverage;

- The survey design needs to fit the mobile device’s limitations and specs; complex programming may have difficulties loading on the mobile device as well as high resolution pages;

- The survey needs to be scripted using a mobile dedicated template and adapted to the mobile device;

- The sample needs to be composed of mobile device owners. The research can also have a combination between sample composed of mobile device owners and non-mobile device owners (two separate targets) or, if requested by the client, the research can send mobile device (usually mobile phones) to those that are not mobile device owners; also there are surveys in which the mobile device users are asked to share the mobile device with others or invite other to
complete the survey on their behalf (e.g. kids if it is the case of parents);

- It is recommended that the questionnaire follows a specific survey design guidelines for mobile devices;
- The researcher can detect when a mobile device accessed the survey data collection platform and use the device profile to route respondents into an appropriate mobile survey if a special sample server is used;
- The marketing researcher collects all the completed responses within a shorter period of time and it is less expensive and efficient for collecting the data of large numbers of individuals due to almost instant access to the respondent;
- The response rate in the mobile marketing research is quite low and it is influenced by the amount of incentives and rewards; In fact 37% of the respondents who have been invited to participate on the text based mobile survey have indicated that they were more likely to participate at the survey if they would have received incentives such as retail coupons or free song or ringtone, unlike only 11% who indicated that such incentives would not have any impact (ABI research, 2008)

- The need for the permission to interact with the respondent, the consumer innovativeness and the privacy vulnerability are found to be the three most important factors in consumer mind that affect the attitude toward mobile marketing (Muhammad Faheem Ashraf, Yasir Kamal, 2010);
- Smartphone users are mainly youths and young adults; This users are called The Millennials and according to Venkatesh Shankar, Alladi Venkatesh, Charles Hofacker and Prasad Naik (2010), they are 10-25 years old users, easy adaptable to innovations that are fitting their lifestyles and they are somewhat skeptical about the business world and often resent it if retailers intrude into their “private” and exclusive mobile spaces. They usually are generating a low response rate and a high abandon rate.

5 Ethics in Mobile Marketing Research

The increasing evolution and the fast growing usage of mobile devices such as smart phones and tablets are creating unprecedented opportunities for the newly created mobile marketing research industry. Due to the incorporated technology from the mobile devices, the researchers may track participants’ whereabouts and listen to the actual conversations of the customer while they are in process of buying goods or services, the most important moment for most to marketers. Millions of consumers have already downloaded smart phone apps that use GPS to track their location so they can obtain discounts, coupons or cash incentives for answering a few questions about their experience when they are in specific stores (NewsRx, 2012).

In October 2012, MMRA (Mobile Marketing Research Association) and ESOMAR have updated the professional ethics and standards guidance on Mobile Research. The new Guideline on Mobile Research was launched in November 2012 at the ESOMAR 3D Digital Dimensions conference in Amsterdam (MMRA and ESOMAR Launch New Guideline for conducting Mobile Marketing Research, retrieved on April 14th 2013 from https://mmra.sitemym.com/news/108242/MMRA-and-ESOMAR-Launch-New-Guideline-for-conducting-Mobile-Marketing-Research-.htm). The new guideline is providing an up-to-date guidance in line with the latest international developments in mobile research to promote best practice, professional standards, and respectful relationships with respondents and participants (MMRA and ESOMAR Launch New Guideline for conducting Mobile Marketing Research, retrieved on April 14th 2013 from https://mmra.sitemym.com/news/108242/MMRA-and-ESOMAR-Launch-New-Guideline-for-conducting-Mobile-Marketing-Research-.htm). With the newly released guideline, ESOMAR and MMRA are hoping to attract companies that are not part of the market research industry, to do marketing research via mobile devices. Also, the guideline
assists researchers in addressing legal, ethical and practical considerations while conducting mobile researches. The scope of the guideline is to cover the data collection process run through mobile devices (mobile phones, tablets, PDAs, eReader or other similar mobile computing devices) for market, opinion or social research purposes (used exclusive for market research purpose). The new guideline is taking into account the increasing number of smartphones, tablets or other mobile devices along with the development of the geographic positioning systems and how these may impact the marketer’s practices in the mobile marketing research industry. The guideline is also providing assistance in online areas such as online diaries, mobile ethnography, video and camera technology and mobile contextual data collection (Codes & Guidelines, retrieved on April 14th 2013 from http://www.esomar.org/knowledge-and-standards/codes-and-guidelines.php).

6 Conclusions

The conceptualization and the phenomenon of mobile marketing research are not ready to generate a full guideline for future studies. The existing literature is defining the mobile marketing research according to their study applicability and the contextual approach. There is the need for researchers to devote their attention to this area of interest and to explore this field. The advantages which are available through the mobile devices are generating the future point of interest from the marketing research point of view. The developments which are occurring in the consumer’s environment have made the mobile marketing research the most important topic of interest in recent years in the marketing industry.

References


Ajax Persaud, Irfan Azhar (2012), "Innovative mobile marketing via smartphones Are consumers ready?"., *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, vol. 30, no. 4, pp. 418-443;


Gerpott T.J. (2012), “Characteristics and mobile Internet use intensity of consumers with different types of advanced handsets: An exploratory empirical study of iPhone, Android and other web-enabled mobile users in Germany”, *Telecommunications Policy* (18 June 2012);


Mars, Alexandre (2010), “Importing Mobile Marketing Tools”, *Adweek*; Feb 15, 2010; 51, 7; ProQuest Central, pg. 17

Mohammad Ismail, Razli Che Razak (2011) "A Short Review on the Trend of Mobile Marketing Studies".

Muhammad Faheem Ashraf, Yasir Kamal (2010), "Acceptance of mobile marketing among University students", Mustang Journal of Business and Ethics, vol.1, pp. 9-29;


Infographic: Tracking the Evolution of the Mobile Phone, http://www.mobilemarketingwatch.com/infographic-

Author description

Daniel-Claudiu Paraschiv is a PhD student at Babeş-Bolyai University from Cluj-Napoca, Romania and a Project Manager in online marketing research. His research is mainly on quantitative marketing research, new product development and mobile technology in marketing research. His research has been published in journals such as ProQuest. He has been awarded at the Marketing National Olympics from Romania in 2011.