Chapter 82
Gender Differences in Advanced Mobile Services Acceptance:
M–Location and M–Social Media

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ABSTRACT

By stating that the antecedents of customers´ intentions to use mobile services should be studied across service categories and gender differences, the purpose of this article is to investigate the validity and differential predictive power of a model that explain acceptance of several mobile services across male and female customers. This study contributes to the emerging but limited body of research on consumer adoption of advanced mobile services by addressing several critical issues. First, the present paper focuses on two mobile services, namely m-location and m-social media, as they are considered as the new age of advanced mobile services. Furthermore, we include gender as a moderator variable. A theoretical model is proposed and tested in a sample of 429 Dutch consumers. Results from structural modeling equations show that the factors explaining the acceptance of m-location and m-social media services differ. Second, gender moderating effect has been found significant as gender differences exist in the strength of various paths. In addition to its theoretical contributions, this research presents important practical contributions. In particular, practitioners can gain valuable insights into the driving forces of mobile services.

1. INTRODUCTION

The business environment in the mobile services field is getting more competitive (Chuang & Tsaih, 2013). The number of mobile phones in use far exceeds any other technical devices that could be used to market, sell, produce, or deliver products and services to consumers (Dahlberg et al., 2008). As a result, understanding how companies should interact with their customers and deliver services in this mobile environment is therefore of decisive importance (Parasuraman & Zinkhan, 2002). The success of these services hinges on consumer willingness to adopt new technology and engage in activities using systems and devices different from what they have used in the past (Bruner & Kumar, 2005). Thus, in pursuing digital channels to sell and distribute products, the major challenge these businesses face is evoking user acceptance of the information service once the digital channels are in place (Luo et al., 2011).

With the development of smart phones (a type of mobile phone that can be used both as a mobile phone and as a handheld computer) it is no longer the mobile operator who controls the applications, but the user. Smart phones (in the reminder, we refer to smart phones as mobile phones) allow users to install and use the applications on their own, based on their own needs and interests (Verkasalo et al., 2010). In this context, technology developments have created new types of mobile services that allow customers to move from time and location-based behaviors toward non-temporal and non-location behaviors (Sharma & Sheth, 2004). These types of services have been categorized as advanced mobile services (Lopez-Nicolas et al., 2008) that differ from traditional mobile services in their ability to provide service offerings regardless of temporal and spatial constraints, frequently referred to as ubiquity (Kleijnen et al. 2007). Moreover, in advanced mobile services new experiences are enabled and social interactions are mediated, by wireless and mobile technologies. There are three main advanced services that are critical for firms: a) Mobile commerce services (M-Commerce), b) Mobile location services (m-location) and c) Mobile social media services (m-social media). The present paper focuses on two mobile services, namely m-location and m-social media, as they are considered as the new age of advanced mobile services.

Just as the Internet and user-friendly web browsers provided the preconditions for the take-off of e-commerce, mobile phones that are date-ready and connected to digital communication networks provide the preconditions for M-commerce (Ko et al., 2009). M-commerce services include a wide range of services such as mobile banking (M-banking) and mobile remittance (Lin, 2011; Luarn & Lin, 2005). Similarly, m-location services have increased their relevance due to their potential to redirect customer purchase decision from one firm to another as the positioning system can locate the user exactly. Those services are considered as more sophisticated services (Nikou & Mezei, 2013). They are an example of applications where content is deliberately developed for mobile use (Bouwman et al., 2012). In her pioneering work on mobile location-based systems, Pura (2005) predicted that the ability to identify the customer's location at a certain time is one of the most promising applications of mobile commerce. That promise has been confirmed over time. Delivering value-added, interactive or location-based mobile services to customers seems to be increasingly important in gaining a competitive edge by strengthening relationships with key customers. Locating a place, navigation services or using map services are some of the services that are included in this category (Liang & Wei, 2004). They have been stood out as the most innovative services but the least likely to be used (Bouwman et al., 2012). This finding highlights the need to study the determinants of mobile location-based services adoption.

One of the type of services with higher relevance nowadays are those related to m-social media services that allow customers to interact between each other and obtain up to date information at a higher rate than traditional channels. M-social networking services can be considered to be the Mobile Web 2.0

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