

Factors influencing consumer retention of mobile apps: A Conceptual perspective on the high-street retails

Khalid AL-Nabhani, Alan Wilson

University of Strathclyde

The high adoption rates of branded mobile applications (Apps) demonstrates its popularity, but also shows that consumers are emerging into an era where products and services are consumed anytime anywhere. Despite the high adoption rates of branded mobile apps, recent ongoing studies highlight the importance of investigating the low retention rates of smartphone mobile apps by consumers. This study presents a conceptual model, which includes factors that motivate consumers to retain mobile apps from high-street retailers, based on the literature and 21 in-depth interviews with non-student consumers.

1. Introduction

Mobile phones are known for their persuasive capabilities in altering human behaviour for the following reasons. People are emotionally attached to their mobile phones (Fogg 2007, Rohm et al., 2012), mobile phones are with us anytime anywhere, and the mobile phone is becoming capable of doing many things despite its small form factor (Fogg 2007). The number of smartphone users is expected to continuously grow to reach 80% of the world's population by 2020 (Ericsson, 2015), and consumers' willingness to use mobile commerce (m-commerce) is witnessing a rapid growth that is beyond expectations (Criteo, 2014). A study by Criteo (2014), reports that the value of m-commerce through smartphones is reaching to the level of desktop computers, and is generating more transactions than other mobile devices (e.g. tablets). In addition, the study also show that the m-commerce channel is becoming more about initiating transactions on the smartphones, and not just researching information about products.

The smartphone is also referred to as the consumer's "brand in the hand" (Sultan; Rohm, 2005, Rohm et al., 2012). As a marketing medium, mobile phones are also considered to be the largest marketing channel for delivering strategic marketing activities (Sultan; Rohm, 2005). It is worth noting, that academics already predicted that mobile phones would become the most important technological platform in people's lives. For example, Fogg (2007, p.5) states "I believe mobile phones will soon become the most important platform for changing behavior. Within 15 years, no other medium---TV, word of mouth, the web---will be more effective at changing what we humans believe and what we do."

It was the technological introduction of smartphones that allowed marketers to offer consumers an experience that is interactive through branded mobile apps, rather than just focusing to generate brand awareness through the mobile marketing chan-

nel (Chiem et al., 2010). Branded mobile apps have transformed how consumers communicate with brands. Mainly because, mobile apps are promoting “pull” forms of communication with brands, which gives consumers the control when to communicate with brands (Bellman et al., 2011). With this regard, smartphones have become a marketing channel that provides marketers the opportunity to offer a wide variety of pull-based services to consumers, by enabling consumers to be in control when seeking content from organisations, and not only communicating with consumers intrusively through text, audio and video (Ajax; Irfan, 2012). This resulted in enabling consumers to be the ones to choose which apps they want to download on their smartphones, and to be in control of how much information they are willing to reveal (Bellman et al., 2011).

With the rapid growth and the large amount of downloadable smartphone apps that are available to consumers, it becomes a difficult task for marketers to motivate consumers to retain mobile apps for continuous usage (Bellman et al. 2011, Chiem et al., 2010). Bhandari et al. (2015) explain, that what makes researching mobile apps interesting, is their very high adoption rates, but the retention of apps is very low, as it has been reported that 26% of the people who download mobile apps only use them once. In addition, it is important to note that mobile phones used to be viewed as an intrusive marketing communication channel, due to the lack in technological capabilities (Shankar; Hollinger, 2007, Winer, 2009). This notion led some researchers to conclude that there is a lack of research in the mobile marketing research area in general, due to the rapid development of the technology of mobile devices that happened at fast rates, which caused consumer behaviour to shift (Roach, 2009). Therefore, it is suggested that the majority of existing research are based on classic mobile phones with their limited intrusive communication capabilities, in addition, the available findings are viewed to be inconsistent (Ajax; Irfan, 2012).

With this regard, the aim of this paper is to present the factors that influence consumers to retain branded mobile apps from high-street retailers. To our knowledge, there is no research available that explain the factors that influence consumers to retain branded mobile apps from the high street industry. According to Nysveen et al. (2015), there is a gap in researching mobile services apps in a developed context, and there are many studies on the adoption of mobile services rather than the effects of using a mobile service. With this regard, this research aims to contribute to answering questions regarding consumers’ retention of branded mobile apps.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Branded Mobile Apps

The term mobile “app” became popular and associated with software that is downloaded to a smartphone’s operating system (Purcell et al., 2010). From a marketing perspective, Bellman et al. (2011, p.191) define branded apps “as software downloadable to a mobile device which prominently displays a brand identity, often via the name of the app and the appearance of a brand logo or icon, throughout the user experience.” Smartphone apps can utilize the hardware and features of the smartphone to deliver tailored experience to consumers. Therefore, smartphone apps are also defined “as end-user software applications that are designed for a cell

phone operating system and which extend the phone's capabilities by enabling users to perform particular tasks" (Purcell et al., 2010, p. 2).

According to Cortimiglia et al. (2011) there are three types of mobile apps. First category is marketing-oriented apps that organisations use to advertise their promotions, products and services. The second category is content-oriented apps that offer consumers information, entertainment, productivity and communication. The third category is service-oriented apps, which enables consumers to shop from retailers, or provide other services such as renting a car or booking a train ticket.

There is a high interest among organisations to offer their services and products through branded mobile apps (Bellman et al., 2011). Branded mobile applications offer consumers a variety of ways to consume services that can be accessed any-time and anywhere, enabling consumers to perform a wide range of daily tasks, such as shopping, paying bills, reading products reviews, viewing food menu, locating a store and getting driving directions (Kim et al., 2013). In addition, Branded mobile apps are found to increase interest in the brand, impacts attitude and purchase intentions, and enhance the consumer's connection with the brand. It is worth noting, that consumers are more likely to download branded mobile apps that are familiar to them (Bellman et al., 2011).

The next section discusses the theoretical foundation and the factors that motivate consumers to retain high-street branded apps included in the theoretical model presented later in this paper.

2.2. Predicting Consumers' Retention of Mobile Apps

2.2.1. The Technology Acceptance Model

To develop a better understanding of factors that influence consumers' attitude and intention toward retaining branded mobile apps, we constructed the research framework presented in this study based on conducting in-depth interviews and relying on previous research relating to the adoption of technological innovations and services. It is very important to note, that the research framework is mainly adapted from the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The TAM is recognised as the most influential model in investigating the drivers toward technology acceptance (Kapoor et al., 2013). Since its existence, the TAM became a very popular model that was used and extended by researchers, to answer questions regarding the adoption and the acceptance of technologies (Legris et al., 2003).

It is worth noting that the TAM based its theoretical foundation on the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). With this regard, it is important to take into consideration the theoretical foundation of the TAM to develop a better understanding toward consumers' retention of branded mobile apps. The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) was developed by Fishbein; Ajzen (1975) and Ajzen; Fishbein (1980), which aims to predict people's behaviour through their behavioural intention. Ajzen (1988) argues that behavioural intention is important in determining people's willingness to perform a particular behaviour. Furthermore, behavioural intention is referred to by Fishbein; Ajzen (1975, p.288) as the "person's subjective probability that he will perform some behavior."

In the TRA the behavioural intention to perform a behaviour is shaped by the individual's attitude toward the behaviour and subjective norm. Attitude toward the behaviour is referred to by Fishbein; Ajzen (1975, p.216) as the representation of "a person's general feeling of favorableness or unfavorableness toward some stimulus object." While, subjective norm is defined by Fishbein; Ajzen (1975, p.302) as "the person's perception that most people who are important to him think he should or should not perform the behavior in question." Moreover, the TRA assumes that individuals are usually quite rational and make systematic use of the information available to them to perform a behaviour in a conscious state of mind. (Ajzen; Fishbein 1980).

However, the TAM is specifically tailored to answer questions regarding computer usage and acceptance in an organizational setting (Davis et al., 1989). With this regard, the TAM theorises that the behavioural intentions to use a technological innovation is determined by the user's attitude toward accepting and using a technological innovation. In other words, the positive and negative feelings (attitude) that consumers have toward retaining a branded mobile app, determines their willingness (behavioural intention) to retain the branded app.

Moreover, in the TAM, attitude toward using a technological innovation is influenced by the individual's perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of the technological innovation. Furthermore, perceived usefulness is defined as "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance. (Davis 1989, p.320)" In other words, if a consumer perceive a branded mobile app is providing him/her many benefits, he/she is more likely to have a positive attitude toward retaining the app, which is more likely to influence their intentions to retain the app. Furthermore, perceived ease of use is defined as "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of effort. (Davis 1989, p.320)" In other words, if a consumer perceive a branded mobile app easy to use, he/she is more likely to have a positive attitude toward retaining the branded mobile app, which also more likely to influence their intentions to retain the app.

Researchers demonstrated the importance of ease of use and usefulness toward influencing consumers' attitudes and intentions to use technological innovations. For example, among other variable, ease of use and usefulness were found to influence the use of e-services (Hung et al., 2013), multimedia messaging (Pagani, 2004), and m-commerce (Chang et al., 2015).

It is worth noting, that researchers encourage looking beyond just ease of use and usefulness when studying consumers' use of technological innovations (Legris et al., 2003). With this regard, Legris et al. (2003) argue, that researchers should expand the TAM, while recognising the human and social change process, in addition to the factors that is appropriate to the context of the technological innovation that is being researched. Similarly, Chong et al. (2012) recommend expanding the traditional TAM when conducting a research in the m-commerce context, as they concluded in their study, which compared the acceptance of adopting m-commerce between Chinese and Malaysian consumers. Following this approach, we propose the following factors that are discussed in the next section.

2.3. Subjective Norm

As mentioned earlier, subjective norm is referred to as, “the person’s perception that most people who are important to him think he should or should not perform the behavior in question (Fishbein; Ajzen, 1975, p.302)”. Subjective norm is something that is not actual; it represents the perceptions of an individual, in terms of what other important referents to the individual think about a particular behaviour (Morton et al. 2011). Schepers; Wetzels (2007) argue that it is important to include the subjective norm factor when investigating the acceptance of technological innovations, because from a realistic point of view, subjective norm represents word-of-mouth in the business to consumer context. Previous studies validated subjective norm to be a predictor of consumers accepting e-commerce services. Venkatesh et al. (2012) found that subjective norm plays a significant role in influencing consumers’ intention to use the mobile internet. Moreover, Bhattacharjee (2000) and Hung et al., (2013) found that subjective norm is a predictor of consumers’ intention to accept e-services. Subjective norm was also found to influence consumers’ intentions to accept e-government services.

2.4. Compatibility

Rogers (2003, p240) referred to compatibility as “ the degree to which an innovation is perceived as consistent with the existing valued, past experiences, and the needs of potential adaptors.” Several studies found compatibility to be a predictor of adopting and using technological innovations. Hsu et al. (2007) found that compatibility is an important factor that influences users to use Multi Media Messaging (MMS). In the research area of mobile commerce, Wu; Wang (2005) found that compatibility directly influences behavioural intention to use mobile commerce. Moreover, they also found that compatibility is also more significant than perceived usefulness in predicting the adoption of mobile commerce. Moreover, Ajax; Irfan (2012) suggest that when consumers shopping style is not compatible with mobile marketing, they are more likely to not participate in mobile marketing. Therefore, consumers are more likely to accept and use branded mobile apps that they feel is compatible with life-style.

2.5. Enjoyment

Enjoyment is a factor that appeared in other versions of TAM (Venkatesh; Bala, 2008), and other theories that predict the use of technologies (Venkatesh et al., 2012). Perceived Enjoyment is referred to as “the activity of using a specific system is perceived to be enjoyable in its own right, aside from any performance consequences resulting from system use” (Venkatesh, 2000, p. 351).

Researchers have showed that there is a relation between enjoyment and the use of technologies. The degree of enjoyment is found to influence employees to use computers at work (Davis et al., 1992). Enjoyment was also found to influence consumers to use mobile internet (Venkatesh et al., 2012). With regard to online shopping, enjoyment was found to motivate consumers to shop online (Monsuwé et al., 2004). Moreover, Enjoyment was found to influence consumer attitudes toward electronic shopping (Ha; Stoel, 2009). In addition, it is suggested that enjoyment can influence

the use of m-commerce, more than usefulness and ease of use (Mahatanankoon, 2007). Following the steps of previous findings from the literature, enjoyment is expected to play a role in motivating consumers to retain branded mobile apps.

2.6. Brand Image

The brand image concept was originally introduced to the consumer behaviour research area by Gardner; Levy (1955). During the concept establishment, Levy, (1959, p.118) proposed that “people buy things not only for what they can do, but also for what they mean”. The meaning consumers hold toward a brand enables consumers to establish favourable or unfavourable connection toward brands (Biel, 1992). Furthermore, Keller (1993, p.3) defines brand image as the “perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory.” With this regard, consumers are believed to establish various networked associations with brands in their mind, which contribute to establishing a perceived image of the brand (Keller, 1993, Aaker, 2012). Similarly, Aaker (1991, p.110) defines brand image as “a set of associations, usually organized in some meaningful way.”

Bernstein (1984), explain that the image that consumers hold toward brands is viewed to be of importance, because of its persuasive impact on the consumer decision making with regard to products and services that organisations offer to consumers. The perceived image that consumers hold toward a brand influences their behavioural reaction toward organisations, which influences consumers’ consumption of products and services that are offered by organisations (Bernstein, 1984, Dowling, 2002, Balmer; Greyser, 2006). Burleigh B. Gardner (1999, p.7) explain that, “These sets of ideas, feelings, and attitudes that consumers have about brands are crucial to them in picking and sticking to ones that seem most appropriate.”

With this regard, Stern et al. (2001) explain the true essence of the brand image streams from the consumers need to make the decisions making toward purchasing much simpler, by establishing symbolic images with brands that represent a relevant meaning. In addition, Stern et al. (2001), argue that the consumer may base their decision making on symbolic associations, psychological factors, and expressiveness more than the physical features of the product, especially when the marketing environment shifts from tangible to intangible offerings (e.g. services). Moreover, the brand image is also believed to help consumers reduce uncertainty and serve as a justifying element toward what they consume or purchase in competitive marketing environments that are driven by the rapid development of technology (Stern et al., 2001). Therefore, Keller (2013) points out that when consumers have some knowledge about a brand, they may not require to engage in a lot of information processing with regard to making a purchase decision. Therefore, it is also suggested that the image consumers hold toward brands aid them to reduce/avoid confusion in scenarios that could involve a decision that is complex in nature (Meenaghan, 1995).

Kwon; Lennon (2009) found that the brand image consumers hold toward the brand from shopping offline (e.g. shopping physically at the store) influence their perception and loyalty toward the retailers website. With this regard, this research purposes that consumers hold a general perception from shopping through the multiple channels which high-street retailers offer them. This leads to the assumption that consumers are not retaining only a mobile app, but also retaining the brand in a technological

form. With this regard, this research proposes that the consumer's image of the brand influences their attitude toward retaining a branded mobile app.

2.7. Brand Loyalty

Jacoby; Chestnut (1978, p.80) defined brand loyalty as "The biased behavioural response, expressed over time, by some decision making unit, with respect to on store out of a set of stores, which is a function of psychological (decision making and evaluative) processes resulting from commitment". Furthermore, popular definition of customer loyalty is by Oliver (1999, p.34), who defines customer loyalty to the brand as "a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronise a preferred product or service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts that have the potential to cause switching behaviour". Moreover, Johar; Awalluddin (2011) suggest that when consumers are loyal to an electronic commerce (e-commerce) service provider, they are more likely to continue to use and repurchase from e-commerce service provider. With this regard, in this study we predict that brand loyalty influence consumer attitude toward retaining high-street branded apps.

2.8. Personalisation

In general, services that are delivered through electronic channels are capable of providing consumers a personalised experience (Rowley, 2006). Jrstad et al. (2005) describe personalization of a mobile service as the adaption of a service to suit the needs and likings of the consumer. The personalisation of mobile services is known to play an important role toward consumers' acceptance of mobile services (Jrstad et al., 2005). Chau and Lai (2003) found that personalisation influences the usefulness of internet banking services. In addition, Alamri et al. (2014) found that users perceive a personalised website to be more easy to use and useful than a website that is not personalised. With this regard, it is suggested that when services are customized to the preference of consumers, it enhances their perception of the usefulness and ease of use of the service. Considering the portability of the smartphone, it is proposed that personalisation is an important factor, which enhances the usefulness and ease of use of high-street branded apps.

2.9. Escapism

Hirschman (1983) refers to escapism as an "aspect of an hedonic behaviour deals with activity in order to escape a reality that the individual finds difficult or is unable to deal with adequately. Therefore, people may seek to experience a desirable mental state of mind that is different from the ordinary everyday reality (Hirschman, 1983).

Grant; O'donohoe (2007) found that since mobile phones allow users to instant personal access at any time and location, it allows users to "drift away mentally from particular activities" when they feel bored and they feel the need to pass time. This finding is consistent with the conceptualisation of the term "escapism" as it is suggested that "...individuals may have a greater need to escape the unpleasant reali-

ties of life by engaging in activities that allow them to forget their present problems.” (Hirschman, 1983, 75)

Escapism can also play an important role in delivering an enjoyable experience for retaining high street retail branded mobile. Hofacker (2008) suggest that an enjoyable experience of services in an electronic retail environment can be achieved through “escapist elements” such as images, sounds, colours and streaming media. Moreover, Monsuwé et al. (2004) explain that in an online shopping explain that escapism can be reflected in the consumer’s enjoyment toward influencing them to shop online. In this paper, it is purposed that consumers may retain a branded app, because it provides them the opportunity to escape through using the app to seek an enjoyable experience. With this regard, this paper proposes that escapism can increase the consumer perception of enjoyment, which in turn will influence their attitude to retain high-street branded mobile apps.

3. Research Methodology

This study focused on investigating the factors that are likely to influence consumers’ intentions to retain branded high street retail mobile apps, in addition to investigating the role of brand related variables that may influence the intentions to retain branded mobile apps. There is very limited research on branded mobile apps, and to our knowledge there are no other studies available that focus specifically on high-street retail apps. With this regard, to gain a deeper understanding of the retention of branded mobile apps, this research used a qualitative study. A qualitative approach will help us capture a better understanding of consumers perceptions and attitudes toward the retentions of high-street branded mobile apps, and help develop the conceptual framework (see: Healy; Perry, 2000).

A total of 21 face-to-face in-depth interviews with non-student consumers who already retain branded mobile apps from high street retailers were conducted, in order to gain deeper understanding of their perceptions, attitudes and their intentions toward retaining branded high street mobile apps. The format of the in-depth interviews was semi-structured to allow the participants to express their own viewpoints and feelings regarding the topic of research (Flick, 2002). Participants in the interviews were almost equally divided and covered a variety of ages, ranging from 23 to 53 years. The in-depth interviews with the participants in this study were recorded and each in-depth interview lasted approximately one hour. The next section will discuss the findings from the in-depth interviews.

3.1. Findings and Discussion

3.1.1. Brand Image

Respondents have commented on their perception of high-street retail brands, which they retain and use their branded mobile apps. With this regard, the perceptions that consumers hold toward the high-street brand influence their intention to retain the high-street retails store branded mobile app. Therefore, if consumers perceive the high-street retail store as a premium brand and meets their expectations they will be

more likely to be willing to retain their branded app. This is reflected in the following quote:

I really like what they have got, the products, the store, and general vibe. It's a premium brand, their app really met my expectation. [Respondent 1]

Very reliable, you get what you see. It's probably a middle range. You can buy for everything, you can buy children and for adults. You can buy trendy stuff but also classics. It's always reliable. [Respondent 2]

I like them a lot. I associate John Lewis and Waitrose together. I think they are a good brand, reliable!. It's always very good service and if John Lewis is selling something you can rely on it being high quality. Sometimes it might not be John Lewis's own brand but if it is another brand it will be good. I like John Lewis. [Respondent 3]

Consumers are not likely to retain branded mobile apps which they perceive not up to their shopping tastes. This is related to the experience that consumers encounter from shopping in high-street retail stores, which also forms their perception of high-street retail store brands. This view is expressed in the following quote:

From experience of shopping in their store, they are too young for me. Topshop and River Island are very similar. I went in about 5 years ago and thought 'this isn't me anymore' I wouldn't mind having their app, but the store isn't right. I don't actively avoid them, they just don't cater to my tastes. [Respondent 1]

It is important to acknowledge that consumers may retain multiple high-street branded mobile apps in their smartphone. Therefore, consumers may have different perceptions of each branded mobile app they retain on their smartphone. Respondents expressed their perceptions between two high-street branded mobile apps in the following:

As a brand I like Marks and Spencer, I still see them as a traditional, it was a place my family shopped years ago. I think there is a good reputation and I like to shop in there. It is a good place to shop. It's not as up there as John Lewis. It doesn't have the same range of products that I'm looking for, like electronics or make-up. I like the shop and I like the store. I see John Lewis slightly better as they are very customer focused. With their price match and things I think they are good for a high street store. I've never had any issues with Marks and Spencer, I think they are quite good. [Respondent 4]

John Lewis seems more premium; in terms of clothing it's very similar. John Lewis isn't as trendy but they still have a decent clothing department. House of Fraser is ahead of John Lewis instead of clothing. John Lewis is more polished. House of Fraser has upped its game, it has also always seemed like a Glasgow institution. I have a tie to it from my youth. [Respondent 1]

Respondents also commented on how their perception of the brand changed from negative to positive about a high-street branded app which they retain. The percep-

tion that they hold toward the brand is related to their shopping experiences from the high-street store. This is expressed in the following quote:

I think in the last 4 or 5 years they have caught up with the times. If you went in years ago in Glasgow the gents clothing department smelled like sewage. Now its upstairs, well laid out, no in your face sales people. I would only go there for clothing, not for any other products. [Respondent 1]

From the above, the image of the brand plays an important part for consumers when retaining mobile apps from high-street retailers. The respondents associated what they think and feel regarding a high-street branded app with their physical shopping experiences from high-street stores. With this regard, this paper purposes that the consumer's perception of a high-street retailer, motivates the consumer in retaining the high-street retailer branded mobile app.

3.1.2. Brand Loyalty

It was concluded that one of the factors that motivates the respondents to retain high-street branded apps, is brand loyalty. This view is expressed in the following quotes:

I see myself as a loyal customer and having the APP enhances that. [Respondent 1]

I used to do an online shop every week with Tesco but then I changed to Asda. Then you get all your favourites saved and it becomes a pain in the neck to change and I think that's why the companies do it. I feel that I don't then delete my Tesco one because sometimes I like to switch between them and look at both. I feel a bit of loyalty to them both because I have them both on my phone and I feel like I should use them both. [Respondent 4]

Taking the brand loyalty's definition which was mentioned earlier into consideration, brand loyalty is proposed to be one of the important drivers which influences consumers to retain branded mobile apps. Therefore, if a consumer intends to keep re-purchasing and consume services from the brand, he/she is more likely to retain the high-street store's branded mobile app.

3.1.3. Usefulness and Ease of Use

Respondents mentioned that the ease of use and usefulness of high-street branded apps is important to them. With regard to ease of use, since consumers use high-street branded apps on the go, they need the app to be easy to access and the process of consuming the service to be straight forward and respond quickly. This view is expressed in the following quote:

I have to say that I would expect them to be simple, straight forward, easy to follow and quite reliable...I think for me ease of use and ease of access is very important. [Respondent 2]

Well they are all pretty easy to use but, well I can always get to where I want to go, but with John Lewis it feels easier, it's not as confusing, it's a nicer experience. [Respondent 6]

From the above, ease of use is an important factor that can influence consumers' attitude toward retaining high-street branded apps. Moreover, it is important for high-street retailers to deliver a service experience through their branded mobile apps to consumers which is easy to use, easy to access and responsive.

With regard to usefulness, respondents mention that high-street branded to offer them benefits. Mainly because, branded apps can simplify their life, as it allows them to save time in their busy day, enables them to be more productive and also help them plan their purchases. This view is expressed in the following quote:

Apps make my life easier, especially with my 7-month year old. Anything that can simplify life and give you an extra 10 minutes per day...I don't know what makes them indispensable. It has to be a two-way thing, they need to offer me something back to become more important to me. [Respondent 1]

Well I think they do make things quicker, especially on the phone, they allow you, you don't have to go through the loading process so much, I think it feels a lot more streamline. I like to use them. [Respondent 6]

Useful, very useful. Certainly their accessibility is undeniable...You know with a laptop you are trying to get a connection but a phone it's so easy. [Respondent 7]

High-street branded mobile apps also help the consumers to be more productive, as it enables them organise and plan their purchases. This view is expressed in the following quote:

I guess they are really good for helping you with the planning and things. [Respondent 8]

From the above, it is proposed that if consumers perceive they are more likely have positive attitude toward retaining the app, which then will influence their intentions to retain it.

3.1.4. Enjoyment

Respondents commented that shopping for products that they really want is enjoyable. Moreover, it was also mentioned that the experience of shopping through the high-street mobile app is enjoyable in its own self.

Yes, anything you really want is enjoyable to shop for! I like jeans, I might get excited about looking at jeans! [Respondent 1]

But that was a barrier I got through in the end. There was a period maybe two or three years ago when I still shopped through a website or go in store. But

when I started making purchases through apps and I enjoyed it. [Respondent 9]

From the above, it is proposed that if consumers perceive the experience of using the high-street branded mobile app to enjoyable they will more likely have positive attitude toward retaining the app, which then will influence their intentions to retain it.

3.1.5. Escapism

As mentioned earlier, escapism is conceptualised as an aspect of hedonic behaviour. Respondents have commented on using branded high-street branded apps to escape from the daily routine and pass time, which is expressed in the following quote:

Yes, I do it on my lunch break and on the train to work killing time. If I'm sitting at home rather than sitting on Facebook or twitter rather I would go in and scroll through John Lewis to see if they have got anything new in. [Respondent 5]

When consumers escape through using branded mobile apps they seem to be spending more time on the app then they initially planned. In other words, consumer who seek to escape through branded mobile apps and find that they have spent more time than intended, are doing so because they are enjoying their experience.

I do know what you mean. I do it a lot when I get into bed. I will think I will just check this quickly and before I know it, I will have been looking at things for an hour. [Respondent 10]

With this regard, if a consumer feels that high-street branded mobile app allows him/her the opportunity to escape and provide an enjoyable experience, it is more likely that he/she will develop a favourable attitude toward retaining high-street branded apps, which then will influence their intentions to retain the app.

3.1.6. Compatibility

Respondents viewed branded high-street retail apps to be compatible with their busy life-style. Interestingly, when asked about compatibility, they seem to associate it with the usefulness of the app. This view is expressed in the following quotes:

I just work Monday to Friday office hours and I don't drive so I often don't get to the shopping centres or whatever so it's just easier to order it and collect it from a store. [Respondent 5]

You know again it probably goes down to a time thing. Because I have young children I'm always rushing, you want something that you can do quickly and you want the reality that it will be there in 3 days. If there is a problem, you know it will be resolved. [Respondent 2]

I would personally find that shopping with three children is a complete nightmare. If I am going to do something I want to know that I'm not going to waste my time. [Respondent 8]

With this regard, it is suggested that there is a connection between compatibility and the usefulness of branded high-street mobile apps. With this regard, when consumers view branded mobile high-street apps compatible with their lifestyle, their perception of usefulness is increased.

3.1.7. Subjective Norm

My girlfriend uses John Lewis a lot; I don't know if she influenced me, well I guess she did because I see her all the time! [Respondent 6]

Yeah I have some friends that got me into Waitrose and subsequently John Lewis, I looked up to them and they were shopping there. [Respondent 1]

3.1.8. Personalisation

Personalisation is an important factor for the retention of branded high-street apps. Respondents commented that they expect branded apps to offer a personalised experience, beyond just storing their billing and addresses. It is not important, that when high-street branded mobile apps do not offer a good personalised experience, it can annoy the person retaining the app. This is expressed in the following quote:

Both of them have a mad profile function. I don't use them that regularly But the profile section seems like it's to store your address, which is good for billing and stuff, but in terms of preferences and stuff it would be a bit better if it was a bit more refined I guess. [Respondent 9]

It is also important that branded high-street apps to personalise the experience of the app based on the gender of the customer. This view is expressed in the following quote:

In terms of the apps, in the likes of Zara and stuff, Zara is complicated to compare with Topman, because it's not unisex. As soon as you go into the Zara app its women's first then you scroll down for the men's section. I think if I was going into another type of app, like gaming, right away when you open the app Zara could store whether or not you're male or female. [Respondent 9]

Consumers also may retain high-street branded apps because it makes the process more useful and simpler than using a mobile browser on their smartphone to make a purchase. This view is expressed in the following quote:

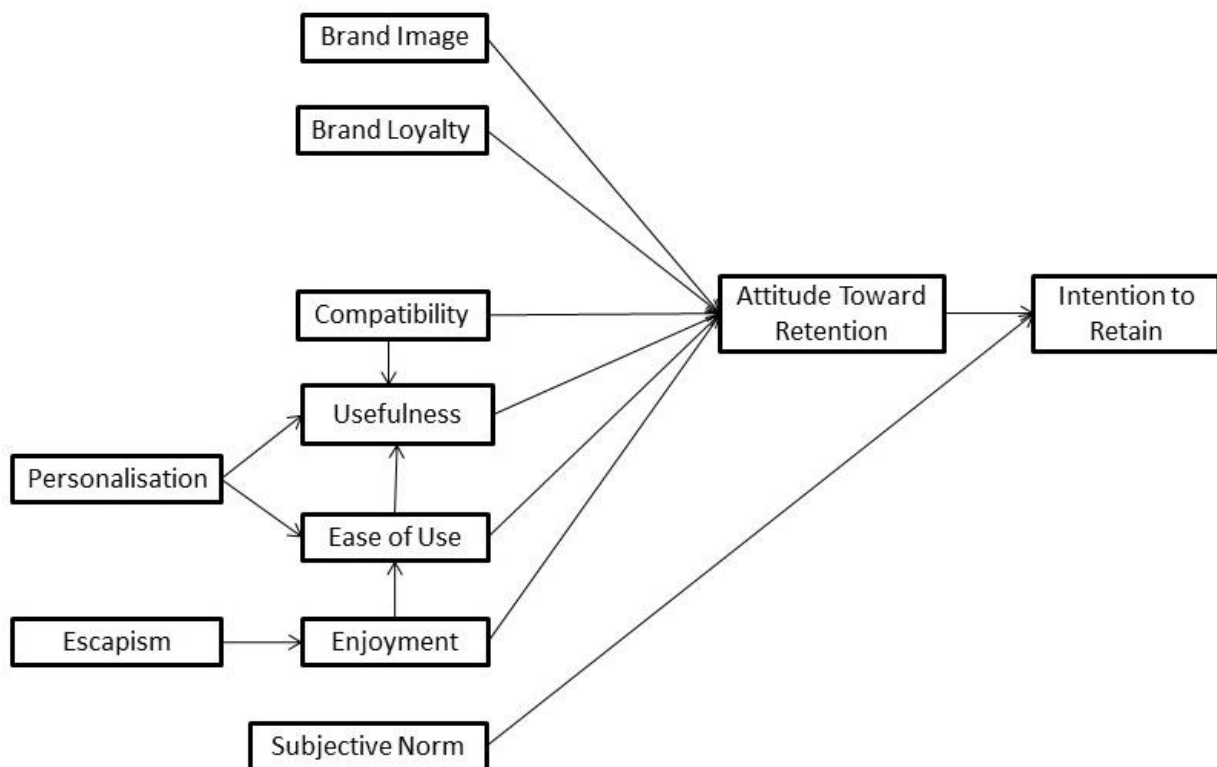
A lot of them are quicker than the website to be honest. I don't know if they were brought out to create a more personalised experience or that a lot of brands felt that they had to keep up with each other. [Respondent 11]

I do think it makes the processes simpler and easier, therefore the decision making is a lot easier to do, you don't need to travel into Glasgow to go to the shop, and it's very easy to do. I know that I purchase a lot more online than I ever use to. My whole Christmas has been purchased online bar a couple of things that it wasn't possible to get. The apps just make things simpler to do. The things that annoy me having to get through the mobile website and having

to put all the details in again. All your details are there and it's just confirming your method of payment. [Respondent 10]

From the above, respondents demonstrated that importance of personalisation as a factor that makes their experience when using their high-street branded apps more useful and simpler. Thus, based on the interpretation from the literature and the in-depth interviews, we reach to the conceptual model that is presented in figure 1, which is to be tested through a quantitative method in the next stage of this research:

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework:



4. Conclusion

It is important for organisations to understand the reasons that motivate consumers to accept, use, retain and adopt new technological innovations, regardless whether its providing services or products, especially when services play a central role in information and communication technology environments (Bitner et al., 2000). The primary objective of this study is to provide insights to what influences consumers to retain branded mobile apps in the context of high-street retailers. The results high-

light the importance of exploring brand related factors such as brand image and brand loyalty when researching the retention of mobile services. The study also showed that respondents elaborated on their past experiences from shopping physically at a high-street retailer and how it influences their attitudes toward the retaining the retailer's branded app. This supports that consumers past experiences from interacting with an offline channel (e.g. Physical store) is transferred to an electronic channel (e.g. branded apps) (Kwon; Lennon, 2009). In addition to exploring brand related factors which play a role in influencing consumers to retain mobile services. This study also proposes the importance of recognising utilitarian (e.g. ease of use and usefulness), hedonic (e.g. Enjoyment), social influence (e.g. subjective norm), while also recognising the role of personalisation and compatibility when researching mobile services in the context of retention. The study also highlight the need to capture consumer perceptions toward technological innovations and not fully rely on information system theories (Hilton et al., 2013).

4.1.1. References

- Aaker, D. A. 1991. *Managing Brand Equity*, Free Press.
- Aaker, D. A. 2012. *Building Strong Brands*, Simon & Schuster UK.
- Ajax, P. & Irfan, A. 2012. Innovative mobile marketing via smartphones: Are consumers ready? *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 30, 418-443.
- Ajzen, I. & Fishbein, M. 1980. *Understanding attitudes and predicting social behavior*, Prentice-Hall.
- Ajzen, I. 1988. *Attitudes, personality and behavior*, Open University Press.
- Alamri, A. S., Cristea, A. I. & Al-zaidi, M. 2014. The Acceptance Of Social Personalised Versus Static Web-based Education By Saudi Students. *EDULEARN14 Proceedings*, 3145-3153.
- Balmer, J. M. & Greyser, S. A. 2006. Corporate marketing: integrating corporate identity, corporate branding, corporate communications, corporate image and corporate reputation. *European Journal of Marketing*, 40, 730-741.
- Bellman, S., Potter, R. F., Treleven-Hassard, S., Robinson, J. A. & Varan, D. 2011. The Effectiveness of Branded Mobile Phone Apps. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 25, 191-200.
- Bernstein, D. 1984. *Company Image and Reality: A Critique of Corporate Communications*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

- Bhandari, U., Neben, T. & Chang, K. T. 2015. Mobile App Preferences: What Role Does Aesthetics and Emotions Play? In: Davis, F. D., Riedl, R., Vom Brocke, J., Leger, P.-M. & Randolph, A. B. (eds.) *Information Systems and Neuroscience*. Springer International Publishing.
- Bhattacharjee, A. 2000. Acceptance of e-commerce services: the case of electronic brokerages. *Systems, Man and Cybernetics, Part A: Systems and Humans*, IEEE Transactions on, 30, 411-420.
- Bitner, M. J., Brown, S. W. & Meuter, M. L. 2000. Technology infusion in service encounters. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 28, 138-149.
- Burleigh B. Gardner, S. J. L. 1999. *The Product and the Brand. Brands, Consumers, Symbols, & Research*. SAGE Publications, Inc, Thousand Oaks, CA, SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Chau, P. Y. K. & Lai, V. S. K. 2003. An Empirical Investigation of the Determinants of User Acceptance of Internet Banking. *Journal of Organizational Computing and Electronic Commerce*, 13, 123-145.
- Chiem, R., Arriola, J., Browers, D., Gross, J., Limman, E., Nguyen, P. V., Sembodo, D., Song, Y. & Seal, K. C. 2010. The Critical Success Factors For Marketing With Downloadable Applications: Lessons Learned From Selected European Countries. *International Journal of Mobile Marketing*, 5.
- Childers, T. L., Carr, C. L., Peck, J. & Carson, S. 2001. Hedonic and utilitarian motivations for online retail shopping behavior. *Journal of Retailing*, 77, 511-535.
- Chong, A. Y.-L., Chan, F. T. S. & Ooi, K.-B. 2012. Predicting consumer decisions to adopt mobile commerce: Cross country empirical examination between China and Malaysia. *Decision Support Systems*, 53, 34-43.
- Cortimiglia, M. N., Ghezzi, A. & Renga, F. 2011. Mobile applications and their delivery platforms. *IT Professional*, 51-56.
- Criteo. 2014. *State of Mobile Commerce Q4 2014* [Online]. Available: http://www.criteo.com/media/1427/criteo_mobile_commerce_report_2014.pdf
- Davis, F. D. 1989. Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, and User Acceptance of Information Technology. *MIS Quarterly*, 13, 319-340.
- Davis, F. D., Bagozzi, R. P. & Warshaw, P. R. 1989. User Acceptance of Computer Technology: A Comparison of Two Theoretical Models. *Management Science*, 35, 982-1003.
- Dowling, G. 2002. *Creating Corporate Reputations: Identity, Image, and Performance*, Oxford University Press.
- Ericsson. 2015. *Ericsson Mobility Report: 70 percent of world's population using smartphones by 2020* [Online]. Ericsson. Available: <http://www.ericsson.com/news/1925907>.
- Fishbein, M. & Ajzen, I. 1975. *Belief, attitude, intention, and behavior: an introduction to theory and research*, Addison-Wesley Pub. Co.

- Flick, U. 2009. *An introduction to qualitative research*, Sage.
- Fogg, B. 2007. *Mobile persuasion: 20 perspectives on the future of behavior change*, Mobile Persuasion.
- Gardner, B. B. and Levy, S. J. (1955). The product and the brand. *Harvard Business Review*. 33 (March–April), pp. 33–39.
- Grant, I. & O'donohoe, S. 2007. Why young consumers are not open to mobile marketing communications. *International Journal of Advertising*, 26, 223-246.
- Ha, S. & Stoel, L. 2009. Consumer e-shopping acceptance: Antecedents in a technology acceptance model. *Journal of Business Research*, 62, 565-571.
- Healy, M. & Perry, C. 2000. Comprehensive criteria to judge validity and reliability of qualitative research within the realism paradigm. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 3, 118-126.
- Hilton, T., Hughes, T., Little, E. & Marandi, E. 2013. Adopting self-service technology to do more with less. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 27, 3-12.
- Hirschman, E. C. 1983. Predictors of self-projection, fantasy fulfillment, and escapism. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 120, 63.
- Hofacker, C. F. 2008. E-tail constraints and tradeoffs. *Direct Marketing: An International Journal*, 2, 129-143.
- Hsu, C.-L., Lu, H.-P. & Hsu, H.-H. 2007. Adoption of the mobile Internet: An empirical study of multimedia message service (MMS). *Omega*, 35, 715-726.
- Hung, S.-Y., Chang, C.-M. & KUO, S.-R. 2013. User acceptance of mobile e-government services: An empirical study. *Government Information Quarterly*, 30, 33-44.
- Jacoby, J. & Chestnut, R. W. 1978. *Brand loyalty: measurement and management*, Wiley.
- Johar, M. G. M. & Awalluddin, J. A. A. 2011. The role of technology acceptance model in explaining effect on e-commerce application system. *International Journal of Managing Information Technology*, 3, 1-14.
- Jrstad, I., Do Van, T. & Dustdar, S. The personalization of mobile services. *Wireless And Mobile Computing, Networking And Communications*, 2005. (WiMob'2005), IEEE International Conference on, 22-24 Aug. 2005 2005. 59-65 Vol. 4.
- Kapoor, K., Dwivedi, Y. K. & Williams, M. D. 2013. Role of Innovation Attributes in Explaining the Adoption Intention for the Interbank Mobile Payment Service in an Indian Context. *Grand Successes and Failures in IT. Public and Private Sectors*. Springer.
- Keller, K. L. 1993. Conceptualizing, Measuring, and Managing Customer-Based Brand Equity. *Journal of Marketing*, 57, 1-22.

- Keller, K. L. 2013. *Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity*, Pearson Education, Limited.
- Kim, E., Lin, J.-S. & Sung, Y. 2013. To App or Not to App: Engaging Consumers via Branded Mobile Apps. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 13, 53-65.
- Kortum, P. & Sorber, M. 2015. Measuring the Usability of Mobile Applications for Phones and Tablets. *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction*, 31, 518-529.
- Kwon, W.-S. & Lennon, S. J. 2009. What induces online loyalty? Online versus offline brand images. *Journal of Business Research*, 62, 557-564.
- Legrís, P., Ingham, J. & Collerette, P. 2003. Why do people use information technology? A critical review of the technology acceptance model. *Information & Management*, 40, 191-204.
- Levy, S. J. 1959. Symbols for sale. *Harvard business review*, 37, 117-124.
- Mahatanankoon, P., Wen, H. J. & Lim, B. 2005. Consumer-based m-commerce: exploring consumer perception of mobile applications. *Computer Standards & Interfaces*, 27, 347-357.
- Mahatanankoon, P., Wen, H.J. and Lim, B. (2005), "Consumer-based m-commerce: exploring consumer perception of mobile applications", *Computer Standards & Interfaces*, Vol. 27 No. 4, pp. 347-57.
- Meenaghan, T. 1995. The role of advertising in brand image development. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 4, 23-34.
- Monsuwé, T. P. Y., Dellaert, B. G. C. & Ruyter, K. D. 2004. What drives consumers to shop online? A literature review. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 15, 102-121.
- Nysveen, H., Pedersen, P. E. & Skard, S. E. 2015. A review of mobile services research: Research gaps and suggestions for future research on mobile apps.
- Oliver, R. L. 1999. Whence consumer loyalty? *The Journal of Marketing*, 33-44.
- Pagani, M. 2004. Determinants of adoption of third generation mobile multimedia services. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 18, 46-59.
- Purcell, Kristen, Roger Entner, and Nichole Henderson (2010), "The Rise of Apps Culture," Pew Internet and American Life Project, September 14, <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/The-Rise-of-Apps-Culture.aspx>.
- Roach, G. 2009. Consumer perceptions of mobile phone marketing: a direct marketing innovation. *Direct Marketing: An International Journal*, 3, 124-138.
- Rogers, E. M. 2003. *Diffusion of Innovations*, 5th Edition, Free Press.
- Rohm, A. J., Gao, T., Sultan, F. & Pagani, M. 2012. Brand in the hand: A cross-market investigation of consumer acceptance of mobile marketing. *Business Horizons*, 55, 485-493.

- Rowley, J. 2006. An analysis of the e-service literature: towards a research agenda. *Internet Research*, 16, 339-359.
- Schepers, J. & Wetzels, M. 2007. A meta-analysis of the technology acceptance model: Investigating subjective norm and moderation effects. *Information & Management*, 44, 90-103.
- Shankar, V. & Hollinger, M. 2007. Online and mobile advertising: current scenario, emerging trends, and future directions. *Marketing Science Institute*, 07-206.
- Shankar, V., Venkatesh, A., Hofacker, C. & Naik, P. 2010. Mobile Marketing in the Retailing Environment: Current Insights and Future Research Avenues. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 24, 111-120.
- Simons-Morton, B., MCleroy, K. R. & Wendel, M. 2011. *Behavior Theory in Health Promotion Practice and Research*, Jones & Bartlett Learning.
- Stern, B., Zinkhan, G. M. & JAJU, A. 2001. Marketing Images: Construct Definition, Measurement Issues, and Theory Development. *Marketing Theory*, 1, 201-224.
- Sultan, F. & Rohm, A. 2005. The coming era of "brand in the hand" marketing. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 47, 83.
- Venkatesh, V. & Bala, H. 2008. Technology Acceptance Model 3 and a Research Agenda on Interventions. *Decision Sciences*, 39, 273-315.
- Venkatesh, V. 2000. Determinants of Perceived Ease of Use: Integrating Control, Intrinsic Motivation, and Emotion into the Technology Acceptance Model. *Information Systems Research*, 11, 342-365.
- Venkatesh, V., Thong, J. & Xu, X. 2012. Consumer acceptance and use of information technology: extending the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology. *MIS quarterly*, 36, 157-178.
- Winer, R. S. 2009. *New Communications Approaches in Marketing: Issues and Research Directions*. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 23, 108-117.
- Wu, J.-H. & Wang, S.-C. 2005. What drives mobile commerce? An empirical evaluation of the revised technology acceptance model. *Information & Management*, 42, 719-729.
- Yang, H. C. 2013. Bon Appétit for Apps: Young American Consumers' Acceptance of Mobile Applications. *Journal of Computer Information Systems*, 53, 85-95.
- DAVIS, F. D., BAGOZZI, R. P. & WARSHAW, P. R. 1992. Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation to use computers in the workplace¹. *Journal of applied social psychology*, 22, 1111-1132.

Author(s):

Khalid AL-Nabhani
University of Strathclyde

Department of Marketing
University of Strathclyde Business School,
Sir William Duncan Building
130 Rottenrow Glasgow G4 0GE
khalid.al-nabhani@strath.ac.uk

Professor Alan Wilson PhD,
Academic Director: Exec. Masters Hospitality Leadership
Department of Marketing,
University of Strathclyde Business School,
Sir William Duncan Building
130 Rottenrow
Glasgow G4 0GE
Email: alan.wilson@strath.ac.uk