

ANTECEDENTS OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN
MOBILE COMMERCE CONTEXT

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This dissertation is dedicated to my mom and dad and to my beloved aunt Maryam
whose memories stay with me forever....

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ABSTRACT

These days, customer satisfaction, understanding customers' requirements and the ability to reply to customers' needs in near real-time have become serious competitive drivers in a business context. With more satisfied customers, a business can expand its margins while improving selling opportunities. In order to enhance customer satisfaction, new mobile application services, need to be perceived as valuable additions to existing services. While the issue of customer satisfaction in relation to the provision of most goods and services by 'traditional' methods has been comprehensively examined in academic literature, little research exists regarding this issue with respect to mobile application services. As such, this study firstly undertook a systematic review of the available research into the antecedents of customer satisfaction in mobile commerce. This review process identified a list of antecedent factors of customer satisfaction in mobile commerce, related source models, methodologies, limitations and future work recommendations. Secondly, the study proposed a model for antecedents of customer satisfaction in mobile commerce (ACSM), based on the American Customer Satisfaction Index model. The construct of ACSM is defined and validated by the study, together with its underlying dimensionality through an investigation of 120 users of the Resorts World Genting mobile application, which was developed in Malaysia and is also used in this country. The results indicate that consumer expectations have no direct impact on both perceived value and customer satisfaction. However, perceived value has a significant impact on customer satisfaction for mobile application services, with perceived quality also having an impact.

ABSTRAK

Baru-baru ini, kepuasan pelanggan, memahami keperluan pelanggan, keupayaan untuk menyahut keperluan pelanggan dalam masa yang terdekat menjadi suatu persaingan yang serius dalam konteks perniagaan. Dengan adanya pelanggan yang berpuas hati, satu perniagaan boleh meluaskan keuntungan dan dapat meningkatkan peluang menjual. Dalam usaha untuk meningkatkan kepuasan pelanggan, perkhidmatan aplikasi mudah alih yang baru harus dilihat sebagai tambahan yang bernilai kepada perkhidmatan yang sedia ada. Walaupun isu kepuasan pelanggan berhubung dengan peruntukkan kebanyakan barangan dan perkhidmatan dengan kaedah 'tradisional' telah diteliti secara menyeluruh dalam kajian akademik, sedikit penyelidikan wujud mengenai isu ini berkenaan dengan perkhidmatan aplikasi mudah alih. Oleh itu, kajian ini pertamanya menjalankan kajian sistematik penyelidikan yang sedia ada ke dalam latar belakang kepuasan pelanggan dalam perdagangan mudah alih. Ini kajian ini mengenalpasti senarai faktor-faktor yang kepuasan pelanggan dalam perdagangan mudah alih, model sumber yang berkaitan, kaedah - kaedah, had - had dan cadangan kerja-kerja masa depan. Kedua, kajian ini mencadangkan satu model untuk menerangkan mengenai kepuasan pelanggan dalam perdagangan mudah alih, American Customer Satisfaction Index model (ACSM). Pembinaan ACSM ditakrifkan dan disahkan, bersama-sama dengan kematraan asas melalui penyiasatan daripada 120 pengguna aplikasi mudah alih Resorts World Genting, yang telah dibangunkan di Malaysia dan juga digunakan di negara ini. Keputusan menunjukkan bahawa jangkaan pengguna tidak mempunyai kesan langsung ke atas kedua-dua nilai dilihat dan kepuasan pelanggan. Walau bagaimanapun, nilai yang dilihat mempunyai kesan yang penting ke atas kepuasan pelanggan bagi perkhidmatan aplikasi mudah alih, dengan menganggap bahawa kualiti yang dilihat juga mempunyai kesan..

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
	DECLARATION	ii
	DEDICATION	iii
	ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
	ABSTRACT	v
	ABSTRAK	vi
	TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
	LIST OF TABLES	xi
	LIST OF FIGURE	xii
1	INTRODUCTION	1
	1.1 Introduction	1
	1.2 Background to the Problem	2
	1.3 Statement of the Problem	4
	1.4 Project Objectives	4
	1.5 Scope of the Project	5
	1.6 The Importance of the Project	5
	1.7 Chapter Summary	8
2	LITERATURE REVIEW	9
	2.1 Introduction	9
	2.2 Mobile Commerce	11
	2.3 Electronic Commerce vs. Mobile Commerce	12
	2.4 Mobile Web Application as a Gateway to Mobile Commerce	13
	2.5 Benefits of Mobile Commerce	15

2.5.1	Benefits to Customer	15
2.5.2	Benefits to Firm	16
2.6	Challenges and Risks of the Mobile Commerce	17
2.7	Customer Satisfaction	19
2.8	National Customer Satisfaction Index Models	22
2.8.1	The Original SCSB Model	23
2.8.2	The ACSI Model	24
2.8.3	The First NCSB Model	25
2.8.4	The ECSI Model	26
2.9	Antecedents of Customer Satisfaction in Mobile Commerce: Systematic Literature Review	28
2.9.1	Scope	28
2.9.2	Search Question	29
2.9.3	Search Process	29
2.9.4	Inclusion and exclusion criteria	30
2.9.5	Summary of the Results	31
2.10	Role of Mobile Applications in Hotel Industry	35
2.11	Conclusion	36
3	METHODOLOGY	37
3.1	Introduction	37
3.2	Project Methodology	37
3.2.1	Phase 1: Initial Planning	39
3.2.2	Phase 2: Literature Review	39
	3.2.2.1 Review Concepts and Theories	40
3.2.3	Formulate Research Model and hypothesizes	40
	3.2.3.1 Extract Antecedents of Customer Satisfaction in Mobile Commerce	40
	3.2.3.2 Research Model and Hypothesis Development	41
3.2.4	Phase 4: Model Validation	42
	3.2.4.1 Data Collection	42
	3.2.4.2 Target Population and Sampling	42
	3.2.4.3 Mail Survey	44
	3.2.4.4 Data Analysis	45

3.3	Conclusion	46
4	RESEARCH MODEL AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT	47
4.1	Introduction	47
4.2	Extraction of Antecedent of Customer Satisfaction in Mobile Commerce	47
4.3	Research Model Development	53
4.4	Hypothesis Development	55
4.5	Conclusion	56
5	RESEARCH MODEL VALIDATION	57
5.1	Introduction	57
5.2.	Organizational Analysis	58
5.2.1	Why Resort World Genting Mobile App?	59
5.2.2	Background of the Resorts World Genting Mobile App	59
5.2.3	Modules and Components of Resorts World Genting Mobile App	60
5.2.3.1	Resources	61
5.2.4.	Resorts World Genting App Users Review	62
5.2.4.1.	Android Market (Google Play):	62
5.2.4.2	IOS Market (iTunes)	64
5.3	Proposed Model Validation in Case Study (RWG app) Setting	65
5.3.1	Demographic Statistics	65
5.3.1.1	Demographic Statistics by Educational Level	65
5.3.1.2	Demographic Statistics by Age	66
5.3.2	Most Popular Modules of the RWG App	67
5.3.3	Overall Expectation of the RWG App Services	67
5.3.4	Overall Evaluation of the RWG App services	68
5.3.5	Overall Evaluation of Quality of Mobile Services Given the Prices User Should Pay	68
5.3.6	Overall Evaluation of the Satisfaction Level of RWG app Services	69

5.4	Validity	69
5.5	Hypotheses Testing	72
5.5.1	Coefficient of Determination (R ²)	72
5.5.2	Bootstrapping Procedure	74
5.6	Conclusion	77
6	DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	78
6.1	Achievements	78
6.1.1	Achievement 1	78
6.1.2	Achievement 2	79
6.1.3	Achievement 3	79
6.2	Contribution of the Research	80
6.3	Constraints and Challenges	81
6.4	Further Research	81
6.5	Conclusion	82
	REFERENCES	84
	APPENDIX A	94

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE NO.	TITLE	PAGE
2.1	Distinctions between m-commerce and e-commerce (Dholakia& Rask, 2002)	12
2.2	M-Commerce services and applications(Tiwari et al., 2008)	14
2.3	Numbers of found, candidate and selected studies by their sources. Identical studies in different sources have been eliminated	31
2.4	Systematic review studies regarding research question.	32
3.1	Sample size rule of thumb	43
4.1	Inter-judge agreement for the sub categories	50
4.2	Antecedents of customer satisfaction in mobile commerce based on ACSI model extracted from the previous studies	51
4.3	Taxonomy for antecedents of customer satisfaction in mobile commerce	52
5.1	RWG app user reviews on Google play, 2013	63
5.2	Demographics of Educational Level	66
5.3	Demographics for Age	66
5.4	Factor Loading	70
5.5	Discriminant validity	71
5.6	Inter-Correlation Matrix	72
5.7	Summary of the Results	74

LIST OF FIGURE

FIGURE NO.	TITLE	PAGE
1.1	Research Diagram Strategy (RDS)	7
2.1	Literature Review Framework	10
2.2	Traditional Organizational Chart.Source: (Kotler et al.,2000; Angelova and Zekiri, 2011)	20
2.3	Modern Customer-Oriented Organization Chart. Source: (Kotler et al., 2000; Angelova and Zekiri, 2011)	21
2.4	The SCSB (Swedish Customer Satisfaction Barometer) model	23
2.5	The ACSI (American Customer Satisfaction Index) model	25
2.6	The ECSI (European Customer Satisfaction Index) model	27
3.1	Project Methodology Framework	38
4.1	Data analysis process; Source:(Ghapanchi and Aurum, 2011)	49
4.2	Model of antecedents of customer Satisfaction in m-commerce(ACSM Model)	54
5.1	RWG app home screen	58
5.2	RWG Android App user rating	62
5.3	RWG Android App User reviews	63
5.4	Customer Expectation	67
5.5	Perceived Quality	68
5.6	Perceived Value	68
5.7	M-satisfaction	69
5.8	Results of Structural Model	73
5.9	The Smart PLS 2.0 Results for the Tested Relationships	75

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The internet and telecommunications have become increasingly prevalent in daily life since the 1990s. In 2011, there were approximately 2,265 million internet users and 5,972 million mobile phone users worldwide (Internet Telecommunication Union, 2012).

Commerce is one of the domains that continue to substantially benefit from the growth of internet technologies. Indeed, commerce has evolved from the traditional way of buying and selling to launching online transactions from browsers and lately, hand held mobile devices. This shift from commerce to e-commerce and now m-commerce, shows how easily individuals and organizations quickly embrace IT technologies and gadgets (Mostefaoui et al., 2011).

Recently, the potential for using m-commerce applications has led many organisations to expend substantial resources on these technologies. Delivering value added, interactive and location-based mobile services (e.g., banking, content download, emergency/ roadside assistance, etc.) to customers seems to be increasingly important in gaining a competitive edge by strengthening relationships with key customers (Lin & Wang, 2006). As the market becomes increasingly

mature, the competition for acquiring new customers and retaining existing customers becomes more intense. In this environment, customer satisfaction is a critical factor for mobile service providers to maintain or improve their market share and profitability.

This study establishes a customer satisfaction evaluation system for mobile commerce. It deals with managing applications and services that are becoming available from internet-enabled mobile devices, based on customer satisfaction antecedents.

1.2 Background to the Problem

These days, customer satisfaction, understanding customers' requirements and the ability to reply to them in near real-time is becoming increasingly competitive. With more satisfied customers, a business can expand its margins, while improving its selling opportunities. In order to enhance customer satisfaction, new mobile services need to be perceived as valuable additions to existing services(Dencker-Rasmussen, 2005).

Many researchers have undertaken significant studies in relation to customer satisfaction and loyalty in e-commerce, which are called e-satisfaction and e-loyalty, respectively (Choi et al., 2008). Although m-commerce has become a part of everyday life, customer satisfaction in m-commerce (m-satisfaction) has rarely been considered, because it has only been in existence for a relatively short period of time(Choi et al., 2008).

When m-commerce first emerged, the majority of researchers examined the issue of a customer's intention to accept m-internet, rather than customer satisfaction in m-commerce (Choi et al., 2008). However, notwithstanding the mobile web

services phenomenon, it has not yet been well explored by researchers. In fact, only a limited number of studies have been conducted which have focused on predicting the issues that play a role in the development of mobile user satisfaction and these operational strategies are not enough for the operators specialised in m-commerce.

The case study chosen for this thesis is the Resorts World Genting mobile application (RWG app), which was developed in Malaysia and is also used in Malaysia. Malaysians are usually very motivated about using mobile technology, as revealed by the growing numbers in the implementation of wireless technologies (Haque&Raihan, 2003). As reported by International Data Corporation Malaysia (IDC, 2012), smartphones are expected to increase their share in Malaysia's mobile market, expanding from 30% in 2011 to 35% in 2012 and to 50% by 2014. However, even though the usage of smartphones is high, m-commerce usage is still quite new compared to European and other Asia Pacific countries such as Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore.

According to user reviews (Android Apps on Google Play, 2013), RWG app carries the average rating four out of five and a considerable number of users rank the app as a 1 star service provider in star ranking evaluation. However, users complain about many issues, like unexpected bugs and crashes, slow processing and content errors. Given this, this application needs to identify the factors which influence user satisfaction in order to fulfil users' requirements and to rectify deficiencies and restrictions of the application.

The present study suggests a summary of feasible and relevant experiences that may affect customer satisfaction in mobile commerce and especially in relation to the RWG app. The premise being that gaining more knowledge about mobile satisfaction strategies will lead to the better understanding of successful applications in the mobile commerce area.

The results of this study will be helpful for not only academics and researchers engaged in the study of mobile commerce, but also for those involved in the design, management and implementation of the foundations of mobile commerce services, especially for RWG app providers.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

This research attempts to understand the answers some of the following problems:

1. What are the antecedents affecting customer satisfaction in relation to the Resorts World Genting mobile application?
2. How can mobile commerce help Resorts Worlds Genting mobile application providers increase customer satisfaction?
3. What are the criteria for a satisfactory mobile application for hotels from a customer's perspective?

This investigation adopted an appropriate research methodology to study the data to be collected. The study results would benefit the RWG app by answering the question, 'What are the antecedents affecting customer satisfaction in relation to the Resorts World Genting mobile application?'

1.4 Project Objectives

This study concentrates on the following objectives:

1. To derive relevant antecedent factors relating to customer satisfaction in mobile commerce.

2. To develop a research model of antecedents for customer satisfaction in mobile commerce, based on the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) model.
3. To validate the proposed research model in a real case study setting.

1.5 Scope of the Project

Since mobile hotel apps are very popular with Malaysians (The Star Online, 2013), data used to test the measurement model was gathered from a mail survey, with a sample of the respondents using the RWG app, which was developed and is being used in Malaysia via two popular technology platforms, iPhone-based and Android-based. This app provides immediate access to the latest information on events, attractions, packages, recommended itineraries and other all year round activities at Resorts World Genting. Respondents were initially asked whether they had ever used the RWG app via m-commerce transactions; if they replied in the affirmative, they were asked to participate in the survey. This research formulates a comprehensive plan to explore the issues pertaining to customer satisfaction in relation to the RWG app.

1.6 The Importance of the Project

With the proliferation of wireless technologies, users are increasingly interfacing and interacting with m-commerce systems. It is therefore important to develop new instruments and scales, which are specifically targeted for these new interfaces and applications. In addition, user satisfaction is commonly acknowledged as one of the useful proxy measures of system success (Wang & Liao, 2007).

This study addresses the issue of what constitutes effective mobile applications by evaluating and measuring the construct of antecedents of customer

satisfaction in m-commerce (ACSM). Based on the case study chosen, this study introduces and defines the construct of ACSM and also validates the construct and its underlying dimensionality. It is considered that this validated instrument will be useful to future researchers in developing and testing theories on m-commerce systems, as well as to the hotel industry, especially Resorts World Genting app providers in developing mobile services that are more widely accepted.

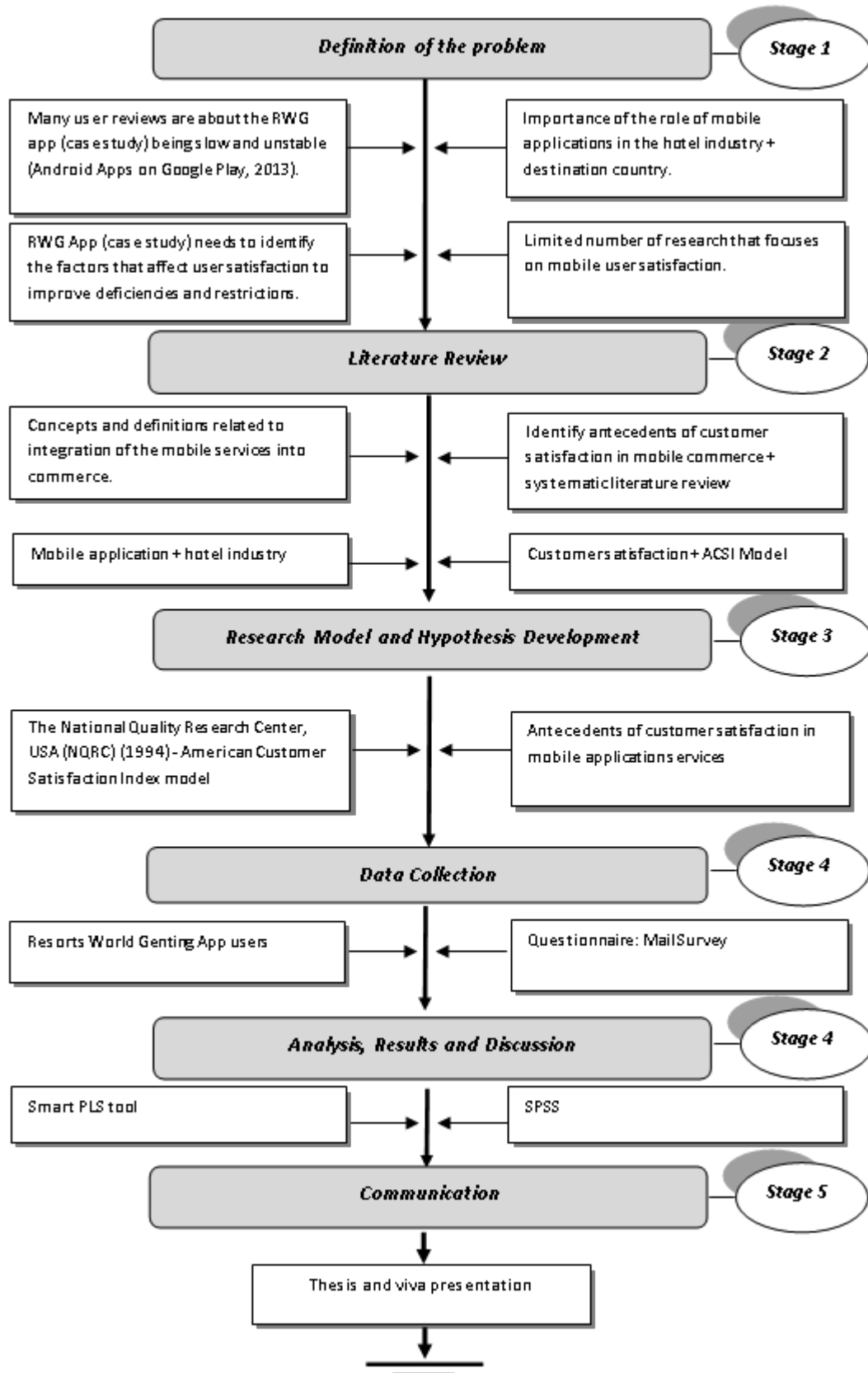


Figure 1.1 Research Diagram Strategy (RDS)

1.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter gives a brief overview of the goal of the project, the background to the problem and the statement of the problem. The chapter also outlines the objectives and scope of the project, establishes why the project is important and presents an appropriate answer to solve the problem identified.

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