

Chapter 16

The Impact of Gender and Age on Consumer Responsiveness to Permission-Based Mobile Advertising

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ABSTRACT

This chapter investigates the impact of gender and age on mobile marketing responsiveness among regular customers of Finnish night club chain. The study develops sixteen research propositions which are tested with a sample of 8578 members of the company's permission-based, opt-in mobile advertising list. The results contribute to mobile marketing and technology acceptance literature in various ways. First, the authors find support for four out of eight gender related propositions. Second, five out of the eight age-related hypotheses are supported. The results further show that among opt-in customers, gender and age explain various antecedents of intention to engage in mobile marketing. The study provides several theoretical and managerial contributions and outlines vital avenues for further investigation in the field.

INTRODUCTION

Literature on mobile marketing has grown steadily during the last five years, but still the study of mobile

marketing is in its infancy. Even the term “mobile marketing” has not yet gained universally accepted definition (Leppäniemi & Karjaluo, 2006). In short, mobile marketing refers to the use of a mobile media, as a means of marketing communications (Leppäniemi & Karjaluo, 2006). Practitioners

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have defined mobile marketing as “*The use of wireless media as an integrated content delivery and direct response vehicle within a crossmedia or stand-alone marketing communications program*” (Mobile Marketing Association, 2008, p. 22). Thus, mobile marketing is a term used to describe marketing on or with a mobile device. By the same token, it is worth noting that the term “mobile advertising” is used to describe advertisements communicated to the consumer/target via a mobile handset. These advertisements include for example mobile web banners, full screen interstitials appearing while mobile web pages are loadings, SMS and MMS ads, and mobile in-game ads (Mobile Marketing Association, 2008). In our study we concentrate on SMS advertising, which is still dominating the mobile marketing landscape in western markets.

A considerable number of the publications on mobile marketing have examined consumer attitudes to mobile marketing (Haghirian & Madlberger, 2004; Leung & Cheung, 2004; Tsang, Ho, & Liang, 2004) and acceptance of mobile marketing (Bauer et al., 2005; Leppäniemi & Karjaluo, 2005; Barnes & Scornavacca, 2004; Leppäniemi et al., 2005; Karjaluo et al., 2008), with a growing interest in responsiveness, effectiveness, and branding effects (Leppäniemi & Karjaluo, 2006). In addition, many new research areas are evolving. For instance, it can be expected that as GPS enabled mobile phones penetrate, location-based mobile marketing will become the next important research area for marketing scholars.

In this chapter our aim is to build on existing conceptualizations of mobile marketing acceptance (Karjaluo et al., 2008) by looking at how two demographics, namely gender and age, explain the variation in the factors relating to the acceptance of mobile marketing. In other words, our objective is to throw more light on whether males and females differ in their evaluation of the importance of the constructs related to acceptance

as well as whether we can find differences between the age groups.

We will build our theoretical background on the discussion of demographic differences in the use of mobile services and mobile marketing (Carlsson et al., 2005; Haghirian, Madlberger & Tanuskova, 2005; Hyvönen & Repo, 2005; Karjaluo et al., 2006); Nysveen, Pedersen & Thorbjørnsen, 2005; Okazaki, 2004). Literature indicates that there are certain differences between males and females in the use of mobile services, but relatively little empirical research has been conducted to date to examine differences in permission-based mobile marketing communications (Karjaluo et al., 2006).

In a recent study, Karjaluo et al. (2006) surveyed 4,062 Finnish online users' mobile marketing experience. Their examination covers two areas of mobile communications, namely general mobile communications and the mobile marketing experience. In regard to mobile communications, they report that consumers who are more willing to upgrade their mobile phones earlier are predominantly male, relatively young and with a lower level of education. In addition, the study finds that females and young people are more active in sending and receiving short messages. With regard to mobile marketing, the study shows that there are significant differences between genders and age groups. The age group 21 to 25 receives more mobile marketing messages and is the most active of the different age groups in requesting information via SMS. Interestingly, the study reports that females are more active in engaging in mobile marketing activities such as sweepstakes and interactive TV shows. Hyvönen and Repo (2005) report a similar observation. In a study of mobile service usage they found that females are more active than males in sending and receiving SMS, downloading logos and ring tones and in campaign participation.

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