

## **Using Smartphone as a Journalistic Tool: An Examination of Ethical Codes in Mobile Journalism in Saudi Arabia**

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This study aimed to understand the impact of ethical codes on Saudi journalists' perceptions toward mobile journalism (MOJO). Three major ethical dimensions were examined, including seeking truth, minimizing harm, and being accountable in news coverage. A survey link created with SurveyMonkey was transmitted via social media avenues, such as Twitter and WhatsApp, where Saudi journalists can complete the questionnaire and then share the link with other Saudi journalists. A total of 124 Saudi journalists were recruited by this snowball sampling approach, while the Codes of Ethics of Society of Professional Journalists was adapted as major measurements for three ethical dimensions, including seeking truth, minimizing harm, and being accountable. Results found that all three ethical dimensions of professional journalists generated significant influences on Saudi journalists' perceptions toward MOJO. Specifically, minimizing harm was found as the most powerful factor that affected Saudi journalists' perceptions toward MOJO, followed by being accountable and seeking truth, indicating that Saudi journalists who were more likely to seek truth, minimize harm, and be accountable would exhibit more positive perceptions toward MOJO. Although using smartphone as a journalistic tool was a key factor toward Saudi journalists' MOJO perceptions, it was not as powerful as three ethical dimensions that affected their MOJO perceptions.

*Keywords:* mobile journalism, codes of ethics, professional journalism, Saudi journalists

### **Introduction**

Journalism has gone through a major change and benefited as a result of various technological discoveries over the last decade, which demonstrates that traditional journalism is conforming to constant change and news media can meet audience expectation, specifically in terms of credibility and timing (Maccise and Marai, 2016). Mobile Journalism (MOJO) is defined as a kind of digital storytelling where the primary device is used for writing, designing, and editing images. MOJO is considered a new phenomenon for multimedia storytelling where journalists are well trained and equipped for being fully mobile and completely autonomous (Myllylahti, 2017).

According to the Global Media Insight (2018), the population of Saudi Arabia reached 33.25 million in 2018, and the number of internet users in Saudi Arabia

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rose swiftly to reach 30 million people at the beginning of 2018. The internet penetration in the country has now reached 91%, and the number of social media usage on their mobile devices reached to 18 million, indicating 54.14% of Saudi Arabian population. Due to these increasing numbers and technological developments, the emergence of smartphones, along with digital technology and Wi-Fi, continues to change traditional journalism. Not only have smartphones become a crucial device for news consumption, but also provided a pocket-sized media hub for journalists. Therefore, mobile devices can be an alternative tool to traditional news outlets in Saudi Arabia. MOJO is a new era for journalism in Saudi Arabia when numerous Saudi journalists use mobile devices as their journalistic tools. The use of MOJO requires special equipment and news applications and programmers, which would generate some side effects on journalism practices, especially from an ethical perspective.

The role of ethical codes is key to news performance. Journalists produce their news stories based on the ethical codes of professional journalists. Media ethics around the world affirm that professional journalists should be committed to news truth, accuracy, honesty, integrity, and non-distortion of information (Abu Arqoub, 2010). Indeed, media ethics are issued to set journalism profession and play a primary role in covering news stories in a practical way. Therefore, this study aimed to explore how Saudi journalists would perceive MOJO based upon their consideration of ethical codes of professional journalists. Three major ethical codes were investigated in this study, namely seeking truth, minimizing harm, and being accountable in news coverage. More specifically, the study attempted to examine the extent to which Saudi journalists would seek truth minimize potential harm, and be accountable in news coverage in response to their MOJO perceptions. Moreover, three demographic variables, including Saudi journalists' news industry experiences, frequency of using smartphones as a journalistic tool, and education levels, were employed as key factors toward their MOJO perceptions. Simply stated, the study would offer practical insights into how Saudi journalists perceived MOJO based upon their considerations of ethical codes of professional journalists and their journalistic and technological experiences.

## Literature Review

### Mobile Journalism

Mobile Journalism (MOJO) is a creation of the modern technology, especially the use of the mobile technology for the video journalism purposes (Karhunen, 2017). MOJO is the process by which information is collected and disseminated to the society, through the use of the mobile technology, and even the use of the tablets (Maccise and Marai, 2016). MOJO is mainly used in the process of news reporting and delivering through mobile devices in order to enhance the coverage of breaking news.

MOJO is a modern process that facilitates the media workflow and storytelling process, in which journalists are offered with the basic training and equipped to

move from one place to another with independence. Although most journalists have integrated the use of the laptops into the processing of news coverage, the use of mobile phones has remained as an eternity of the essential ways through which a majority is able to advance in the journalism sector.

MOJO is also used for radio news and podcasts, television news and documentaries, and even videos for social platforms. Indeed, MOJO is a new workflow for media storytelling where reporters are trained and equipped for being fully mobile and fully autonomous (Mobile Journalism Manual, 2018). MOJO is more focused on enhancing the empowerment process of individual storytellers who can use the consumer technology to come up with the best story possible. Thus, the definition of MOJO can be extended to include DSLR cameras, laptops, GoPros, and even mobile phones.

MOJO is one of the fastest growing sections within the modern journalism industry, although there is a major problem facing mobile journalists, especially the tension that exists between the various issues of print, broadcast as well as digital journalism, traditional journalism and lifestyle journalism (Fürsich, 2012). MOJO is becoming increasingly, one of the most important sectors, not only in news media industry, but also on other sectors, such as organizations that need to capture the various live activities, like NGOs, PR agencies, broadcasting and even social media specialists (Perreault and Stanfield, 2019). According to Maccise and Marai (2016), new ideas in the journalism industry are brought into light by individuals who are using their mobile devices to generate information. Due to MOJO, most journalists are able to enhance their skills and ensure their interests to explore an alternative medium better than others that had been used in traditional journalism. MOJO is embraced by various editors and even managers who are in charge of the process of enhancing news development and practice. However, it is important to investigate whether journalists are trained well to use mobile devices for the purposes of news reporting, where the technical competencies must be accompanied by the various key journalistic skills, including their ability of storytelling, justification of information, verification, and even packaging of the content collected for mobile devices.

Podger (2018) explained that several benefits are attributed by MOJO, given that smartphones can be used in various ways, such as the production studio for radio, television production, text production and even the creation of social content in one's pockets. These benefits include: *Affordable*, *Portable*, and *Discreet*. *Affordable* indicates that the smartphones can be used in the creation of the television-quality video if the video is created with the use of professional video recording app, and the addition of the external microphone and tripod. Using that set-up, there is the grate minimization of costs, given that it does not cost the same as having an entry-level TV camera. The process makes it possible and affordable for the millions of people across the world to receive news, through multimedia storytelling process, especially for journalists and storytellers working in NGOs, education sector, or business sectors. *Portable* means that the majority of journalists can fit their equipment in a backpack, since phone, lightweight tripod, clip-microphones, and external light have a weight under three kilograms, hence, making the process of high-quality storytelling production easy and effective.

Discreet denotes that the availability makes mobile phones an ideal tool for most journalists to sue across the world, and the need to have a discreet use of mobile devices, when covering news stories (Podger, 2018).

The impacts of new technologies on professional journalism are deterministic. As new technologies were used as key tools to direct professional journalism into a dialogical and participatory model of journalism, everyone who can produce and deliver short videos via new technologies can be journalists (Kawamoto, 2003; O' Sullivan, 2005). Some empirical studies investigated the impacts of new technologies on the practices of professional journalism. Urshell (2001) found that the use of new technologies in professional journalism is dependent on the goals and judgments of executive personnel and political regulators. Although journalists tend to acknowledge dialogical and participatory attributes of new technologies (Hermida and Thurman, 2008), they are still uncertain to embrace this dialogical and participatory model in their journalism practices (Heinonen, 2011). Specifically, reluctance to surrender control (Singer and Gonzalez-Velez, 2003; O' Sullivan, 2005), extra workload and difficulties in moderating and controlling user-generated content (Thurman, 2008; Chung, 2007), lack of necessary innovative skills (O' Sullivan 2005; Robinson, 2011; Brannon, 2008) and a rigid professional culture rooted in established journalistic routines and professional beliefs (Ryfe, 2009) are key factors delaying the use of new technologies in professional journalism. Furthermore, Spyridou et al. (2013) found that the use of new technologies is seen as empowering journalists to do their traditional jobs better instead of moving on to the dialogical and participatory model of journalism built around a stronger commitment to capitalize on the growing sociotechnical potential.

Correspondingly, some negative impacts of new technologies on MOJO were deterministic. For example, Blankenship (2016) found that the mobile journalists have less specialized expert knowledge. Although working outside a crew gives them greater autonomy, their increased use of work routines makes them to give up some control to organizational needs. Moreover, these mobile journalists allow some encroachments by other professionals, specifically public relations professionals, in order to accomplish their work tasks within specified deadlines with limited time and resources. Similarly, Kumar and Haneef (2018) found that the practice of MOJO leads journalists to learn new apps and tools, produce short videos by and for mobile devices, and disseminate news to digital readers through multiple platforms, but also discourages journalists to value basic news reporting and gathering skills.

### **Smartphones for MOJO**

The popularity of smartphones is attributed to the universality and manner in which they are available in the market and different societies. Smartphones are small of size with better processing and connectivity capabilities, have reduced the cost of operation, and have the ability to host several multi-goal applications. The modern smartphones can harbor multimedia technologies, high-capacity sensor data, various communication logs, retention of data created or even consumed by

various applications, among others. Smartphone is utilized for state-of-the-art mobile phone devices, by industry and research community. Smartphones are regarded as 'smart' due to a major difference from regular phones and cellphones which are not technologically enabled. Also, smartphones are devices that have two characteristics. First, each smartphone contains a mobile network operator smartcard that enables the phone to have a connection to mobile networks, in the form of SIM or USIM card in the GSM and UMTS systems. The second aspect is that all smartphones have an operating system that has the ability to link with any third-party software (Theoharidou et al., 2012).

According to Budmar (2012), smartphones are more similar to handheld personal computers with the ability to enhance extensive computing capabilities, the inclusion of the high rates of speed, the power to access the Internet, through the Internet and mobile broadband. A majority of smartphones is built with the ability to support Bluetooth and Satellite Navigation Systems, which give the users the ability to access services through touchscreen color display option and also provide the users with the ability to enhance the graphical interface that can cover the front surface and virtual keyboard, where it is possible to type and even press the onscreen icons. Also, all interactions are mostly done through the use of touchscreen, although there exists a few physical buttons (Budmar, 2012). Smartphones are usually small, fitting comfortably in the pockets of the users, although there are larger ones, known as the phablets which are smaller than tablet computers. Moreover, smartphones use a lithium-ion battery which is mostly rechargeable.

Mohd (2013) suggested that smartphones show a combination of personal device assistants as well as mobile phones that focus on using advanced operating systems, while permitting the users to be able to make the installation of new applications, the ability to connect to the internet, and enhance the provision of varied functionalities of two aspects of phones. Smartphones make the lives of many people better and easier since the use of the Internet is part of people's everyday life, where within 24 hours a day, people use the Internet for their various activities. The application of mobile devices that are equipped with digital access and camera as well as messaging services becomes a key inspiration for the use of mobile devices in growth in covering news stories. The technological innovation further enhances the development of general processes, leading a majority of journalists working for several media houses and using mobile devices to cover news stories. The use of mobile devices also leads to a rapid growth in modern citizen journalism. The use of MOJO promotes the expansion of mobile technologies and new opportunities for journalism. The process has influenced on the issue of mobile news reporting, which impacts the general organization and the practice of journalism, where certain mobile device features, such as positioning, are able to receive specific attention. Moreover, the use of MOJO is effective, given that it cuts costs, enhances the usability and functionality, and minimizes journalistic challenges (Jokela et al., 2009).

The Reuters news agency seeks an opportunity for MOJO and enters into a contract with the Finnish Nokia Company, so as to enhance the development of a model for digital journalism. This idea gives birth to the emergence of mobile

devices that lead to small computers with permanent and specific applications. Smartphones are giving the world another aspect of journalism. With the modern introduction of various means of communication, such as satellite, terrestrial or microwave, the flow of communications becomes easier and effective, both in the local and international arena, due to the links with newer technologies and other media, such as telex and facsimile (Bivens, 2008).

### **Ethical Codes of Professional Journalists**

Media ethics in various media channels, such as print, audio, video, and electronic media, are viewed as the most important component for media performance (Al-Abad, 2017). Many Press Associations have drafted media codes of ethics to be a moral guide for journalists to set their performance for media audiences. For example, the Jordanian Press Association has issued its first code of ethics in 1996 and the second code of ethics by the late of 2003 (Abu Arqoub, 2010). Abu Arqoub (2010) continued to emphasize that the freedom of speech, journalists' right to receive information, and journalists not to obtain special benefits are highly considered and specified at the second draft of the Jordanian media code of ethics. The main purpose of drafting the media code of ethics is to reduce the governmental control over media outlets. Makhareh (2018) stated that media outlets are strictly controlled by states and the journalism practice that aims to search and uncover the truth is observed as strange in the Arab world.

The Code of Ethics of Society of Professional Journalists is the biggest national journalism organization of the Society of Professional Journalists, whose main function is to promote the process of free journalism practices and the process of stimulating the high-level standards of the journalist's ethical behavior. The organization was founded in 1909, with the name Sigma Delta Chi, SPJ, and promoted the process of free information flow which was critical for the creation of a citizen who were well-informed, through the daily activities of almost 7,500 members, where the main focus was to inspire and also educate the journalists, both in the present and the future, through the process of professional development. The organization also protected the First Amendment, which gave the journalists the guarantee of the freedom of speech and the press by the advocacy efforts (Society of Professional Journalists, 2014).

The Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics is a statement of abiding principles supported by The Society of Professional Journalists, the nation's most broad-based journalism organization that is dedicated to encouraging the free practice of journalism and stimulating high standards of ethical behavior. Founded in 1909 as Sigma Delta Chi, SPJ promotes the free flow of information vital to a well-informed citizenry through the daily work of its nearly 7,500 members; works to inspire and educate current and future journalists through professional development; and protects First Amendment guarantees of freedom of speech and press through its advocacy efforts (Society of Professional Journalists, 2014).

This study attempts to look at three key dimensions of the Code of Ethics of Society of Professional Journalists, namely *Seeking Truth*, *Minimizing Harm*, and *Being Accountable*. These three dimensions are selected in response to Saudi

journalists' perceptions toward MOJO, given that these dimensions are highly related to the core value of professional journalism that promotes accuracy, humanity, and accountability (Harcup, 2020), and could be gradually disregarded when mobile journalists have to complete their work tasks within specified deadlines with limited time and resources (Blankenship, 2016). The study examines how these ethical dimensions affect Saudi journalists' perceptions toward MOJO and which dimension generates a greater impact on their perceptions toward MOJO. Moreover, three demographic factors are considered as key variables that influence Saudi journalists' MOJO perceptions, including their news industry experiences, frequency of using smartphone as a journalistic tool, and education levels. Six research questions were proposed in the following:

- RQ1:** Do Saudi journalists who are more inclined to seek truth in their news coverage have more positive perceptions toward MOJO?
- RQ2:** Do Saudi journalists who are more inclined to minimize potential harm in news coverage have more positive perceptions toward MOJO?
- RQ3:** Do Saudi journalists who are more accountable in news coverage have more positive perceptions toward MOJO?
- RQ4:** Do Saudi journalists with more news industry experiences have more positive perceptions toward MOJO?
- RQ5:** Do Saudi journalists with more experiences in using smartphone to cover their news stories have more positive perceptions toward MOJO?
- RQ6:** Do Saudi journalists' education levels influence their perceptions toward MOJO?

## **Methods**

This study aimed to better understand the impact of ethical codes on Saudi journalists' perceptions toward MOJO. Three major variables related to ethics were examined in this study, including seeking truth in news coverage, minimizing harm, and being accountable. A computer-mediated questionnaire was developed by the researchers. This online questionnaire was transferred on a program installed into the computer, known as the computer-assisted self-administered interviewing, to the participants as an email link. The online questionnaire was conducted to explore Saudi journalists who were residents of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The survey was first written in English, and later translated into Arabic language.

## **Sampling and Procedure**

Snowball sampling approach was used for the study which applied the principle of chain referral, where the participants are requested to choose and even bring an extra individual into the study population. The approach, therefore, was used for the selection of the required number of Saudi journalists who were accessible. The major assumption for snowball sampling was that all the members of the target group knew each other to create a sampling frame. The sampling

process was also used in the processes of studying the deviant behavior, where the issues of morality, legality or social sensitivities of a given behavior were discussed. The ideal candidates to participate in this online questionnaire were obtained through the chain process and the development of the initial conducts for referrals determined the quality of the sample and representation of the actual population. Regarding the distribution of online questionnaire, the link would be shared by the participants' permission after completing the survey and passing it to other potential candidates. The participants would be told that their participation was voluntary, and all personal information was destroyed after data collection. Finally, the data was transferred into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for the final analysis.

### Measured Variables

The link created with SurveyMonkey was transmitted via social media avenues, such as Twitter and WhatsApp, where the participants can complete an online survey based on three advantages: Anonymity, flexibility, and volunteerism. Due to the nature of mother tongue of Arabian participants, the questionnaire was translated into Arabic language. The questionnaire was divided into several sections, based on research questions. The questions also provided with a form of multiple choices, which included gender, level of education, age, opinions and behaviors, and ranking the most truth source for news by the participants. Age group was divided into four categories, including: (1) 18–25, (2) 26–32, (3) 33–39, and (4) 40 and over. Four major variables were examined in the following.

*Seeking Truth in News Coverage.* Six items were used to measure the extent to which Saudi journalists sought truth in news coverage. These items included: (1) I test the accuracy of information from all sources in my news coverage, (2) I identify the sources whenever feasible in my news coverage, (3) I always question source motives before promising a anonymity in my news coverage, (4) I never distort the content of news photos or video image enhancement in my news coverage, (5) I never plagiarize in my news coverage, and (6) I avoid any stereotypes in news coverage. Five-point scales were used to assess their responses (1 = *Strongly Disagree*; 5 = *Strongly Agree*). All scores were summed and averaged ( $M = 4.27$ ,  $SD = 0.65$ ). Cronbach's alpha for this measure was 0.81.

*Minimizing Harm in News Coverage.* Six items were included to measure the extent to which Saudi journalists minimized potential harm through their news coverage. These items were: (1) I show compassion for those whom may be affected by my news coverage, (2) I am sensitive when seeking or using interviews of those affected by tragedy in my news coverage, (3) I recognize that gathering and reporting information may come harm of discomfort in my news coverage, (4) I show the good taste when covering news, (5) I am cautious about identifying juvenile suspects in my news coverage, and (6) I balance a criminated suspects fair tried rights with the epacts' rights to be informed in my news coverage. Five-point scales were used to evaluate their responses. All scores were summed and averaged ( $M = 4.25$ ,  $SD = 0.54$ ). Cronbach's alpha for this measure was 0.72.

*Accountability in News Coverage.* Five items were utilized to measure the extent to which Saudi journalists were accountable in news coverage. These items were: (1) I clarify and explain my news coverage and invite dialogue with the public, (2) I encourage the public to voice grievances against the news media, (3) I admit my mistake and correct them promptly, (4) I expose unethical practices of journalists and the news media, and (5) I abide by the same high standards they expect of others. Five-point scales were used to assess their responses and all scores were summed and averaged ( $M = 4.30$ ,  $SD = 0.56$ ). Cronbach's alpha with the current sample was 0.68.

*Saudi Journalists' MOJO Perceptions.* Seven items were applied to measure how Saudi journalists perceived MOJO. These items were: (1) the mobile journalism is the process by which information is collected to the society, through the use of the mobile technology, (2) mobile journalism is been used majorly in the process of covering news and broadcasting, (3) mobile journalism is considered the modern process of journalism, (4) the mobile journalism is one of the fastest growing styles within the modern journalism industry, (5) the mobile journalism allows journalists to explore alternative mediums in their journalistic work, (6) mobile journalism makes creating content easier at any time more than traditional journalism, (7) the availability of the smartphones facilitates the journalists' efforts to report news across the world. Five-point scales were used to assess their answers. All scores were summed and averaged ( $M = 4.49$ ,  $SD = 0.59$ ). Cronbach's alpha with the current sample was 0.87.

## Results

### Participants

A total of 124 Saudi journalists participated in this online questionnaire, but only 115 participants were retained, given that nine participants did not complete the questionnaire. As indicated in Table 1, a total of 79 males (73.8%) and 25 females (26.2%) participated in this study. Regarding journalistic experiences, 43 participants who had worked for 4 to 10 years (40.2%), followed by 28 participants for 11 years and more, (26.2%), 25 participants for 1 to 3 years (23.4%) and 11 participants worked for less than one year (10.3%). For journalists who used smartphone as a journalistic tool to cover news stories, a total of 55 participants used smartphones for news coverage for 1–3 years (51.4%), followed by 28 participants for 4–6 years (26.2%), 18 participants for less than one year (16.8%), and 6 participants for 7–11 years (5.6%). Regarding age, 39 participants were aged from 26 to 32 (36.4%), followed by 28 aged from 33 to 39 (26.5%), 21 aged from 18 to 25 (19.6%), and 19 aged at 40 and more (17.8%). As to education levels, 71 participants acquired a bachelor's degree (66.4%), 34 held a graduate degree (31.8%), and only 2 finished high school (1.9%).

Table 1. Demographics

	N	%
Gender		
Male	79	72.8
Female	25	26.2
News Industry Experience		
Less than one year	11	10.3
1–3 years	25	23.4
4–10 years	43	40.2
11 years and more	28	26.2
Smartphone as News Tool Experiences		
Less than one year	18	16.8
1–3 years	55	51.4
4–6 years	28	26.2
7–11 years and more	6	5.6
Age Group		
18–25	21	19.6
26–32	29	36.4
33–39	28	26.2
40 and more	19	17.8
Education Level		
High School	2	1.9
Bachelor's	71	66.4
Graduate	34	31.8

**RQ1** was proposed to examine the impact of seeking truth in news coverage on Saudi journalists' perceptions toward MOJO. As indicated in Table 2, the results showed a significant positive relationship between seeking truth in news coverage and perceptions toward MOJO ( $r = 0.52, p < 0.01$ ), indicating that Saudi journalists who were more likely to seek truth in news coverage would exhibit more positive perceptions toward MOJO. Specifically, as indicated in Table 3, seeking truth was loaded in the third stepwise regression model ( $B = 0.21, t = 2.12, p < 0.05$ ), but less powerful than minimizing harm and being accountable to influence Saudi journalists' perceptions toward MOJO.

**RQ2** looked at whether the impact of minimizing harm in news coverage on Saudi journalists' perceptions toward MOJO. Table 2 also suggested that Saudi journalists who were more inclined to minimize harm to others in news coverage would perceive MOJO as more positive ( $r = 0.55, p < 0.01$ ). Moreover, Table 3 showed that minimizing harm was loaded in the first ( $B = 0.55, t = 6.93, p < 0.01$ ), second ( $B = 0.40, t = 4.43, p < 0.01$ ) and third ( $B = 0.31, t = 3.19, p < 0.01$ ) stepwise regression models, which further suggested that minimizing harm in news coverage was the most important factor toward Saudi journalists' perceptions toward MOJO.

Table 2. Correlation Matrix

Variable	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Perceptions of MOJO	0.52**	0.55**	0.49**	-0.06	-0.22**	-0.09
2. Seeking Truth	-	0.59**	0.57**	-0.04	-0.21*	0.06
3. Minimizing Harm		-	0.53**	-0.06	-0.16*	-0.01
4. Being Accountable			-	-0.002	-0.08	-0.21*
5. News Industry Experiences				-	0.55**	0.30**
6. Smartphone as Journalistic Tool					-	0.13
7. Education Levels						-

Note: \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ .

Table 3. Stepwise Regression Models

	Model Statistics					
	Model 1** <sup>1</sup>		Model 2** <sup>2</sup>		Model 3** <sup>3</sup>	
<i>F</i>	48.01		31.03		5.26	
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.30		0.36		0.38	
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> Change	0.30		0.06		0.03	
Variable	Standardized Beta	<i>t</i>	Standardized Beta	<i>t</i>	Standardized Beta	<i>t</i>
Seeking Truth					0.21	2.12*
Minimizing Harm	0.55	6.93**	0.40	4.43**	0.31	3.19**
Being Accountable			0.28	3.19**	0.21	2.21*
News Industry Experiences						
Smartphone as Journalistic Tool						
Education Levels						

Note: \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; <sup>1</sup>Predictor Included: Minimizing Harm; <sup>2</sup>Predictors Included: Minimizing Harm and Being Accountable; <sup>3</sup>Predictors Included: Minimizing Harm, Being Accountable, and Seeking Truth.

**RQ3** was proposed to explore the impact of being accountable in news coverage on Saudi journalists' perceptions toward MOJO. The results found a positive relationship between being accountable in news coverage and perceptions toward MOJO ( $r = 0.49, p < 0.01$ ), indicating that Saudi journalists who were more accountable in news coverage would exhibit more positive perceptions toward MOJO. Additionally, being accountable was loaded in the second ( $B = 0.28, t = 3.19, p < 0.01$ ) and third ( $B = 0.21, t = 2.21, p < 0.05$ ) stepwise regression models, indicating that being accountable was more powerful than seeking truth, but less essential than minimizing harm toward Saudi journalists' MOJO perceptions.

**RQ4** examined whether Saudi journalists' news industry experiences affected their perceptions toward MOJO. The results did not find any significant relationship between news industry experiences and MOJO perceptions ( $r = -0.06, p = 0.26$ ). On the other hand, **RQ5** was used to explore the impact of using smartphone as a journalistic tool on Saudi journalists' perceptions toward MOJO. The results showed a negative relationship between using smartphone as a journalistic tool and MOJO perceptions ( $r = -0.22, p < 0.05$ ), indicating that Saudi journalists who adopted smartphones to cover news stories less frequently would exhibit more positive perceptions toward MOJO. Finally, **RQ6** examined the impact of Saudi journalists' education levels on their perceptions toward MOJO. The results did not show any significant influence of education levels on their MOJO perceptions ( $r = -0.09, p = 0.17$ ). Moreover, three demographic factors were not loaded in any stepwise regression models, demonstrating that these demographic factors were not as powerful as three ethical variables that affected how Saudi journalists perceived MOJO.

## Conclusion

In spite of the significance of MOJO in Saudi Arabia, there are very limited studies that examined how Saudi journalists would perceive mobile journalism based upon key ethical dimensions of professional journalists. The study found that all three key ethical dimensions generated significant influences on Saudi journalists' perceptions toward MOJO. Specifically, Saudi journalists who were more likely to seek truth, minimize harm, and be accountable in their news coverage would perceive MOJO as more positive, which suggested that MOJO can be perceived to meet the standard of ethical codes of professional journalists. Moreover, as three dimensions of ethical codes affected how Saudi journalists perceived MOJO at various levels, minimizing harm played the most powerful role in influencing Saudi journalists' perceptions toward MOJO. Indeed, Saudi Arabia is a society intertwined with collectivism culture in accordance with their social norms and religious customs. The value of minimizing harm may become the most important standard when Saudi journalists defined MOJO as their profession.

Being accountable was another key standard to perceive MOJO in Saudi journalists, as it was less powerful than minimizing harm, but more significant than seeking truth. This may explain that journalism ethics in Saudi Arabia should

cultivate Saudi journalists to take more responsibility for their journalistic works that decidedly generated impacts on the public, which should be applied in MOJO too. Moreover, Saudi journalists were admitted by their news organizations to acknowledge their mistakes, but they must correct these mistakes promptly and prominently. The policy of the ministry of media also issued certain media legislations to promote responsible news media. Thus, it is fair to state that the value of being accountable should be an essential standard when Saudi journalists perceived MOJO.

Seeking truth was an important ethical dimension, but it was the least important standard to perceive MOJO. Indeed, the definition of truth can be varied by different news ideologies, especially when most news organizations were more likely to set their own agendas. In Saudi Arabia, news organizations were endowed by particular professional sports teams. They reported these teams in very positive ways and sports journalists who worked in these news organizations were hired to support sports clubs/teams. Thus, media bias emerged in most Saudi journalists, which may affect Saudi journalists to evaluate the value of seeking truth less important than those of minimizing harm and being accountable when they perceived MOJO.

News industry and the education levels, as two key demographic variables, did not produce any influences on Saudi journalists' perceptions toward MOJO. It may explain that Saudi journalists did not specialize in any journalism field and a large number of Saudi journalists were part-time journalists. This demonstrated that the impact of education levels and news industry would not affect how Saudi journalists used smartphones for their news coverage and how they perceived MOJO as their profession. Instead, Saudi journalists' frequency of using smartphone as a journalistic tool would cultivate them to be more skilled at mobile technologies and assist them to be more professional mobile journalists.

Although several insights were generated, some limitations still emerged. First of all, several participants indicated that there were many questions in the questionnaires. Some did lose their patience and skip some questions, while several Saudi journalists did not complete the questionnaires, which resulted in a major limitation for this study. Second, the sample may also restrict the generalization of the results in this study. As stated previously, most valid samples were male journalists. Therefore, the sample may not generalize the population appropriately. Future research may examine how gender differences would influence Saudi journalists' perceptions toward MOJO and whether gender difference would vary significantly to mediate the impact of ethical dimensions of professional journalists on their perceptions toward MOJO.

Finally, some personality traits may play another key role in Saudi journalists' perceptions toward MOJO, beyond the ethical codes of professional journalists. Future research could investigate personality traits as predictors toward how Saudi journalists would perceive MOJO. Moreover, this study found a positive relationship among seeking truth, minimizing harm, being accountable and Saudi journalists' perceptions toward MOJO, but the study did not look at some interaction effects between personality predictors and other ethical variables on Saudi journalists' perceptions toward MOJO. Future research may focus on the

impacts of other personality traits related to Saudi journalistic norms and examined whether Saudi journalists at various levels of these personality traits would lead to different levels of MOJO perceptions based upon their consideration of ethical codes.

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