Aalborg University

Culture, Communication and Globalization

Market and Consumption

The Consumer Story: Attitudes toward

Marketing via Mobile Phones

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**Abstract:**

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this research was to carry out an exploratory study on mobile marketing. The chosen topic has been investigated from the point of view of the consumer so as to gain an understanding of their perspectives on the issue.

**Methodology/Approach:**

Data is collected from the questionnaire responses of 114 consumers, aged 18 to 54, both female and male. Direct experience with mobile marketing was not a requirement, neither was the type of mobile device, as long as the respondents had one.

**Theory:**

The two theoretical concepts addresses are mobile marketing and consumer attitudes. The aim was on the one hand to offer a comprehensive view of the field while also to present a model that would help guide the analysis process and infer consumers’ attitudes towards mobile marketing.

**Findings:**

The respondents’ adoption of mobile marketing is low. With regard to attitudes, more than half of the respondents have a negative attitude towards the service, and a significantly lower percent a positive one. With regard to age, the claim that younger consumers have a more favorable attitude towards mobile marketing was not confirmed in this research study, nor was the claim that males have a more positive attitude towards it than females.

**Research Limitations:**

The two most important ones have to do with method and number. For this research study the method was the most appropriate and the number of consumer viewpoints assessed was acceptable. For further research, I would definitely consider changing the approach.

**Keywords:**

mobile marketing, SMS, MMS, mobile apps, display ads, paid search ads, QR codes, near field communications, location-based marketing consumer attitudes, age, gender

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

## 1.1 Background:

There was a time when selling was a kinder, more cordial process and buying was seen as a delightful regular activity rather than a task on a to-do list. Imagine Miss Johnson entering the local shop, run by Mr. Forrester who also owns the business and who is familiar with all of his customers and their past purchases. He engages in a friendly conversation with Miss Johnson while preparing her order and also informs her of the latest flavors in matters of tea that he purchased. He knows that if interested, Miss Johnson will come by another time and buy some. He is also aware that there is no need to remind her of the new flavors every time she comes to the shop or their interaction may change for the worse. We have seen portrayals of such close buyer-seller relationships in movies (Cranford) or read about them in literature (The House of the Seven Gables) but we have not experienced them and for a perfectly good reason: evolution.

Inevitably, developments and innovation bring about change for businesses and people alike. The Industrial Revolution led the way towards a new economy, “defined in terms of assembly-line production of standardized products, mass distribution of these products to consumers in a wide geographic area and mass media vehicles to carry standardized advertising messages” (Godin 1999, p. 12). In other words, selling underwent a major transformation from personal one-to-one persuasion to what Solove (2004, p. 16) calls “large-scale advertising campaigns designed for the nameless, faceless consumer.” The same message was broadcast to everyone, with total disregard towards the different nature of each and every person. But through how many ill-fitting ad messages can the consumer sit through before they become background noise? Apparently, “mass marketing consumed vast fortunes and only a small fraction of the millions of people exposed to the ads would buy the products or services” (Ibid.). Thus, marketers learned not to treat consumers as a homogeneous group and understood that they had to come up with a solution to this problem. Soon, they discovered the value of targeted marketing.

By definition, targeted marketing means “identifying a target market after detailed research and developing specific marketing campaigns focused at it” (BusinessDictionary). A target market refers to a group of people that are most likely to buy the product or service a certain company is trying to sell. The first form of targeting involved selecting a particular TV program, radio show or magazine in which to place the ad message but unfortunately, this was merely perceived as mass marketing on a smaller scale (Solove 2004, p. 17). Since simply predicting individual preferences and tastes was no longer working, serious efforts have been made by companies to try and reach the consumer directly. Therefore, targeted marketing became truly successful when it was associated with direct marketing, “a database-driven interactive process of directly communicating with targeted customers or prospects using any medium to obtain a measurable response or transaction” (Spiller and Baier 2010, p. 4). Through such means as mail-order catalogs, door-to-door salespersons and telemarketing, marketers attempted to build or add information to their databases and achieve a higher consumer response rate than mass marketing. But the “2 percent” rule – only 2 percent of those contacted would respond – was still prevailing (Solove 2004, p. 17).

In order for direct marketing to increase the low response rate, the targeting had to be more precise which meant that a more effective way to collect and analyze customer information was required. The advent of the Internet made way for computer databases to develop which brought about a great change to what targeting marketing once was. Instead of broadcasting a general message through television or print, it was now possible to send a targeted message to an individual via his/her email. As consumers engaged in Internet activities more and more, the amount of personal data generated increased as well. Pretty soon, marketers understood the benefits of this type of information being available: not only would it help them understand customers better but would help serve them better as well. If they could ensure an ongoing exchange of information (customer needs, interests, lifestyle), marketers stood a great chance of coming up with highly satisfying customized offers. It is important to emphasize the value of the Internet that has given marketers the opportunity to form relationships with each and every one of their customers: “If there is a single phrase that best captures the nature of the business revolution that has been set in motion by computers and interactive technologies, it is this – Treating different customers differently” (Peppers and Rogers 2005, p. 72).

Thus, from personal one-to-one persuasion, mass marketing and afterwards target marketing, we are now talking about one-to-one marketing which basically means “being willing and able to change your behavior toward an individual customer based on what the customer tells you and what else you know about that customer” (Pine and Gilmore 1999, p. xvi ). In other words, companies have started to understand that each customer is unique, or differently put, “a market of one” (Ibid.) and that they can interact with him/her to determine his/her needs and wants. This enables companies to offer products or services that have a better chance at pleasing the consumer. Basically, marketers have now returned to the idea of buyer-seller relationship that was discussed at the beginning of this introduction, that was the norm a long time ago and that is a necessity for success today.

In addition, customers are not only difficult to find but even harder to keep: “The mind of the consumer is complex. Numerous contextual influences interact to drive individuals’ deliberations about products and services and the processes that govern how and when individuals decide to pull the trigger on purchases are both varied and fluid over time and across consumption situations” (Posavac 2012, p. vii). If we are to also consider the multitude of choices consumers nowadays have it is definitely hard for companies to effectively persuade them into action. Stiff competition will only motivate marketers to find new ways of reaching prospective customers and to use more aggressive means so as to communicate their message across. This leads us to mobile marketing, a direct form of marketing that first of all, allows companies to form strong bonds with each and every one of their customers: “no other medium can provide the accurate and rich user profile, psychographic, social engagement and demographic data available from mobile” (Sharma et al. 2008, p. 88). It also allows them to be creative so as to be ahead of the competition and to make buying more than a task on a to-do list. But as we shall see, there are not only advantages but also downsides to mobile marketing.

Gone are the days when mobile phones were only used to communicate with each other. In fact, we have entered a new era, “the all mobile era,” according to Michael and Salter (2006, p. 1) in which mobile phones or rather said, smartphones, do it all, from browsing the Internet for information to ordering online and paying your bills. “The mobile phone is set to become the Third Screens after TV and computer,” says Asif (2011, p. 1). Moreover, Apple’s iPhone, Google’s introduction of Android and Apple’s launch of the iPad have had an unbelievable effect: smartphone adoption has dramatically increased. The possibilities of smartphone use seem to be limitless and they have the potential to revolutionize the way people live and work. Thus mobile phones have surpassed their status as mere gadgets and have become more of a precious commodity.

Given the fact that people have their phones with them almost all the time, it is natural for companies and organizations to try and reach them using this medium. Therefore, mobile marketing is “a set of practices that enables organizations to communicate and engage with their audience in an interactive and relevant manner through any mobile device or network” (Mobile Marketing Association). There are many ways in which businesses can use mobile marketing but these aspects will be discussed in another chapter. What should be mentioned is that due to the novel possibilities that it encompasses, scholars (Bober, 2011; Hopkins, 2011; Krum, 2010) have already touted the service as the next big thing marketing-wise.

## 1.2 Problem Area:

However, mobile marketing has still many challenges to overcome, the first one being people’s reception of it. For instance, we are bombarded with marketing messages at home, on the Internet and basically everywhere we go. Because of this constant presence in our lives, many people have a negative attitude towards advertising. Thus, marketers’ attempt to reach consumers on their mobile phones might very well be regarded as intrusive. There are already so many concerns with regard to privacy and trust in the online environment that perhaps some people do not want to worry about these matters in the mobile world as well: “Digital technology enables the preservation of the minutia of our everyday comings and goings, of our likes and dislikes, of who we are and what we own. It is ever more possible to create an electronic collage that covers much of a person’s life” (Solove 2004, p. 1) In addition, fear of spamming can also be a major concern. Thus, addressing these issues and providing convincing solutions is of utter necessity and importance in order to gain consumer acceptance of mobile marketing.

Furthermore, should mobile marketing be readily accepted by people, another challenge would be marketing to them at a very personal and geographically relevant level so as to ensure response and consequently success. According to Michael and Salter (2006, p. 37), “the content that you deliver is vital to your success. If your message is not clear, your goal will not be achieved. Your goal is not merely for a message to be seen; it must also be understood, remembered and acted upon.” Latest solutions in the form of location-based marketing, mobile augmented reality and mobile apps have been provided in order to market at a personal and geographically relevant level and to create value for the consumer.

However there may be a problem with people actually understanding these methods or the reason why they received a particular ad message. According to Forrester’s 2011 Mobile Channel Strategy (in Ho, 2011), “53% of those surveyed cited major concerns around mobile technologies with 38% admitting they don’t have the right skills or expertise.” To sum up, it can be said that there is excitement and hype surrounding mobile marketing but also legitimate criticism which could be a possible explanation for Hopkins and Turner’s (2012, p. 4) statement, “you’d be surprised how many people *talk* about mobile marketing but don’t actively *use* mobile marketing.”

## 1.3 Problem Formulation:

Thus, although mobile marketing has been touted as the next big thing, just as social media marketing before it, there is still plenty of unknown territory to be explored when it comes to the everyday consumer’s perception and acceptance of it. Its novelty may help it get noticed but will not necessarily guarantee good times, especially considering it still has certain challenges to overcome. Moreover, given the fact that consumers lie at the heart of the success or failure of any industry, it would be intriguing to research the chances of mobile marketing to be embraced and to thrive upon. This curiosity prompts the following problem formulation:

To what extent does the mobile phone provide a novel marketing channel and how do consumers react to a proposed change in the way they are marketed to?

In order to answer this research question, I am going to investigate these related issues:

What are the advantages and disadvantages of mobile marketing?

In what ways can mobile marketing be used to promote products or services?

How knowledgeable are consumers in the issue of mobile marketing?

Do gender and age affect consumers’ attitudes to mobile marketing?

## 1.4 Outline of the Thesis:

This thesis is divided into six chapters. The first chapter is the introduction which offers some background to the reader about the research area and is followed by a problem area discussion and the problem formulation. In the following chapter, key aspects of methodology will be discussed such as epistemology, ontology, research strategy, design and method. Chapter three provides the reader with an overview of the literature. In the fourth part, theories with regard to mobile marketing and consumer attitudes will be explored. Then, the analytical part will follow where the data collected from the questionnaires will be introduced and interpreted in order to answer the problem formulation. Finally, the sixth and final chapter, the conclusion, will highlight the main points of this research and provide ideas for further research.

**2. METHODOLOGY**

## 2.1 Ontological Consideration

The central question raised by the ontological paradigm is “whether social entities can and should be considered as objective entities that have a reality external to social actors, or whether they can and should be considered social constructions built up from the perceptions and actions of social actors” (Bryman 2004, p. 18). On social entities, Thomasson (in le Poidevin et al., 2009, p. 545) says that they include social facts (the fact that there is an economic crisis), social actions (the invasion of Irak) and social objects (Microsoft). The topic of this research study, mobile marketing, is a social action. The question raised in this case by ontology is whether the meaning of mobile marketing exists independent of people’s reach and influence or whether people are shaping it through their actions and perceptions. In this project my ontologicalposition is constructionism which implies that “social phenomena and their meanings are produced through social interaction and they are in a constant state of revision” (Bryman 2004, p. 18). We have seen what mobile marketing means, its actual definition, in the introduction. At the same time, it is a service that causes privacy concerns among consumers as well. This aspect of privacy concerns has come to be a part of mobile marketing as a result of some people’s actions, i.e. companies that chose to exploit it to their own advantage.

In addition, the purpose of this research is to explore and gain a better understanding of mobile marketing from the consumer point of view. With every questionnaire filled out, different attitudes or interpretations come to surface, which ultimately bring a new perspective to it. Moreover, Bryman (2004, p. 17) says that a constructivist “always presents a specific version of social reality, rather than one that can be regarded as definitive.” As already mentioned, this research aims to explore the issue of mobile marketing from the consumer point of view only and more exactly, from that of 114 people. Based on their answers, the results will definitely offer perspective on the issue but they should not be generalized, that is interpreted as if they define the general perception of mobile marketing.

## 2.2 Epistemological Consideration

With regard to the issue of epistemology, Guba (1990, p. 56) says that the question to be answered is “what is the nature of the relationship between the knower and the known?” or in other words, what do people know and how. In this research, in order to see what consumer think about mobile marketing, questionnaires are employed. As a researcher, I myself acquire knowledge by gaining access to their thinking about the matter. This idea reflects really well the issue of interpretivism which is my epistemological stance and according to which knowledge is acquired through interaction (Bryman 2004, p. 13). For example, many of the respondents have gained knowledge about mobile marketing as a result of their own search for information or direct experience with it. Moreover, the questionnaires themselves pass as interaction and are an exchange of information between the researcher and the respondents. When asking questions about the benefits and cons of mobile marketing, I provide the answers to choose from and they can provide a better insight on the issue for those who were not aware of those aspects. And when they answer the questions, I receive in return a certain amount of information as well, which helps me understand their views on mobile marketing.

In addition, Neuman (2007, p. 44) says that interpretivism “emphasizes Verstehen, the desire of a researcher to get inside the worldview of those he/she is studying and accurately represent how the people being studied see the world, feel about it and act.” He also says that “for most humans, social reality is largely the shifting perceptions that they are constantly constructing, testing, reinforcing or changing.” This research inquires into different stages of the consumer-mobile marketing relationship in order to get a highly detailed picture of it: it assesses the respondents’ awareness of, their interest in, their experience with and finally their thoughts about mobile marketing. The results for each stage are presented, analyzed and compared with each other in order to assess any change, difference of opinion or disparity that may come about.

## 2.3 Research Strategy

The main aims of this project are to explore the issue of mobile marketing and to understand how consumers react to it. In order to do this, a qualitative research strategy is considered. Qualitative research is usually employed to help look at events and the social world through the eyes of the people that are being studied (Bryman 2004, p. 393). In this case, the respondents’ answers give me insight into their viewpoints which in turn lead me to a better understanding of the matter in question. In addition, qualitative research is criticized for being too subjective (Bryman 2004, p. 391) as research findings could depend on the researchers’ view too much. In this particular case, I analyze the respondents’ answers and come up with a conclusion based on my interpretations. However there is always the possibility of my own personal opinions to unconsciously interfere in my analysis. Had there been more researchers in this project, it would have been better since we could have tried to avoid any trace of subjectivism through comments and discussions. This not being the case, I have to say though that in my opinion, I have done my best in staying objective and not allowing my own values interfere with this research.

## 2.4 Research Design

A research design “provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data” (Bryman 2004, p. 27). What this means is that a researcher should first have a “topic” he/she wants to investigate. In this case, mobile marketing was the topic that I decided to look deeper into. In order to explore this issue, I decided to focus on the consumer point of view. Thus, I use consumers and their perception of mobile marketing as a framework for the generation of data. Needless to say, each and every one of the respondents was supposed to have a mobile phone in order to be able to answer the questions. This could be considered as the first type of segmentation employed. Experience with mobile marketing was not a requirement since I was interested to also see what those who have not experienced it know and perceive mobile marketing. As a result, the first part of the analysis presents the answers of all 114 respondents in order to paint a picture of the general reactions to it.

Moreover, when it comes to mobile marketing, there is a lot of talk and focus on the young generation primarily because they are competent users of the mobile phone and could easily and successfully respond to such marketing messages. Therefore many researchers and analyst groups (Haghirian and Madleberger, 2008; Quorus, 2011; Comscore Networks, 2006) choose to address and incorporate this aspect in their study in order to see whether different age groups react differently to mobile marketing. In addition, similar claims have been made with regard to gender, in the sense that males and females respond differently to mobile marketing. Haghirian and Madleberger’s (2008) study for instance has on the one hand concluded that “younger consumers value advertising messages via mobile devices to a higher extent than older consumers and also show a more positive attitude toward them” and on the other that “male consumers show a more favorable attitude toward mobile ads than female consumers.” As a result, I have also decided to include these two aspects in my research study. My purpose is not only to put these claims to the test but also to see whether the positive attitude towards mobile marketing is one-sided, meaning young males. Should that be the case, it would definitely give an interesting perspective on the issue and pave the way for further research. Thus, after the general findings presented in the analysis, segmented data based on age and gender will also be presented, assessed and added to the general understanding of the matter in question.

## 2.5 Research Method

Bryman (2004, p. 27) defines the research method as “a technique for collecting data” which is needed for the analysis of the issue under investigation. The data collection for this research study was carried out by means of an online questionnaire. As a result, 114 people have answered. The motivation behind the choice of such a method is simple: it was the most appropriate. Since I am interested in these people’s viewpoint, interviews or questionnaires are the best options to pursue. For the research to be relevant however, the more people share their view, the better. Thus, since it would have been difficult to arrange and time-consuming to conduct tens of interviews, I believe that in this case questionnaires were the best option. The fact that they were online questionnaires made it easier for me to distribute them to as many people as possible. Thus it made it easier for me to reach people and in the end receive a decent number of responses.

However, there are disadvantages with this method as well. First of all, if one of the respondents does not understand the meaning of a question, there is no one there to clarify it for him/her. Also, in an interview, the respondents could shed light on a new aspect of the matter in question through their answers and with the researcher there, there is the possibility to delve more into it and add more value to the discussion. Questionnaire answers are fixed and there is no possibility to collect additional data. Finally, lack of supervision could also result in the respondents not paying close attention to questions and answering without really thinking about what is being asked or they could skip questions which would in the end leave the researcher with missing data.

**3. LITERATURE REVIEW**

In the last few years, the field of mobile marketing has been gradually flourishing. Due to technological advancements (brought forth mainly by Apple’s iPhone and Google’s Android), interest in the opportunities that mobile marketing could provide for businesses and consumers alike has begun to swell. This interest prompted journalists, marketers, pundits to delve into it and make up their own interpretation of the issue. Thanks to this, many helpful accounts are now available for those in search of information with regard to mobile marketing. Therefore, I will first take a look at the journalistic world by discussing some articles focusing on the business side of mobile marketing. Then I will touch upon the more complex issues of it that books address (business and consumer-wise) and will finally discuss research studies on the issue that have been previously carried out.

To begin with, a strong focus among journalists writing on the subject is particularly on the benefits mobile marketing could provide businesses. Articles by Orfao (2011), Robertson (2011), Orton-Jones (2011) and Gunelius (2011) present mobile marketing as a guaranteed success. The fact that mobile phones belong to one person, are always on and always at hand, provides indeed many new and interesting opportunities for consumers to be reached. In addition, statistics showing a rise in smartphone adopters (Orfao, 2011) and better response rates to mobile marketing messages (Turner, 2011) represent encouraging aspects of the matter but it is not enough to justify their assertion. What these articles fail to consider is the consumer’s point of view. They underscore the fact that in order to be successful, businesses should first of all understand how consumers operate in mobile mode and whether they are open to changes.

The challenges businesses would face with a mobile marketing campaign are sporadically dealt with in the media world (Avalos, 2012; Manninen, 2010) which makes it a medium that does not provide a comprehensive, well-balanced take on the matter. The same goes for other mobile marketing-related issues, for instance location-based marketing which one can find clashing information about. While Hopkins (2012) reports that more and more consumers want location-specific offers (although there is no mention of a study that would back up this statement) and Orfao (2011) mentions the explosive growth of location-centric social networks such as Foursquare and Gowalla (that enable consumers to check in to their location, be it a restaurant, museum, library and so on), Ho (2011) brings to light a different version of the issue. In an article published three months after Orfao’s (2011) and three months before Hopkins’ (2012), Ho (2011) agrees with the fact that there is buzz and potential with regard to location-based marketing but at the same time uses the results of a study to show its current status: “only 4% of the adult Internet-using population has used any kind of location-based app or service, and a pitiful 1% of all adults regularly check-in to a location.” Thus, there are some weaknesses to this mobile marketing information source that should be considered. The articles mentioned at least are too brief, the information presented is not well-researched and they do not explore both sides of the issue under discussion.

Fortunately, mobile marketing literature is not only made up of articles, but books as well. With regard to the connection between the two of them, I would say that books build on the information found in articles. They are well-versed and more informative, thus broadening the horizon and enriching the context of the issue under discussion. What is mobile marketing? What are its typical contexts and characteristics? How can businesses jump-start their mobile marketing campaign? These are primary questions that all of the consulted books have touched upon (Hopkins and Turner, 2012; Michael and Salter, 2006; Bober, 2011; Dushinski, 2009; Krum, 2010; Becker and Arnold, 2010; Sharma et al., 2008; Wuebben, 2011; Pearson, 2011; Martin, 2011). The prevailing theories to be found are in regard to strategies of mobile marketing (SMS, display ads, QR codes, locatioan-based marketing, etc), challenges (understanding this new landscape, winning consumers’ trust, wipe away privacy-related concerns) as well as opportunities (reach consumers directly, grow sales and revenue, gain competitive advantage). While some of these writers (Hopkins and Turner, 2012; Dushinski, 2009; Krum, 2010; Bober, 2011) are more enthusiastic and optimistic about the inevitable success of mobile marketing (which is visible in their style of writing), others (Michael and Safter, 2006; Becker and Arnold, 2010) are more cautious in their choice of words and simply acknowledge that there is potential but also a long road ahead for mobile marketing.

Primarily written to benefit businesses interested in this practice, the strength of this literature is that it tackles and at the same time seeks to comprehend the consumer point of view as well. The way consumers engage with their mobile phones, the changes that mobile marketing would bring about to their daily life, the experiences that it would provide are to a larger (Martin, 2011; Pearson, 2011; Hopkins and Turner, 2012) or lesser extent (Wuebben, 2011; Becker and Arnold, 2010; Bober, 2011) discussed. The case studies in particular, provided by some of them (Michael and Salter, 2006; Sharma et al., 2008; Hopkins and Turner, 2012) underline and at the same time balance out rather well the advantages (immediacy, interactivity, personalization) and the disadvantages (privacy issues, spam, viruses) mobile marketing would bring to consumers.

Undoubtedly, these books present a wider take on the topic and make a more significant contribution to its understanding. However, they are not void of criticism. What I would personally like to emphasize is the fact that although they cover both sides of the issue, the information provided is still directed at businesses. It suits them to know what possible issues could upset the consumer, what aspects would most probably be pleasing, how to satisfy their needs through the mobile world. This way, they gain a clearer understanding of the elements driving consumer acceptance of mobile marketing. These books are full of how-to chapters and subchapters for businesses. They lack, however, the how-to or advice on what to do for consumers: for instance, how to take action when you receive a spam message on your mobile, how to diminish the monitoring of your mobile activity, what to do to receive text messages or push notifications from a company and so on. A consumer in search of this type of information would definitely not regard these books as the appropriate source for that.

At the same time, it is worth mentioning that, while all of these writers deal with the same topic, the information provided is not completely the same, in the sense that there is variation to it. For instance, only Krum (2010), Becker and Arnold (2010), Michael and Salter (2006) and Pearson (2011) deal with the issue of m-commerce, which refers to the selling or buying of different things via a mobile phone. Similarly, only Hopkins and Turner (2012) address the idea of mobile marketing in a B2B environment, only Pearson (2011) talks about m-banking and m-gambling, Dushinski (2009) alone points out the necessity of a mobile-savvy audience and the technical part concerning mobile phones is once again discussed merely by a few of them (Hopkins and Turner, 2012; Michael and Salter, 2006; Bober, 2011; Krum, 2010).

While mindful of all these aspects of mobile marketing, my focus in this research study is upon the consumer. That is, I approach mobile marketing with a particular interest in how it is “affecting” people. From a theoretical point of view, my starting point is of course the mobile phone. I am interested to show what differentiates marketing via a mobile phone from other marketing channels, a discussion that covers aspects such as benefits, cons and tools. It is important to go over these aspects so as to clarify what is implied by marketing to a person via his or her mobile phone. My attention will then be directed to consumers, more precisely to how this new type of interaction (with all of its implications) could make them react, to possible attitudes and impressions they could assume. Therefore my theoretical focus in this research study is on selected aspects of mobile marketing that are relevant to this investigation and subsequently on consumer attitudes.

If up until now the focus in this literature review has been on the theoretical findings with regard to mobile marketing, it will now shift to the empirical ones (which put theories to the test). Understandably, there had been research studies carried out on this topic already and some have been assessing the companies’ experience with mobile marketing while others the consumers’ side which is what I will focus on here. One of the earliest studies carried out is the one by Tsang, Ho and Liang (2004) and was actually in regard to consumer attitudes toward mobile advertising (SMS-based ads only) since back then, smartphones had not invaded the market yet and SMS represented the only way to reach the consumer on his/her mobile phone. Based on 380 answers, the researchers reached the conclusion that mobile ads were seen with negative eyes unless they had explicitly consented to receive them. In other words, permission-based messages were crucial for a positive perception of mobile advertising on the part of consumers. At the same time, they acknowledged the importance of content, form and credibility of the message that could have a saying in the shaping of consumers’ opinion.

The following year, a study on consumer acceptance of mobile marketing was published by Bauer et al. (2005) that focused on the exact factors that would influence consumers into accepting the mobile phone as a marketing channel. They identified entertainment, information and creative design (of the marketing message) as perceived utility that would influence their attitudes positively. At the other end of the spectrum, fear of data misuse and spam were seen as perceived risk that would have a negative influence. Similarly, a study by Haghirian and Madlberger (2008) also addressed this effect that certain characteristics may have on consumers’ attitudes toward mobile marketing. Once again, entertainment and information, together with credibility, rose to the top as those value-inducing factors that could sway consumers in favor of mobile marketing. On the other hand, irritation, frequency of exposure and privacy have been named as the top three factors that could have the reverse effect. What differentiates this study from the 2005 one is that Haghirian and Madlberger (2008) also counted age, gender and education among the factors that could influence consumers’ attitudes. The data however did not support the hypotheses with regard to age and gender but it did in the case of education. Apparently, interviewees with higher education perceived mobile advertising more valuable. Ultimately, what makes these two studies more sound than the first one is the far greater number of respondents (1103 and 815 as opposed to 380).

One thing is for sure: the success of mobile marketing depends on consumers’ acceptance which in turn depends on their attitudes on the matter, attitudes shaped by different factors as these studies have shown. With regard to my own research study, I would say that it does not try to infer consumers’ attitudes from the content and form of the marketing message but from the benefits and cons that mobile marketing provides, from consumers’ awareness of mobile marketing, search of information, intentions and actual experience. The reason for this is because my approach to the topic is more complex as mobile marketing has grown to be more than just an ad message sent via text. In my study, mobile marketing also incorporates display ads, paid search ads, mobile apps, QR codes, near field communication and location-based marketing.

At the same time, other studies on consumer attitudes toward mobile marketing exist so why would there be another? First of all, each one is valuable in its own way as each one adds a new dimension or sheds a new light on the topic. Barutcu’s (2008) research for example follows consumers’ attitudes towards mobile marketing and mobile commerce as well while Quorus Consulting Group’s (2011) consumer attitudes study introduces aspects such as mobile donation, mobile banking and payments. Secondly, this is a domain that is in constant change as evidenced by the difference between my study and Tsang, Ho and Liang’s (2004) study. This change can also explain the clashing views on the matter (for instance Barutcu (2008) reports that mobile users have positive attitudes toward mobile advertising while Tsang, Ho and Liang report the opposite).

Therefore, these new changes (in the consumer and in the market) need to be constantly assessed. In addition, mobile marketing has been heavily promoted as the “new frontier” in marketing and one that promises great results. As a consequence, many companies have jumped on the bandwagon and designed their mobile marketing campaigns based on intuition or scarce information. Hence, it resulted in failed campaigns, consumers’ distrust and disinterest. Thus there is still research that needs to be done on the issue that marketers can use to understand the consumer better and come up with better campaigns in order to achieve their own goals and attract and satisfy consumers as well. Through my own research study, I hope to convey actual results that would capture the current “feeling” towards mobile marketing in consumers and that would contribute to the better understanding of them and the issue under discussion.

**4. THEORY**

## 4.1. Mobile Marketing

At its core, marketing is about communication and persuasion. By the means of a message, a company will try not only to “impart information and news about products, services, and related activities to their audience (customers, clients, partners, and society at large)” (Becker and Arnold 2010, p. 32) but will also try to persuade them into giving that product or service a try. If successful, that initial message could blossom into a dialogue and an ongoing exchange of information between the company and its audience. If unsuccessful, the message will most probably remain unanswered and not acted upon. Whichever the case, companies will always come up with new ways to reach their customers (new and existing alike) that will hopefully generate more business. From newspapers, radio and television to billboards and the Internet, it has now come the time for marketers to try and reach their customers on their mobile phones.

According to Becker and Arnold (2010, p. 15), mobile marketing is “a set of practices that enable organizations to communicate and engage with their audience in an interactive and relevant manner through any mobile device.” Although touted as the “next big thing” for the last few years, this practice has not yet taken off as successfully as expected. Indeed, advances in technology have made it possible for marketers to reach people on their mobile phones in manifold ways and undoubtedly, mobile marketing may bring about great benefits for both sides. In spite of this, there are still some concerns on the part of the people with regard to certain aspects such as privacy and spamming. The benefits as well as cons of mobile marketing will now be thoroughly discussed.

### 4.1.1 Benefits of Mobile Marketing

The first positive aspect of mobile marketing worth mentioning is the fact that it represents “a great means of information sharing and knowledge acquisition” (Asif 2011, p. 397). In translation, this refers to a piece of information (ad message) that a company passes on to its customers who, after learning it, are more knowledgeable in the sense that they know more about the company and its offers. However, the very same definition could be applied to other types of marketing (email, TV) and still be valid. What makes mobile marketing different than the other means is that it can provide the fastest way to access information. More specifically, customers can subscribe to companies or organizations of their choice to receive their latest news on their mobile phones as opposed to them having to search for that information. For instance, it would be far more convenient to have your favorite brand notify you when the newest tablet is to be launched in your area instead of surfing the Internet for it. According to Jones and Marsden (2006, p. 248), “we are great consumers of information. We hunt and forage for it; sometimes we immerse and wallow ourselves in it, at other times we skip through it lightly, moving from one nugget to the next.” Moreover, “the desire to have more timely access to information is universal” (Michael and Salter 2006, p.6). This immediacy of information could prove even more beneficial when coupled with location, for instance receiving mobile messages from your favorite brand the moment you pass by the store. Thus, this is one aspect that could make mobile marketing be greeted with positivity by people. As information thirsty as they may be however, should the messages received be irrelevant or intrusive, their attitude towards mobile marketing could understandably be more on the negative side (for more on this, see section 4.1.2).

Furthermore, another key element that customers should take into consideration is the fact that mobile marketing can save time. As human beings, we play various roles: we are consumers, employees, parents, friends, etc and all at the same time. With every role we assume, there are duties that come with it and that have to be fulfilled. Our everyday activities may differ from those of the next person but it does not mean they are less time-consuming. In Godin’s view (1999, p. 10), “each of us is born with only a certain amount of time on this earth and figuring out how to use it wisely is one of life’s primary activities.” Undoubtedly, buying and purchasing products is one of our duties as consumers and with the help of the mobile phone, it can make the task easier to accomplish. A mobile device “is designed to be carried and used while in motion or during pauses at unspecified locations. With significant technology advances in recent years, mobile devices of today are multi-functional devices capable of supporting a wide range of applications for both business and consumer use” (Jiang et al. 2010, p. 224). Therefore, advances in technology have made it possible for mobile phones to be used for more than the usual activities (SMS, calculator, games). For example, while browsing the Internet on the mobile phone, a person may choose to click on a web banner which may in turn lead him/her to an apparel website from which he/she could ultimately decide to buy instead of going shopping the traditional way. “Using a mobile is a great way to manage your life while on the move,” claim Michael and Salter (2006, p. 93). The fact that it can enable people to make a purchase in a five minute coffee break or on the bus on their way home is extremely beneficial and especially time-saving. No other type of marketing can provide this opportunity.

Lastly, mobile marketing could help the customer foster a deeper connection with a specific company which would in turn lead to a high rate of personalization for him/her. In Piller and Tseng’s view (2010, p. 3), “customers often do not know exactly what they want, contrary to the traditional belief.” In addition, Corbae et al. (2010, p. 47) state that “in recent years, customer behavior has been experiencing gradual but constant change. Age, social standing and marital status are no longer valid as clear determinants of buying behavior.” Thus, second-guessing the customer is hard and sending the relevant message across likewise. Evidently, the high number of choices available on the market does not make it easier for the consumer either: “He/she is constantly confronted with new products and innovations, which are attractive and divert the customer away from existing patterns of behavior. While the number of alternatives increases, loyalty to individual products decreases” (Corbae et al. 2010, p. 50).

Through mobile marketing however, companies could work together with customers to get to know them better so as to rightly serve their needs: “Deeper understanding of customer needs goes hand in hand with greater performance” (Corbae et al. 2010, p. 78). To that purpose, Peppers et al. (1999, p. 62) suggest that companies should develop a Learning Relationship with their audience: “the customer tells you what he needs, you tailor your service or customize your product to meet this need and then, with every interaction, your service gets closer to that customer’s individual preferences.” Thus, it is the same process of information sharing and knowledge acquisition previously mentioned (Asif 2011, p. 397) except in this case, it is reversed: the consumer passes on the information and the company learns it. According to Krum (2010, p. 11), “information collected via a mobile device can be used to categorize customers, and distinct messaging strategies can be created for each person.” The key factors to evaluate customer preferences are: demographic data (age, gender, ethnicity, religion), psychographic data (lifestyle, attitudes, interests), preference data (preferred modes of communication), behavioral data (purchasing history, criteria for choosing products), situational context (where the consumer is) (Becker and Arnold 2010, p. 45). By recording all this information, companies can create a user profile for every customer and eventually make recommendations and personalized offers based on this profile. This service “will help ease the user’s burden of finding the information that is most pertinent to him/her” (Allen et al. 2001, p. 28).

Both Peppers and Rogers (2004, p. 52) agree that “most customers are quite receptive to the idea of building relationships with enterprises and brands.” Mobile marketing can facilitate such relationships to form but what customers should be aware of is that in order for them to be successful, relationships require information: “those who are freer with their information will receive more customized and personal service but will sacrifice a level of privacy” (Peppers and Rogers 2004, p. 81). Therefore, disclosure of personal information may bring about some benefits but it may have some repercussions as well. And according to Michael and Salter (2006, p. 125), there is already “tension between the marketer’s need to know information about individual consumers for the purposes of targeted marketing efforts, and the consumer’s right to privacy.”

Thus, the three biggest benefits that mobile marketing can provide its customers have been identified as fast access to information, time-efficient solutions and personalization. As far as I am concerned, I will not deny them nor will I shoot down their value. The fast pace of living is taking over all our time so a time-efficient service as this one is more than welcome. However, for marketers, the media and other parties to so readily predict its success is in my opinion irresponsible and rash. There is no doubt that mobile marketing has great potential to improve people’s lives. For this to happen however, I believe there are still some underlying elements that have yet to be dealt with (the cons of mobile marketing will shortly be discussed). For instance, marketers have yet to make mobile marketing appeal to all age groups since studies have claimed that older people have a more limited interest in emerging technologies. Technologies take time and the initial failure of WAP (mobile Internet service) is proof of that: “early commercial WAP services were launched in 1999 and marketed widely the following year with slogans like ‘surf the mobile net.’ Much was promised – the web on a phone, in fact. By the middle of that year, however, WAP was widely perceived as a failure, a real disappointment; a backlash began” (Jones an Marsden 2006, p. 72). When it comes to mobile marketing, I believe there is a blurry line between evolution and revolution. Personally, I associate it with the former because it is evolution that continuously drives the market to change and it is evolution that will drive mobile marketing to betterment.

### 4.1.2 Cons of Mobile Marketing

Needless to say, the mobile phone is an important part of our everyday life and its various uses are proof of that: “it’s a business tool to clinch important deals; a remote control for the real world, helping us cope with daily travel delay frustrations; a relationship appliance to say goodnight to loved ones when away from home; a community device to organize political demonstrations […] it’s a device that is truly a personal technology, helping people to feel safer, less lonely, more human” (Jones and Marsden 2006, p. 4). Truly, this attitude may differ from one person to the next. Some users may be less attached to their mobiles than others. For some however, they may “have become such intimate companions that the mere knowledge that it is possible for them to be monitored disturbs people” (Ahas in Buscher et al., 2011, p. 183). When it comes to mobile marketing, the first and most serious impediment to its success has to do with privacy concerns.

To begin with, Scholars Acquisti and Grossklags (in Strandburg and Raicu, 2006, p. 21) agree with the definition of privacy as “the ability to control disclosure and access to personal information.” The emphasis in this definition is on the word “control” which implies that consumers may not be one hundred percent against information exchange with marketers but if they agree to this, they would like to control the type and amount of information disclosed. The need for a boundary between public and private is essential. Otherwise, why would people try on clothes in a dressing room and not in other parts of the store or why would they choose to close the drapes on their windows at home? According to Bellotti (in Agre and Rotenberg, 1997, p. 63), “in public and private places there are different more or less implicit rules about acceptable behaviors and interpersonal access rights […] when we break the unwritten rules of private and public places, we become targets for disapproval and may be regarded as threatening or even insane.” Thus, should mobile marketing breach this boundary and be regarded as too intrusive, it could definitely cause negative reactions among many consumers.

Moreover, this polemic has led to the emergence of three different perspectives on consumer privacy: the corporate, the activist and the centrist perspective. According to the proponents of the first perspective, “any restrictions placed on the corporation’s ability to access personal information about consumers only compromises the corporation’s ability to operate efficiently in the marketplace, and thus impedes its ability to fulfill its social responsibility” (Lester in Margulis, 2002. p.324). Should there be no restrictions on the part of corporations then metaphorically speaking, they could end up resembling to a certain extent Orwell’s Big Brother: it “is an all-knowing, constantly vigilant government that controls all aspects of one’s existence. In *1984* citizens have no way of discovering if and when they are being watched” (Solove 2004, p. 29).

On the other hand, the activist perspective argues that “if free-market forces and advances in technology are left unchecked, then information will be available to anyone for any purposes which will violate the right to privacy as well as imposing harmful social costs on society” (Garfinkel and Russell in Margulis, 2002, p. 324). Should this happen, the possible denouement could also metaphorically be compared to Kafka’s *The Trial* which deals with this loss of control over personal information and is essentially about “an individual’s sense of helplessness, frustration and vulnerability when a large bureaucratic organization has control over a vast dossier of details about one’s life” (Solove 2004, p. 9). Thus, not worrying about privacy would definitely not be a recommendable idea.

Finally, the centrist approach is somewhat of a combination between the two perspectives already mentioned. According to its proponents, “corporate access to personal information must be balanced against a legitimate right of consumers to privacy, protection of which is afforded by self-regulation, laws and technology” (Culnan and Bies in Margulis, 2002, p. 324). Whether we like it or not, personal data will always be in demand. Moreover, high levels of privacy may not be desirable either as some sort of information disclosure may lead to companies serving customers better. Therefore, there should be a compromise between companies and consumers, or rather said a mutual agreement according to which “individuals should be willing to disclose personal information in exchange for some economic or social benefit subject to an assessment that their personal information will subsequently be used fairly and they will not suffer negative consequences in the future” (Culnan and Bies in Margulis, 2002, p. 327). For such an agreement to work however, it would be imperative for companies to be open and honest about their information uses and not betray consumers’ confidence.

In the end, the main problem with regard to privacy concerns is that consumers are more or less unaware, or informed of what information is being gathered, how companies do it and what they plan to do with it. Through mobile marketing, companies create a “new” us or what Solove (2004, p. 3) calls “our digital selves.” In order to address this situation, a possible solution could be the idea of a mutual agreement discussed above. According to Becker and Hanley, in order to use mobile marketing correctly and respect customers’ privacy at the same time, companies have to undergo four important steps:

* Choice: “giving the consumer the opportunity to opt-in or choose to participate in the marketer’s initiatives or opt-out and choose to leave and revoke their participation in the marketing initiative at any time.”
* Notice: “the marketer must also provide the consumer with notice, a stated privacy policy that explain exactly what type of information the marketer is collecting […] how this information is to be stored, secured and used or combined with other online and offline information, and shared or sold for the purposes of marketing to the consumer.”
* Value: “consumers should be given value for sharing information with firms […] typical forms of value include the offering of a coupon, free minutes, free or discounted content and monetary incentives.”
* Access and Control: “give consumers access and control over their information so that they can know what is being collected, correct any errors in the information or revoke access permanently to parts or all of the information” (Becker and Hanley 2008 in Kautonen and Karjaluoto, 2008, pp. 132-138).

As ideal as this plan may sound however, it may first of all not be easy to implement and secondly, it may not correspond entirely to companies’ interests, some parts of it at least. While “the process of obtaining opt-ins is crucial to your long-term success in mobile marketing” (Becker and Arnold 2010, p. 106), the idea of giving consumers control and the possibility to make changes to the information collected could easily be met with unease and disapproval by companies. Ultimately, this could lead to a significant loss for them since they would not be able to profit from the buying, selling or sharing of customer information with other organizations.

Although there have been companies that have successfully carried out mobile marketing campaigns (Starbucks, Adidas), one might suggest they were successful because they probably ascertained certain parameters. Given the novelty and complexity of it, mobile marketing may not be for everyone. Specifically, “companies that don’t offer the right product or service or don’t have enough resources to get it right, should wait to undertake a mobile marketing project” (Krum 2010, p. 17). Whether successful or unsuccessful, the fact remains that a great deal of data is being generated that people are unaware of or simply cannot control: “search engines, satellites, sensor networks, scientists, security agencies, marketers and database managers are processing terabytes of data per day” (Van den Hoven 2008, p. 301). To give an example of the intricacy of the situation, Solove (2004, p. 4) says that “about five database compilers have information on almost every household in the United States.” Moreover, “the government itself is the largest gatherer and user of information about individuals and its own practices have long been a concern of privacy advocates” (Henderson 2006, p. 33). And certainly, with news going around about data theft, “about 35% of data pilfered from large companies was taken by organised criminal groups which wanted to sell it or use it to commit another crime” (BBC), the situation does not get any easier. Thus, consumers have every right to worry and make inquiries about their privacy.

Furthermore, another aspect that may hinder the success of mobile marketing is fear of spamming. Mobile spamis “unsolicited, unwanted communications in the form of e-mail, text messages, multimedia messages, and so on” (Becker and Arnold 2010, p. 69). According to Krum (2010, p. 21), “the mobile industry is still very inconsistent and, in many instances, opaque, complicated, and variable […] It has unique assets that make it particularly advantageous for some initiatives but it is not predictable or stable enough for other initiatives.” Therefore, while there are companies that work hard at implementing successful mobile marketing campaigns, there are also companies that may abuse the novelty and inexperience that comes with this medium. Such companies would have no regard for customers or any desire in building a relationship with them, but would be interested only in advertising to them: interrupt so as to send a message across. As Scott (2007, p. 25) says, “people want participation, not propaganda” so if there is too much of the latter, it would be understandable for people to be wary of mobile marketing. Moreover, even though the customer may have opted-in to receive marketing messages, companies have to pay attention to issues such as timing, frequency and content, every time they send them. If messages are sent too often, if they are irrelevant or arrive at an inopportune time, then such irresponsible messaging could upset the customer and push him/her to opt-out of receiving anything further and possibly give up on mobile marketing altogether.

One final issue to discuss has to do with mobile competence. When it comes to mobile marketing, there is a lot of talk and focus on the young generation for many reasons. First of all, it is the surest medium to reach them: “The mobile phone is an extension of everything these new consumers do. They cannot imagine a world without this technology” (Sharma et al. 2008, p. 101). Second of all, the young generation seem to be very interested in technology and competent users of the interface which means that the type of interactivity that mobile marketing brings forth could easily catch on. Last but not least, their word-of-mouth may prove to be extremely influential: “It is Generation C, the younger consumer that can make or break new media almost overnight with viral adoption or immediate rejection” (Sharma et al. 2008, p. 376). However, for mobile marketing to be a success, it cannot only rely on the young audience but on consumers of all ages. Having said that, it might prove challenging for companies to try to reach older customers that find technology too complicated and have no interest in dealing with it or customers that are unaware what a QR code or a location-based service is. Therefore, mobile competence can prove to be essential in the acceptance of mobile marketing by a certain type of consumer.

To sum up, privacy concerns, fear of spamming and mobile competence have been identified as the major issues that may stand in the way of consumers’ acceptance of mobile marketing. Personally, I do not think disapproval and complaints will ever forsake mobile marketing because of the issue of privacy alone. Concerns with regard to it will always be lingering and will come to life at the sight of the first controversy. However, I do believe that many aspects of mobile marketing can be changed for the better, by companies, organizations and consumers alike. Focusing on the latter, I would say that all three major cons previously discussed can be improved through self-education. Regarding the issue of mobile competence at least, self-education might seem the obvious course of action for consumers interested in mobile marketing.

With regard to the other two problems, I would like to first quote journalist Justin Fox (2012) who states that “an awful lot of money is made by banking on customer laziness, limited attention, stupidity.” Thus, customers need to be more familiar with all the aspects involving mobile marketing and how to take action in case of an irregularity. For example, “in France, operators have been encouraging subscribers to report SMS spam. Phone users there can forward offending messages to the Stop-Spam service via the short code 33700” (Sayer 2010). Surely, every country has its own regulations but those who are concerned about spamming can search to find out what options there are to fight against it. With regard to privacy, it is true that consumers cannot control the cookies or web bugs that are embedded in the mobile phone once they click on a banner ad or scan a QR code.

However it could prove helpful to stay informed with the latest news, see what companies are involved in scandals with regard to customer privacy. Such a scandal may prove to be detrimental to a company’s reputation and not only if a significant number of customers ceases to do business with them. For instance, Nike’s sales numbers suffered a major blow when it was revealed that their products were being manufactured in Third World Country sweatshops in sub-par conditions. At the same time, it might be advisable for consumers to read the whole messages they receive from companies on their mobiles since there might be information there about how to opt-out or give feedback on their service which might or might not be of help down the road.

Lastly, since the purpose of this research is to gain a better understanding of consumers’ views towards mobile marketing, it is important to mention that both its benefits and cons are great indicators of that. What consumers say about the benefits and cons, their acceptance or opposition towards them will give me a glimpse of how they regard mobile marketing, whether these would encourage or deter them from experiencing it. As already seen in the introduction (see section 1.2), Hopkins and Turner (2012, p. 4) made a valuable distinction when they said “you’d be surprised how many people *talk* about mobile marketing but don’t actively *use* mobile marketing.” For this research study, the “talking” can be translated into what the respondents, irrespective of their previous activities with regard to mobile marketing, have to say about it, its benefits and cons, basically their thoughts. This is one dimension from which we will try to infer their attitudes. On the other hand, the “using” equals their activities involving mobile marketing from which we will also try to infer their attitudes but which will be thoroughly be discussed in a future section.

## 4.2. Types of Mobile Marketing

### 4.2.1 Text Messaging

The most frequent form of mobile marketing is text messaging which in turn is divided into SMS and MMS text messaging. The former stands for “short message” and “it gives you the ability to communicate directly to your target market by sending a simple, quick text message” (Bober 2011, p. 42). The later on the other hand differentiates itself through content as it can include not only text but also images, sound or video: “it has all the power of SMS but it features the capability to tell a story with images, sound and full-motion video” (Hopkins and Turner 2012, p. 116). For instance, one may receive a text message from his/her favorite brand announcing sales on a certain category of products.

Text messaging is probably the most popular form of mobile marketing because of its high levels of reach among the target group, irrespective of their whereabouts (be it at the office, at home or someplace else). According to Bober (2011, p. 42), “recent studies show that 97% of text messages are read within minutes of receiving them making this the perfect way to get your promotions across.” It would have been interesting however to know a percentage of those who have reacted upon those messages after reading them. In addition, most consumers are familiar with the service: “4 billion texts are sent daily, compared to 2.9 billion Google searches made daily” (Hopkins and Turner 2012, p. 112). Thus, for marketers, text messaging could prove to be the safest choice of all the types of mobile marketing.

Lastly, two very important aspects to pay attention to when doing a text messaging campaign is frequency “think about how often you send someone a message. Send too few and your relationship gets stale; send too many and you run the risk of annoying your customer” (Becker and Arnold 2010, p. 116) and content “no one wants to get the same discount or coupon code every single time he hears from you. Keep your content informative and entertaining with current events and news about your business, the industry, trivia, sweepstakes, and related promotional incentives and programs” (Ibid.) Otherwise, the response of the consumers to the message may not be as successful as anticipated.

### 4.2.2 Mobile Advertising

In the words of Cindy Krum (2010, p. 87), mobile advertising is “the subset of mobile marketing that involves promoting your product or service with text or graphical marketing messages displayed on sites other than your own.” Although there are different types of mobile advertising, only two of them will be discussed here, display ads and paid search ads, as they are the most prevailing.

To begin with, display ads are “the small banner ads that show up when you surf the web on your smartphone […] and can include graphics, colors and even motion” (Hopkins and Turner 2012, p. 10). Usually, they can be seen on mobile websites, apps and even games. Paid search ads on the other hand “show up above the organic search results that are shown when you do a search on Google, Bing or Yahoo!” (Hopkins and Turner 2012, p. 9) While these methods are similar to the ones used in the Internet world, the reaction of the people towards them apparently differs from medium to medium: “Traditional online banners perform at an average of .02% to .05% click-through, whereas Bango, one of the top mobile analytics platforms, claims that mobile banners get an average of 1% to 3% click-through. After click-through, the conversion rates average almost 5 times higher than their non-mobile counterparts” (Krum 2010, p. 88). Since no clear reason has been articulated to explain this behavior, one can only make assumptions: the novelty of the mobile medium might be one explanation; the small screen of the mobile could be another, because of which only one or two ads would be shown which, if well targeted, might have a greater impact; or because “someone searching a keyword on a mobile device is likely to be closer to making a purchase” (Sharma et al. 2008, p. 115). For instance if you are surfing the Internet on your mobile while in a mall and see a display ad of a pizzeria that locates there, you are more likely to click on it than if you had been at home on your computer.

Depending on what is being promoted, the ads could lead the consumer to a homepage or to a specific landing page where he/she could make a purchase or just read more information about an offer, a product or service. Whichever the case, it is vital for companies that want to implement such a campaign, to prepare a smooth navigation for the consumer on the diverted website. It is very important to understand that the experience on a mobile websites differs from that on a computer website and therefore, changes should be made accordingly: “some non-mobile-optimized websites require excessive scrolling; have increased load-time lag on mobile devices; limit message size; and are unable to access pages that require a secure connection, host Flash or have PDFs” (Hopkins and Turner 2012, p. 46). People visiting a website are most probably mobile themselves (on the go or on a break for example) which means they do not have the time or the intention to read or surf the website a lot. Thus, the pages should be simple, to the point and easy to navigate. “If the site is not navigational a potential customer will quickly exit and move on to another site” (Bober 2011, p. 26).

### 4.2.3 Mobile Apps

Short for application, an app “is typically downloaded to a smartphone from an app store to enable the phone user to more easily accomplish a task that can range from checking the weather to comparing products and services” (Martin 2011, p. 26) According to Krum (2010, p. 141), “mobile apps can be a good way to grow a client base, spread brand awareness, create goodwill with existing clients, and monetize the mobile channel,” primarily because it can create engaging, interactive and sometimes unique experiences. For instance, Domino’s Pizza created a user-friendly app that “allows people to order pizza, customize their orders and pay for them, all from their smartphone” (Hopkins and Turner 2012, p. 21). Most definitely, the customization part is what made this app attractive for customers and it shows that as a company, you have to be smart in your approach in order to be successful. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. New applications appear every day yet customers do not automatically download them or use them, the reason for that being that they bring nothing new or innovative to the table: “for any app to be successful, it has to give people a reason to use it over and over again” (Hopkins and Turner 2012, p. 160).

Nowadays there is a vast array of apps to choose from, depending on every customer’s needs and interests: news and information, culture, shopping, branded apps and so on. If there is one problem however regarding these applications, it has to be privacy. “In addition to tracking mobile Web activity, the same tracking code and platform can be used to track customer behavior within an application,” says Krum (2010, p. 34). Actually, in a recent article from Business Insider, Dickinson (2012) reports that 34 app makers got letters from Congress questioning their privacy practices. Thus, while it is refreshing to hear that measures are being taken, privacy still remains a major problem of mobile marketing and a major concern for consumers.

### 4.2.4 QR Codes and Near Field Communication

In Kim Dushinski’s words (2009, p. 175), proximity marketing represents “the distribution of marketing content associated with a particular place.” It can be carried out in different ways, one of them being barcode technology. Pertaining to this technology is the QR Code (Quick Response code) which, unlike the normal barcode, consists of “specially patterned black squares against a white background” (Bober 2011, p. 59). Embedded in it is a piece of information which can be accessed by mobile with a simple scan or picture.

Another way of carrying out proximity marketing is through RFID technology which has very much in common with the one that was just mentioned. Pertaining to it is near field communication (NFC), “a short-range, high-frequency wireless communication technology” (Ahson and Iliyas 2012, p. VII). The main difference between QR codes and NFC is that one of them offers the possibility of a two-way communication: “a NFC tag can work not only as a tag that carries particular information but also as a reader to interpret the information provided by other devices nearby” (Kato et al. 2010, p. 46).

While the most frequent places to encounter these two are on a poster, a newspaper or public places (restaurants, shops, museums), they can be placed everywhere as long as it is relevant. Depending on how creative they are, marketers can pick not only a great display place but also have to choose the data that will be integrated in the code or the chip. The data can direct customers to a website, provide a clip, product information, recommendations, discount and so on (Hopkins and Turner 2012, p. 52). The best thing about these two technologies is how very time-efficient they can be by providing instant access to information for people on-the-go. For instance, on the way to pick up a friend from the airport, a certain someone may scan a QR code from a movie poster and end up buying tickets to go see it the following day.

However, Dushinski (2009, p. 181) warns against falling prey to certain fallacies such as assuming that consumers are up-to-date with all the technological advancements: “few consumers know what to do when they see a 2D barcode […] be prepared to include adequate information to educate consumers on how to participate.” And given the fact that this type of technology has been flourishing lately (Google Goggles, Microsoft Tag), it could prove to be confusing and challenging for the consumer to stay in touch with the latest developments. Thus it could prove to be a good idea for companies to try to amend this probmlem through education and not worsen it.

### 4.2.5 Location-Based Marketing

Also known as geo-marketing, location-based marketing (LBM) is at present a hotly debated tool, thanks to its potential to engage customers in downright rewarding ways. By definition, it is a method that companies can use in order to provide customers with information about products and services of local relevance (Kupper 2005, p. 6).

There are two types of LBM that apparently go by different names. On the one hand, there are location-based services (LBS) which typically refer to “mobile apps that provide information or entertainment to users based on their location” (Hopkins and Turner 2012, p. 147). Theorist Alex Kupper (2005, p. 3) calls it reactive LBM. Irrespective of the name, what characterizes this type of LBM is the fact that the user of the phone is the one who requests information relevant to his/her location. The most famous apps to use in order to tell others your location are Foursquare, Gowalla, Scavenger, WHERE that only require a few clicks for that. The major concern for LBS, says Bodnar (2011, p. 16) is that it involves an action and “users will be too lazy to check-in.” However, Hopkins and Turner (2012, p. 18) report that “Foursquare has more than 11 million members and has generated more than 400 million check-ins including one from space” In addition, the popularity of other apps such as Google Latitude, Friend Finder and Brightkite demonstrate a willingness from people to reveal location information.

One the other hand, there is location-based advertising (LBA) that “isn’t a technology as much as it’s a form of advertising […] to locate people who might be prospects and send them messages” (Hopkins and Turner 2012, p. 149). Also known as proactive LBM (Kupper 2005, p. 3), what makes LBA possible is technology: GPS mobile integration, cell tower localizations, Wi-Fi positioning systems (Azua 2010, p. 199). What differentiates LBA from LBS is that companies are the ones that make the first move by sending information to customers when they enter or approach a certain point of interest. Strout and Schneider (2011, p. 20) speak about geofencing which is “a passive check-in where someone merely walks into a predetermined area.” In other words, a series of nearby locations form an area that is enclosed by geofences (because they are virtual not real) and when a person enters that area, he/she is exposed to receiving messages. An example would be a mall which accommodates all sorts of stores that can make contact with their customers when they enter the building. Appealing as though it may be for customers to receive messages of discounts or special offers, it would be more frustrating for them to succumb to the offer and then find out that they cannot get it. Because what happens if a hundred people respond to a message about a product on sale that the store has only fifty of? This is why a solid mobile campaign must be put into place that would make sure not to let its customers down.

As we have seen, there are many ways in which companies can use mobile marketing. Irrespective of the option chosen, it is clear that it offers them the opportunity to create awareness, to inform, drive purchase decisions and even entertain. In the end, it is the consumers’ choice whether they want to be informed and entertained in this way, based on their personal assessment of the service.

Personally, I believe that this “expose” has reaffirmed the twofold nature of mobile marketing. For the consumer, responding to such messages would be simultaneously beneficial and disadvantageous. At the same time, one of the things that this discussion about the diversity of mobile marketing has unveiled to me is the fact that it can be fun and refreshing. Implicitly, this makes mobile marketing tempting and intriguing which in turn may make people more responsive to it which I believe represents an advantage over other types of marketing. If I were to describe mobile marketing, I would say that via the virtual world, it provides sneak peeks about the real world. And just like in the case of a movie or TV show, it can get the consumer excited, vexed or it can leave him/her indifferent.

## 4.3. Consumer Attitudes

When speaking about consumption, French theorist Jean Baudrillard (in Sassatelli, 2007, p. 83) brings forth the idea of simulacrum. In his opinion, all consumers live in a simulated world in which “their identity becomes synonymous with patterns of consumption which are determined elsewhere.” In other words, they are no longer able to think on their own when it comes to purchases of products or services. Thus they make their decisions based on publicity strategies and manipulations whose purpose is to determine consumers to act precisely as implied.

Going back to mobile marketing, it was mentioned before that in the last few years the mass media, marketers and theorists have heavily promoted it as the next big thing: “Mobile marketing is the marketing of the future. You must understand it or risk being left behind.” (Krum 2010, p. 6) Connecting this idea with that of simulacrum, it would mean that everyone should have accepted mobile marketing by now but the reality of the situation is different: “Consumers are neither blank slates nor carbon copies of each other. Instead, each individual has a host of unique attributes and experiences that influence his or her consumption-related judgments and decisions” (Posavac 2012, p. vii). Therefore we all consume in different ways. Our complex nature as consumers is shaped by many factors (personal beliefs, purchases, experiences, interactions) which ultimately contribute to the decision-making process of each and every one of us. Had consumers been that simple to decipher, there would not be so many marketing campaign failures. On the contrary, treating them as a homogeneous mass is where the mistake lies.

Therefore, we have established that consumers have different views on products and services or in this particular research, mobile marketing. In order to gain an understanding of how they respond to it, we will take a closer look at their attitudes towards it. According to Schiffman et al. (2008, p. 248), “an attitude is a learned predisposition to behave in a consistently favorable or unfavorable way with respect to a given object.” Broadly speaking, there are three basic attitudes that a consumer can have towards a product or service: positive, negative and neutral. A positive attitude refers to readily embracing a product or service and largely, that would translate into a process of purchase or use. However, “having a favorable attitude may not necessarily lead directly to purchase since some other intervening variable such as price may get in the way” (Copley 2004, p. 60). In other words, a person may regard mobile marketing positively but at the same time choose not to respond in any way to it due to personal reasons (tech illiteracy may be an example). In turn, a negative attitude means displaying a certain amount of opposition towards a product or service. Once again though, a person may have a negative attitude but a positive purchase or use behavior. For instance, there may be people who think badly of mobile marketing but at the same time agree to receive SMS messages from brands because the possibility of receiving a discount or free gift is too tempting to resist. Therefore, in order to understand how consumers respond to mobile marketing, it is essential to make inquiries into their attitudes but their behavior as well since it may uncover more patterns and make the research more complex. Last but not least, a neutral attitude characterizes a person who has not decided yet how he/she views mobile marketing. Such an attitude may be justified by a lack of knowledge or lack of opportunity to give it a try.

Moreover, literature suggests that attitudes have three dimensions: cognitive (mental images, interpretation and understanding of the thing), affective (feelings and emotions towards the thing) and conative or behavioral (intentions, actions and behavior with regard to the thing) (Copley 2004, p. 60). These dimensions represent the stages that lie at the basis of the consumer’s decision-making process. Arnould et al. speak about the process that every consumer goes through in order to accept or reject a product or service. The stages included in this process are: awareness, interest, trial, adoption/rejection (Arnould et al. 2004, p. 740). As it can be seen, the three dimensions mentioned earlier are very much incorporated into this process. Ultimately, it represents a model that will guide this research and help clarify how consumers respond to mobile marketing.

Awareness Interest Trial Adoption/Rejection

**Figure 1.** Consumer’s Decision-Making Process

The first logical step for any new product or service entering the market is to garner awareness and this can first of all be achieved through exposure. Consumers may learn about it directly from the manufacturer (in the form of advertising, company websites, direct marketing), from other consumers (word of mouth), from experts (articles in newspapers) and from involuntary direct experience with the product or service (Posavac 2012, p. 34). Thus, exposure is controlled to a certain extent by the company behind the product or service but for the most part, it is unrestrained. However, for consumers to be completely aware and retain the new product or service in their memory, exposure is not enough which is why there are four more steps to complete. They are: attention, “the allocation of processing capacity to an incoming message” (Copley 2004, p. 56); comprehension, “the desired meaning being attributed to a message depends on how a consumer categorizes and elaborates a stimulus through the use of existing knowledge and beliefs” (Ibid.); acceptance, “the consumer may understand a message but not alter buying intentions or behavior. Acceptance means having to change consumer attitudes” (Ibid.); retention, “the message is noted and stored for use on a future occasion” (Ibid.).

Therefore, it can be assumed that the consumer is aware of the new product or service once he/she understands the message. His or her interpretation of it is of great importance because it very much influences the consumer’s opinion in this early stage and it prompts reaction which basically, can go two ways” “it might propel a consumer towards a particular behavior or repel the consumer away from a particular behavior” (Schiffman et al. 2008, p. 248). In other words, it may be decided that he/she is not interested and thus there is no need for further inquiry. According to Schiffman et al. (2008, p. 186), “many people tend to jump to conclusions before examining all the relevant evidence.” So for instance, a person may choose to not fall prey to mobile marketing because he/she heard there may be privacy problems but is not fully informed on the issue. This of course is just an example provided in order to give more clarity to the situation but the reasons for not responding to mobile marketing at this stage are manifold and vary depending on the person.

Awareness  Interest  Trial  Adoption/Rejection

**Figure 1.** Consumer’s Decision-Making Process

Those who are willing to positively respond to the message however, are poised to go to the next step of the process. Expressing an interest in the new product or service means that “information search begins” (Arnould et al. 2004, p. 740). In what could be regarded as a more exploratory stage, this is the time when the consumer examines all the relevant evidence, so as to make the connection to what Schiffman et al. stated earlier. As to what relevant evidence entails, the possibilities are manifold. First of all, consumers may want to look into the product or service’s attributes so as to make sure that it addresses their needs and wants. As Peppers and Rogers (2005, p. 39) say, “Customers just want to have their problems solved and their needs met” so this is a major premise for them when considering something new. Moreover, consumers may want to know more about the advantages and disadvantages of the product or service to verify whether it is worthy of their attention. Although it may not be perfect, if it manages to create value to the consumer then he/she will appreciate it all the more and may give it a chance. At the same time, consumers may take an interest in the company behind the product or service and if familiar with it, the experiences they previously had might prove to be decisive. If they have an existing favorable opinion toward a company, they may be more inclined to try the new product or service whereas this may not happen in the opposite scenario. Credibility is also important: “a source considered unreliable or untrustworthy is likely to be received with skepticism and may be rejected” (Schiffman et al. 2008, p. 285). Regardless, the choice lies with the consumer once again. After the information search comes to an end and the consumer ponders on what was discovered, he/she has once again two choices: the first one is to decide not to give it a try while the other one implies taking a risk and choosing to do it.

Awareness  Interest  Trial  Adoption/Rejection

**Figure 1.** Consumer’s Decision-Making Process

Therefore, the third stage of the process involves the service trial in which the consumer is moved to action and gains firsthand experience using the service (Arnould et al. 2004, p. 740). At this point, the consumer is testing the expectations developed during the first two stages for confirmation or disconfirmation. According to Schiffman et al. (2008, p. 90), there are three possible outcomes after the first experience: actual performance matches expectations, exceeds expectations or is below expectations, causing dissatisfaction. Once the evaluation of the service is over, the consumer must follow it up with a decision. The concept of customer satisfaction is very much connected with that of customer expectations and is a first prerequisite for additional experiences. If the consumer feels the service did not deliver, he/she may choose to no longer make use of it, which would mean rejection of the service. Since we are talking about mobile marketing however, there may be another alternative to rejection in cases of dissatisfaction. As previously discussed, there are various types of mobile marketing and so there is the possibility of choosing to use one over another that failed such as for instance using QR codes but disagree to receiving text messages.

Awareness  Interest  Trial  Adoption/Rejection

**Figure 1.** Consumer’s Decision-Making Process

On the other hand, if the consumer feels the service lived up or exceeded expectations, then he/she will probably use it again. As Evans et al. (2009, p. 114) state, “if an experience is satisfying, not only are we more likely to repeat it but also we are likely to develop favorable attitudes towards it.” The same idea is reinforced by Sharma et al. (2008, p. 80) who believe that “great user experiences are the cornerstone of engagement.” Thus, engaging on more than one occasion in mobile marketing as a result of rewarding experiences would qualify as adoption of the service. Adoption means that the consumer must respond to at least one type of mobile marketing, as often or rare as he/she considers fit (frequency is not a crucial element). This would prove that mobile marketing has been accepted in one way or another. Although this is the final stage of the process, it does not mean that the consumer’s choice ends here. If the service proves to be consistently satisfying and reliable, there may be no obvious reason to give up on it. But if the dissatisfying aspects somehow get to outweigh the beneficial ones, then continuation may no longer be option. In this case, the consumer may decide to no longer engage in mobile marketing.

As seen by now, each stage offers consumers the opportunity to form, strengthen or diminish their opinion on mobile marketing and based on that, decide what course of action to take next. As a result of their research on consumers’ attitudes toward the Internet, theorists Windham and Orton (2000, p. 269) have identified five different segments of consumers: access aspirants, budget conscious, angst avoiders, paranoiacs and technology rejecters. At the same time, Schiffman et al. (2008, p. 9) identified several types of consumers based on their level of satisfaction: loyalists, defectors, terrorists, hostages and mercenaries. Adapting the two models to this study, a new set of segments will be used in order to categorize consumers’ attitudes and behavior towards mobile marketing:

* Loyalists: satisfied consumers who have adopted mobile marketing. They respond to it because they want to.
* Hostages: consumers who are not particularly keen on mobile marketing but have adopted it out of personal reasons.
* Aspirants: consumers who have experienced mobile marketing and are interested in adopting it.
* Defectors: consumers who have experienced mobile marketing but decided not to pursue it any further.
* Newcomers: consumers who are aware of mobile marketing and are interested in giving it a try for the first time.
* Avoiders: consumers who are aware of mobile marketing but are not interested to try it.
* Tech Rejecters/Technophobes: consumers who object to the use of technology.

For this research study, it is important to find out if consumers are aware of the different types of mobile marketing, if they have experienced any of them, if they would be interested to or not. Such data will reveal where they stand when it comes to mobile marketing and provide an answer to the problem formulation. What I personally would like to emphasize however is the fact that attitudes are not permanent. Consumers are changeable individuals and as they change, their needs, interests, opinions, they all change. Thus, what was satisfactory in the past may not be satisfactory in the future and vice versa. So I believe it is important to remember that. And while the findings of this research study will present an answer for what is going on in the present, it may not be relevant in three or 10 years’ time because of what I have just stated. Unpredicted developments in the mobile marketing business may cause alteration in perception and point of view.

**5. ANALYSIS**

As already mentioned, the objective of this study is to gain a better understanding of the consumers’ perception of mobile marketing. To that purpose, a questionnaire was designed. It consisted of twenty four questions which were developed from the theory presented in the previous chapter. The first six questions established the demographic characteristics of the respondents (age, gender, nationality) and also inquired about their mobile device (type, use, features). The second part (from seven to fourteen) included questions about awareness, knowledge and experience with regard to mobile marketing. The remaining ten questions were meant to investigate consumers’ viewpoint on the benefits and cons of the service, with an emphasis on privacy issues.

While an exact number of how many questionnaires were distributed cannot be given (it was promoted online through links on different websites as well as sent to a considerable amount of people via email databases), it is safe to say that more than 800 people were exposed to it. In total, 128 questionnaires were returned but after removing the unfinished submissions, a net sample of 114 remained. The respondents include 74 females and 40 males, ranging from 18 to 54 years old. In the remainder of this chapter, the data collected from the questionnaires will be introduced and interpreted in order to answer the problem formulation.

## 5.1 Consumer Attitudes and Activities

Ever since the introduction of the iPhone in 2007 and that of Android in early 2008, the adoption of smartphones has increased exponentially every year. This seems to be the case with our respondents as well, 73 out of which already own a smartphone and 16 intending to buy one in the near future, leaving only 26 people without one or the intention to have one. In addition, it appears that the ‘smartphone fever’ has definitely sunk in as users make the most out of it and use most features. With the exception of four people, 69 of the smartphone owners access the Internet on their mobile device one way or another: email (67), online searches (53), instant messaging (48), weather (47), social networking or blogging (45), news (41), maps (40), Youtube (32), bank accounts (16). It is true that marketing in the form of text messages can be carried out on regular phones but the reality is that on a smartphone, it can flourish and thrive. If the results above indicate anything, is the fact that there is potential for people to be tempted and for mobile marketing to grow if the service is marketed in the right way, as Michael and Safter, Becker and Arnold (see section 3) also said. Theory has touched upon the new possibilities that the mobile phone can provide as a marketing channel. It is up to companies and organizations to come up with competent campaigns to catch consumers’ attention and spur their interest.

### 5.1.1 Awareness of Mobile Marketing

**Figure 2.** Awareness of Mobile Marketing

Now that we have established that mobile marketing is not going anywhere, we will focus our attention on consumers’ perception of it. In order to find that out, we have to look at their attitudes. First of all, attitudes can be inferred from what consumers do and what they do does not necessarily mean only direct experience with the service. Apart from this, it also refers to their awareness of mobile marketing, search of information and intentions, at least according to Arnould et al.’s consumer’s decision-making process (see section 4.3). Therefore, their attitudes can be inferred from their pre-consumption, consumption and post-consumption activities, depending on the case.

To begin with, it is important to address the high level of awareness with regard to mobile marketing that the respondents have. With the exception of three people, everyone else has heard of at least one type of mobile marketing. Thus, if the consumers have retained this information in their brain, it means that whatever exposure they had to it (ads, websites, articles), they understood the message or what it was about (see section 4.3). Considering the fact that many people may pass by a billboard without even noticing it or may not remember a TV ad the next day after its screening, this can be interpreted as a positive thing. It is easier to promote a service that people are more or less aware of. For instance, not everyone set up a Facebook profile as soon as they heard about it. On the contrary, it took time to grow on people.

As it can be seen in figure 2., the types of mobile marketing they are most aware of are SMS, apps and MMS which is explicable given the fact that text messaging is the oldest “trick in the book” mobile marketing-wise and has been around for a long period of time. For example, Tsang, Ho and Liang’s study on SMS-advertising appeared in 2004 (see section 3). Also, the introduction of iTunes along with the iPhone caused a massive frenzy among consumers and the word app quickly came to be on everyone’s lips which led to immense popularity of the word and concept. Obviously, not every app has a marketing aspect embedded but given how popular they are nowadays, it is safe to assume that consumers, smartphone users or not, are relatively informed about it. Thus, it is understandable how most of the respondents identified the app as a type of mobile marketing. It is also important to mention that the type of mobile each respondent has is not “responsible” for their level of awareness regarding mobile marketing. Actually, more than half of the respondents who own a regular mobile phone, 32 out of 42 to be more exact, are aware of other types of mobile marketing than text messaging which in their case would be the only one they could experience if they wanted to. So the mobile device in itself is not a hindrance in this sense.

Speaking of other mobile marketing tools, in each case fewer than half of the respondents admitted to having heard of them: display ads (47), LBM (31), QR codes (29), paid search ads (24) and NFC (14). Somewhat surprising is the low awareness level with regard to display and paid search ads given the fact that this type of advertising has first been seen in the computer world and it has been around for some time. Krum has indeed acknowledged a low 1% to 3% click-through for mobile banners and an even lower percentage for traditional online banners (see section 4.2.2) but the assumption could have easily been refusal to use them or lack of trust not lack of attention. If these statistics are indicative of anything then I believe they confirm Godin’s theory (see section 4.1.1) that there is an attention crisis going on. People have a limited amount of time and a far greater array of possibilities to choose from to make consumer-related decisions. Figuring out how to use it wisely and what to pay attention to depends on each and everyone one but the bottom line remains that catching consumers’ attention is a challenge for every marketer.

Thus, it can be concluded that the respondents’ awareness with regard to mobile marketing in general is high (98%) which means that more or less people know what it is about which in turn means that they get to have a viewpoint about it. Since this is what this research is after, this information is more than welcome. However, when breaking the service down to different types, we have seen that some of them are more familiar to the respondents than others. Hence, there is a need for certain types of mobile marketing to be promoted more, especially LBM, QR codes and NFC, since they can provide a different, more interactive experience than the other ones (see sections 4.2.4 and 4.2.5).

### 5.1.2 Interest in Mobile Marketing

**Figure 3.** Interest in Mobile Marketing

Furthermore, the correlation between the extent of awareness and intention to know more about mobile marketing is significantly low. For starters, almost half of the respondents (53) had never been interested to find out more about any of the different types of mobile marketing. Interest is, as we have seen, the second stage in the consumers’ decision-making process (see section 4.3). This means that 50 of the respondents (the other three were not even aware what mobile marketing was so could not have expressed an interest) were not captivated enough by mobile marketing to pursue it any further (ask friends, read articles, search information online). Of those who did however (61), it is a fact that some displayed a higher sense of curiosity than others, in the sense that 26 of them have searched information about only one type of mobile marketing while the remaining 36 about multiple types (from two to even eight). Although not really encouraging, the results for those who did express an interest are as follows: apps (32), SMS (27), QR codes (21), MMS (18), display ads (15), LBM (14), NFC (9), paid search (8). An interesting fact is that QR codes and NFC convinced most of their audience (although scarce) to take a further interest, losing only 8 and 5 respondents respectively from the awareness stage, while all the other types have lost significant numbers. Thus, one may never know with more awareness about them, what kind of interest and response these two might cause.

While we do not know when exactly this search of information took place for any of the respondents, it is safe to assume that it happened in the past. Thus the above results indicate a past level of interest in mobile marketing. Respondents were asked a further question in order to assess their level of interest for the future. Specifically they were asked to name what (other) type(s) of mobile marketing they would be interested to search more information about. While there is indeed a change in the statistics, it still cannot be deemed as encouraging. If before 53 of the respondents had never displayed any type of interest towards mobile marketing, this time 51 of them stated their disinterest in finding more about it. What is noteworthy however has to do with the changes that have taken place in the meantime. Some respondents have remained constant in the sense that they were not and are still not interested (32) or they were and are still interested (42) to find out more about mobile marketing. But there are also people who have not been curious before but are now (20) and vice versa (19). The general results however have not improved in any significant way: display ads, paid search ads, NFC and LBM are the only ones who have in the meantime experienced a slight increase in the level of interest; for others it has decreased (SMS, MMS, apps) or remained just the same (QR codes). Overall, the level of interest of the respondents in mobile marketing has increased from the past to the present by only 1%.

Therefore, it can be said that while the awareness with regard to mobile marketing is high (98%), the level of interest in the service is significantly lower (54%). This means that the new type of marketing that so many have hailed as the “next best thing” (see section 3), has failed to garner a significant amount of interest from the people that actually matter and on which its success depends, the consumer. By comparison, Google+ which is a different spin put to social media sites (just as mobile marketing is a different spin put to marketing), has drawn such interest that in 16 days after its launch, it reached 10 million users (Imran, 2011). Going back to mobile marketing, the results show that 44% of the respondents, 50 in numbers, are not interested in the experience that mobile marketing could provide which means that it failed to appeal to them. Personally, I believe that more mobile campaigns could be of real help since it would somehow “force” the consumer into finding out more if he or she wants to be a part of the experience. If the campaigns were to go viral, it would be even better since this way they could spur more interest. People are more willing to look into something recommended by friends or family or something that is “the talk of the town.” The more people interested in the service, the higher the chances of giving mobile marketing a try.

### 5.1.3 Experience with Mobile Marketing

Evidently, one could try to justify the modest level of interest of the respondents in mobile marketing by drawing attention to the possibility that they may have opted to directly experience it without getting informed first. Experience or trial as Arnould et al. name it (see section 4.3) is the third stage in the consumer’s decision-making process. In any case, this could have been a valid argument had the statistics regarding the respondents’ experience with mobile marketing been actually higher than the ones we have just presented above. The truth however is that the correlation between the level of interest and the level of experience with the service is even lower than the previous

**Figure 4.** Experience with Mobile Marketing

awareness – interest relation, with one exception. In the case of SMS marketing, it does seem that many of the respondents skipped the “information search” stage and delved into the experience: 27 respondents have tried to find out more about SMS marketing whereas 55 of them interacted with a company or organization via SMS. It can be assumed that people’s familiarity with SMS in general may have made them feel at ease with the service and in no need for further inquiry so they simply decided for the experience.

In all the other cases of mobile marketing however, the respondents’ experience is extremely low. While the statistics for apps (27) and QR codes (12) can under no circumstances be perceived as positive, those for display ads (8), paid search ads (7), MMS (6), NFC (4) and LBM (3) are downright discouraging. Looking at these numbers, it sure seems difficult to perceive mobile marketing as the “marketing of the future,” as Dushinski named it (see section 4.3), considering the fact that if consumers do not embrace it then there is no future for mobile marketing. Looking at the bigger picture however, one must not forget that almost half of the respondents did experience SMS marketing, most probably because they were familiar with it. At the same time, we have already established that there is a modest level of awareness with regard to paid search ads, QR codes, NFC and LBM so the level of interest could not, from the start, be any higher. Thus, I return once again to the idea of more promotion. Moreover, I agree with the claim that consumers should be educated on the new possibilities that technological advancements supply (see section 4.2.4). Knowledge may help the consumer understand the service better, its benefits, cons and usage and consequently give it a try but in no way does it guarantee acceptance or success. It can go either way since it depends on the consumer’s perception of it. Nonetheless, through promotion, consumers can be educated in this regard.

Overall, 47 of the respondents admitted to not having experienced mobile marketing while 67 have, although 7 of them have stated that their experience consisted in simply receiving spam messages, meaning that only 60 of them have willingly experienced it. According to the results, fear of spamming seems to be a legitimate concern for consumers (see section 4.1.2) as 31 of the respondents have apparently received such messages. Going back to the statistics, if we take into account that 55 of the 60 respondents mentioned have experienced SMS marketing (some only the SMS type, others two or more) then its prevalence among the others is all the more visible. Moreover, as in the case of past and future interest in mobile marketing that we inquired about, the respondents were asked the same thing about their experience. As it turns out, the future does not seem any brighter. The results indicate an increase in the “none” segment. In other words, if 47 of the respondents did not experience mobile marketing before, 59 now admit that they would not like to experience mobile marketing or other types of mobile marketing. In fact, the willingness to give them a try is considerably low. The numbers do not show an all of a sudden excitement or change of heart that would offer mobile marketing, in this instance, a glimmer of hope: LBM (24), apps (19), NFC (16), QR codes (13), paid search ads (10), MMS (7), SMS (6), display ads (6).

As mentioned above, there is a disparity in the respondents’ answers between the level of interest and that of experience with mobile marketing. Namely, there is a higher level in the former than the latter (with the exception of SMS). What this means is that interest and experience are not necessarily complementary. Some people may only want to keep informed about the things around them but not automatically yield in to them and vice versa (as we have seen with SMS marketing). But it is still important to know how curious or informed consumers are with regard to a product or service. The interest statistics have shown a first reaction of the respondents with regard to mobile marketing: 50 of the respondents were not interested to know more about it. But it should not be automatically assumed that none of them will give it a try or that those who displayed an interest will all experience it. Just like theory says (see section 4.3), from here on, it can go either way: the consumer can stop or take the next step. Assessing experience is simply a way of rounding up the respondents’ attitudes from their activities. And speaking of experience, as a conclusion to this section, it can be said that approximately half of the respondents have experienced mobile marketing. Of them however, a large percentage have experienced SMS marketing in particular and an extremely low number have experienced other types, which, ironically, are at the forefront of journalists’ and theorists’ attention because of the possibilities they can provide; possibilities that have apparently failed to resonate with the respondents.

### 5.1.4 Adoption/Rejection of Mobile Marketing

**Figure 5.** Adoption/Rejection of Mobile Marketing

After assessing the respondents’ level of awareness, interest and experience, the results have revealed the following perspectives (see section 4.3):

* Loyalists: 9 respond to mobile marketing on a regular basis because they enjoy it
* Hostages: 18 respond to mobile marketing for personal reasons but do not enjoy it
* Aspirants: 15 have experienced mobile marketing and would like to respond to it on a regular basis
* Defectors: 25 have experienced mobile marketing but will no longer respond to it
* Newcomers: 12 have never experienced mobile marketing but would be interested to
* Avoiders: 35 have never experienced mobile marketing and are not interested to
* Tech Rejecters/Technophobes: none of the respondents objects to the use of technology

Thus, in terms of rejection and adoption (see section 4.3) the results are as follows: of the 67 respondents who have experienced mobile marketing (spam included), 42 have adopted it and 25 have rejected it; of the 47 respondents who have never experienced mobile marketing, 35 are not interested to while 12 of them would be. Overall we have 42 adopters, 60 rejecters and 12 neutralists. In terms of positive-negative-neutral attitudes (see section 4.3.) we already know that 3 of the respondents are not familiar with mobile marketing which means that they cannot have a proper opinion. And although they have rejected the service, it is natural to reject something you know nothing about. So, it is already established that 3 of the respondents, or 2%, have a neutral attitude. That leaves us with 57 rejecters who have a negative attitude towards mobile marketing, to which we add the 18 people who respond to mobile marketing for personal reasons but do not enjoy it. Therefore, 75 of the respondents, or 66%, have a negative attitude. Finally, to the 24 respondents who enjoy mobile marketing, we add the 12 persons who would like to experience it. While the latter are neutral in terms of adoption/rejection because they have not decided yet which is going to be, all of them are aware of mobile marketing and most of them have even searched for information. If with the little or considerable amount of information they know they still want to give it a try, it could be assumed that at the stage they are right now, they have a positive attitude towards mobile marketing. In total, that means 36 of the respondents or 32% have a positive attitude.

To sum up, the overall results do not look particularly encouraging for mobile marketing. After assessing their activities (awareness, interest and experience), it was revealed that the respondents’ adoption of the service is low and that more than half of them display a negative attitude towards it.

## 5.2 Consumer Attitudes and Words

At the beginning of this chapter, it was mentioned that attitudes can be inferred from what consumers do, meaning pre-consumption, consumption and post-consumption activities. On the other hand, attitudes can also be inferred from what consumers say. In this particular case, respondents were asked some questions in order to find out their thoughts with regard to issues such as benefits and cons of mobile marketing. By choosing or expressing the answer(s) that seemed fit, the respondents have expressed their thoughts on the issue, thus allowing the researcher to get a glimpse of and test whether the general attitude likens to the one inferred from their activities.

### 5.2.1 Cons of Mobile Marketing

**Figure 6.** Cons of Mobile Marketing

To begin with, regarding the cons of mobile marketing, it appears that many factors influence on the respondents’ propensity to disapprove of it, some more than others. Many of their complains involve the issue of privacy invasion due to corporate

access to personal information and the constant monitoring of mobile activity issue, with 68 and 45 of them respectively choosing the two. It is no wonder that privacy invasion placed first in the respondents’ concerns with mobile marketing. Apparently, there is a high awareness among them with regard to consumer information sharing between third parties: 101 of them are informed on the matter while a mere 13 are not. Aware of this or not, the issue of privacy is a delicate one and as a consequence, most of them have taken precautions to protect their mobile privacy. More exactly, 63 have created a strong password that contains letters, numbers and characters, 57 do not use apps or go to sites that ask or use their personal information, 27 do not access their accounts via a mobile device and 24 always read privacy policies to understand disclosures regarding use of their personal information. Thus, this confirms Ahas’ point (see section 4.1.2) that for some, the mobile phone may be too personal to allow companies or organizations to disturb them and invade their “mobile” space.

With all their precautions however, the respondents seem to be conscious of the fact that personal data will always be in demand and companies will always find ways to get it. Not knowing what information is being collected is another complain coming from 67 of the respondents and at the same time the inability to control disclosure and use of their personal information (55). Therefore, almost as bothersome as privacy invasion is the fact that the respondents do not know what information is used to create their digital selves and how it will further be used. Of the three perspectives on consumer privacy (see section 4.1.2), the centrist one might be able to address these concerns best, at least according to our respondents. Apparently, 91 of them are willing to share selective information with companies or organizations through their mobile phone. Specifically, many of them agree to share their gender (72) and age (72) and considerably less would share the following: full name (37), email (34), anonymous demographic info (28), date of birth (27), location (26), phone number (12), address (7), website surfing behavior on the mobile (5) and photos or videos (2). What is surprising is the low number of people who would share their location. Sure enough, this analysis is based only on 114 people but with the reported popularity of location apps such as Foursquare and Gowalla (see section 4.2.5), I would have personally thought there would be more location-sharing enthusiasts. Interesting enough, half of the respondents (55) would be likely to accept some sort of benefit (coupon, discount, monetary incentives) in exchange for their information. Therefore this idea of a mutual agreement could be worked upon in order to address privacy concerns. If implemented however, I personally believe that people will still have trust issues. Even with the mutual agreement, it would be hard for consumers in general to not suspect companies or organizations of covertly collecting their information.

Moreover, apart from the cons already discussed, the results of the questionnaire reveal that more than half of the respondents, 63 to be more exact, are also concerned with mobile spamming (see section 4.1.2). In one of the sections above, it has been specified that 31 of them have already received spam messages on their mobile devices so their concern is not unfounded. Thus, even with the opt-in choice that many companies grant those customers that are interested to receive their messages (and 42 of the respondents have admitted to having registered for such messages), there are still businesses that negatively take advantage of the possibilities that the mobile phone provides. Finally, only five respondents have acknowledged the challenging technology that mobile marketing would imply as a concern.

Overall, 105 of the 114 respondents have identified to have at least one concern with regard to mobile marketing. What is interesting is that we have previously established that 75 of them have a negative attitude towards the service. What this means is that it would be wrong to assume that based on these stated concerns all of them view mobile marketing negatively. If anything, it shows that some people may have complaints, problems they may want to be addressed but still view the service in a favorable manner based perhaps on the benefits it provides or other personal reasons. Admittedly, if we are to think of Facebook, there have been numerous articles in the press (Mui, 2011; Sengupta, 2011; Taylor, 2012) and open criticism to the way the social media giant handles personal privacy and security of users. In spite of it, Facebook still has over 800 million users worldwide and I personally have not encountered any articles that report a dramatic loss of users because of it. If a service, a product or company gives the consumer enough reasons to remain faithful then I believe he or she will.

Taking all the cons into consideration or at least those that matter to them, the respondents were further asked how likely they were to reject mobile marketing. Only 18 of them were not likely to, while 48 were very likely and again 48 somewhat likely. The general response is to a certain extent surprising. Once again, if we are to look at our previous conclusions, 60 of the respondents have openly rejected mobile marketing based on their experience or personal assessment. If this study had only inferred the respondents’ attitudes based only on what they say about mobile marketing, we could have concluded that since 96 of them are more or less likely to reject the service then most probably they have a negative attitude towards it. However, since the study takes into account their actions not only their words, we can see that we would have been wrong. This discrepancy simply endorses what was said one paragraph ago that the negative aspects of a product or service, in this case mobile marketing, may not matter as much to push the respondents away.

### 5.2.2 Benefits of Mobile Marketing

**Figure 7.** Benefits of Mobile Marketing

In what the benefits are concerned, it certainly cannot be said mobile marketing is deficient in this department. Theory has shown what the novelty of the mobile phone as a marketing channel consists of. Its most appreciated benefit has been selected by 67 of the respondents to be the fast access to information that it can provide, which is one of the aspects that sets mobile marketing apart (see section 4.1.1). Somewhat surprising is the fact that in second place 51 of the respondents have chosen the benefit of incentives. In the literature presented and discussed a chapter ago, the incentives issue is not regarded as a main advantage of mobile marketing primarily because the three that are considered so, are guaranteed every time a person may choose to respond to a mobile marketing message. Incentives on the other hand are more of a conditional benefit. In the theoretical part, it first appears when Becker and Hanley (see section 4.1.2) present a plan that companies or organizations should stick to in order to use mobile marketing correctly, which says that consumers who share their information with them should be rewarded in the form of an incentive. So far in practice, incentives have been awarded to serve various purposes, from brand building to attracting new customers, rewarding loyal customers or promoting a new product or service. However, irrespective of their purpose, of how often or seldom they are being offered, it seems that for part of the respondents at least, this is viewed as an attractive benefit of mobile marketing.

As opposed to the fast access to information that it provides, the other two main advantages of mobile marketing have not garnered a high level of interest from the respondents. Apparently, only 38 of them appreciate the time-efficient solutions that may simplify life or come to the aid of those people who cannot find the time to deal with all the tasks that need to be dealt with. Even fewer people (23) are interested in receiving personalized offers based on their profile. Admittedly, receiving such offers presupposes that their beneficiary agrees with the monitoring, gathering and analysis of their information by businesses and it is already known that this is a delicate issue. In addition, their attempts at showing through their offers how well they know their customers may be met with unease, hostility or perceived as a sign of persuasion. The low number of respondents that see personalization as a benefit certainly does not repress the possibility of these assumptions. Lastly, forming deeper connections with companies or organizations as a result of personalization appeals to a mere 11 people. It definitely disproves Peppers and Rogers’ claim that most customers are receptive to the idea of building relationships with brands of their choice (see section 4.1.1). Actually, this “bonus” of personalization might be seen as more beneficial by companies than by consumers.

Based on all these benefits, the respondents were asked whether they believe mobile marketing addresses or would address their needs as consumers better. For a marketing service that is unprecedented in its ability to catch consumers at the right time and with the right message, it sure did not make a grand impression. In numbers, only 29 of them believe it addresses their needs better. The rest of the answers are divided between “no” (41) and “don’t know” (44). An interesting fact to mention is that of the 67 people who have experienced mobile marketing, 46 of them are in one of the two last categories. It is irrelevant whether the campaign was shoddy or the company behind it was inexperienced or ill-intentioned, or even if the service was carried out to a high standard. The statistics show that mobile marketing did not manage to convince most of the users of its beneficial novelty. It is understandable for them to view it as just another type of marketing if they do not enjoy or experience any benefit to their liking.

Furthermore, this could serve as an explanation for the lower number of people who said they would adopt mobile marketing because of its benefits as opposed to those who said they would not because of the cons. By comparison, the latter have caused a lot more stir, feelings of frustration and vexation with the service. The benefits have failed to outweigh the cons and generate more powerful feelings of interest and excitement. First of all, 37 of the respondents are unlikely to adopt mobile marketing because of its benefits which can roughly be translated to “they do not matter to me.” That means that the remaining 77 respondents would be likely (19 are very likely, 58 somewhat likely) to some extent to adopt mobile marketing. However previous answers (see section 5.2.1) have revealed that 96 of them are more or less likely to reject it, which would have been fine except there are 114 respondents in total and one cannot be likely to adopt and reject mobile marketing at the same time. This means that many of them are conflicted and do not yet have a clear, honest idea of how they feel about mobile marketing which result in such discrepancies. So once again, it would have been wrong to assume based on these answers that 77 of them have a positive attitude towards mobile marketing.

Moreover, just as it happened in the previous section, there are a number of people who claim that they would adopt mobile marketing (77) but a lower number of people (42) who have actually adopted mobile marketing as a result of their experiences. Even more baffling are their answer choices to describe how they view their experience with mobile marketing (real or potential). With the exception of 5 people who refrained from giving a direct answer, the rest of the respondents have chosen between useful (33), intrusive (28), useless (25), satisfying (18), necessary (12), frustrating (11) and better than expected (10). The results reveal that 57 of the respondents view mobile marketing positively as opposed to 47 who do not, while 5 of them regard it both positively and negatively. Once again there is a disparity between results. Based on their activities concerning mobile marketing, the respondents have chosen a certain perspective from which we inferred their attitudes on the matter. Thus, it has already been established that 36 of them view mobile marketing positively while 75 view it negatively.

## 5.2.3 Data Discussion

What do these clashing statistics mean? What conclusions can be drawn from this? These are natural questions that may come to mind as a consequence of the results that were presented in this chapter so an explanation is in order. We have seen at the very beginning of the analytical part that half of the respondents are only aware of mobile marketing. While it was established what awareness means in the theoretical part (see section 4.3), we do not know if that translates exactly into practice, we do not know what their awareness implies or to what extent it goes. Assumptions can be made: maybe they only know how QR codes work, the benefits it provides but not the cons, what apps to use in order to be in touch with a certain company and so on. Thus it was important to build the questionnaire in such a way so as to not influence their answers. The respondents had to first answer questions that would assess their awareness, interest and experience, which in the end helped them choose a certain perspective on the matter (have not experienced mobile marketing and am not interested to, respond to mobile marketing on a regular basis because I enjoy it and so on).

Having established that, the next round of questions contained information on mobile marketing which may or may not have brought to light unknown aspects to the respondents. This new information could have easily influenced them and made them express thoughts that they may not have had until then or thoughts that may not correspond to their stated position. For example, one or more of the 53 respondents who were only aware of mobile marketing could have claimed that they have not experienced mobile marketing but would be interested to, a position which we have already established implies a positive attitude. However, upon discovering that companies may be monitoring their mobile activity or spam their inbox, they may have changed their mind and said that this would very likely make them reject the service. Hence, inconsistency of attitude. Similarly, someone else could have said that he or she is not interested in the experience that mobile marketing has to offer but state at the same time that he or she is very likely to adopt the service because of its benefits. Having assessed their responses individually in order to find an answer for this situation, I have to say that this type of inconsistency has indeed come up more than a few times.

So what conclusions can be drawn from this? In my opinion the fact that actions really do speak louder than words. When assessing consumer attitudes with regard to a product or service, definitely the most relevant and viable for use points of view will come from those consumers who have had direct contact with it. Indeed, every piece of data should be interpreted with a grain of salt but data from those without direct contact, although they have an opinion on the matter, should be interpreted this way even more so. And it is not that they are lying but their answers are hypothetical answers and consequently hypothetical attitudes. Preconceived ideas or media manipulation can make an inexperienced person see mobile marketing in a certain light but no one can anticipate the outcome of a one-time experience, be it accidental or intended. It could make him/her radically change his/her view on the matter. It is the same conceptual situation as when you are in front of the TV, watching “I shouldn’t be alive” on Discovery, seeing people survive near-death experiences and you try to imagine how you would react in that situation. You have the data, in this case the scenario, but as much thinking or imagining you may try to do, you can never really know how you would feel and react unless confronted with the situation. It is that fine line between hypothesis and reality.

Going back to mobile marketing, this research study came up with both hypothetical and real (in the aforementioned sense since all the respondents try to express their honest opinion) attitudes. If the data coming from the respondents’ activities involving mobile marketing is more relevant for an as accurate as possible assessment, one may easily ask why then take also into account what they say about it. I believe that a study focusing on both these aspects is obviously more complex and pertinent and reveals certain angles of the issue that maybe otherwise would not have surfaced. We have already outlined how wrong certain assumptions would have been, had the focus been only on what consumers say. The truth is that the data collected about their thoughts, awareness, interest, experience are like pieces of a puzzle that together paint a bigger picture. It is not enough to know what people who have experienced it believe, it is just as important to know where other possible customers may come from, what their current standing is or whether they can be persuaded to try it. Indeed, it is like undertaking an interdisciplinary study. If for instance you study a country from a historical, cultural and political point of view, then every time a new dimension is integrated, be it literary, economic or social, it provides a more comprehensive understanding of the issue at large.

## 5.3 Consumer Attitudes and Age

Three segments of mobile users (the cellular generation, transitioners and adult adopters) have been identified based on their age by ComScore Networks (n.d.). The respondents of this study belong to the three segments as follows: 47 of them are aged 18 to 24 which makes them the cellular generation; 54 are transitioners (25-34) and 13 are adult adopters (35-54). Sure enough it is hard to compare a number of 47 or 54 with that of 13 and try to draw balanced conclusions but these were the results of the questionnaire and there is really nothing that can be done about it. The interest in the relation between consumer attitudes toward mobile marketing and age appeared as a result of reading Haghirian and Madleberger’s (2008) research study and then Sharma et al.’s (2008) book on mobile advertising in which there were some claims in this regard. The answers of the three age groups will now be assessed in order to see if there is a correlation between age and the respondents’ attitudes towards mobile marketing.

**Figure 8.** Consumer Attitudes towards Mobile Marketing Based on Age

The first issue to be addressed is the claim that because the cellular generation grew up with a high level of mobile awareness, they should be at the forefront of mobile marketing campaigns (see section 4.1.2). While their ease in maneuvering the mobile platform cannot be contested, the results of the questionnaire have shown that the other two age groups are, if not as competent then competent enough to be able to deal with mobile marketing. First of all, 35 of the 54 transitioners already own a smartphone (with 7 intending to buy one in the near future) and 8 of the 13 adult adopters do as well (only one person intends to soon buy one), as opposed to 30 of the cellular generation (with 8 smartphone hopefuls). What is interesting is that almost all of these smartphone users (with the exception of 1 cellular generation, 2 transitioners and 1 adult adopter), have accessed their mobile Internet in one way or another which means that they can manage a certain degree of technology. This way, they also become more accessible to be reached by companies so the latter cannot claim that these age segments are not accessible.

In addition, of the 114 respondents, only 5 of them (1 from cellular generation, 2 transitioners and 2 adult adopters) have identified the challenging technology of the mobile as a possible reason to reject the service. In other words, the rest of them (52 transitioners and 11 adult adopters in particular) feel confident that they can manage whatever technology mobile marketing might imply. Thus, if anything, the results show that just because they have had contact with mobile phones later in their life, it does not make them any less competent.

Moreover, the second issue to be addressed stems from Haghirian and Madleberger’s (2008) claim that younger consumers value advertising messages via mobile devices to a higher extent than older consumers and also show a more positive attitude toward them. According to the results of the questionnaire, there are no dramatic differences that would unequivocally reinforce this claim. We already know that there is a high level of awareness among the respondents with regard to mobile marketing (the 3 unaware respondents are all transitioners). Indeed, a slightly higher number of 18 to 24 year-olds have displayed an interest (32 versus 22 transitioners versus 7 adult adopters) but when it comes to experience, in all three cases, a little more than half of their respective numbers have experienced mobile marketing. More exactly, the statistics are as follows: 27 out of 47 cellular generation; 31 out of 54 transitioners; 9 out of 13 adult adopters. Based on their answers, their perspectives with regard to mobile marketing have been established, with loyalists, hostages, aspirants, defectors, newcomers and avoiders making an appearance in these three segments. Apparently, the cellular generation has 18 adopters, 23 rejecters and 6 neutralists; in the transitioners segment there are 17 adopters, 30 rejecters and 7 neutralists; and among the adult adopters there are 7 adopters, 6 rejecters and 0 neutralists.

Overall, of the 47 respondents belonging to the cellular generation, 18 have a positive attitude while 29 a negative one; the 54 transitioners are divided between 16 with a positive attitude and 38 with a negative one; in the case of adult adopters, 3 are for and 10 are against mobile marketing. As it can be seen, in all three cases the negative prevails. Since there is no major difference between the 18 to 24 year-olds and the 25 to 34 year-olds, it cannot be said that the younger generation has a more positive attitude but it can be assumed that they have a more positive attitude than the adult adopters. Obviously, it would have been better to have a balanced number in all the groups for the comparison to be more relevant. We cannot know, had 40 more adult adopters answered the questionnaire, what the results would have said. However, we already have only 3 of the adult adopters being for mobile marketing and considering that the service did not fare particularly well in the other two segments either, it is hard to believe that more adult adopters would be more accepting of the service.

Thus, two issues with regard to the relation between mobile marketing and age have been addressed. According to the results of this study, all three age groups are competent users of the interface. Thus using this argument as a justification for a mobile campaign addressing young people only, could not necessarily stand. Moreover, the claim according to which young consumers show a more positive attitude toward mobile marketing was not sustained by the results. In all three cases, the majority of the respondents has proved to have a negative attitude towards the service.

## 5.4 Consumer Attitudes and Gender

**Figure 9.** Consumer Attitudes Toward Mobile Marketing Based on Gender

According to Haghirian and Madleberger (2008), male consumers show a more favorable attitude towards mobile ads than female consumers. As in the previous case, once I came upon this claim, my interest in the issue was spurred. As a result, I wanted to see whether there is a difference in attitude between the two genders. Yet again, the fact must be mentioned that it would have been preferred to have an equal number of both females and males to have a more sound comparison. Nonetheless, I believe that even in this situation (40 males and 74 females), we will be able to paint a picture of the issue and draw some conclusions.

Following the same pattern that was applied in the previous section, we will examine each step of the consumer’s decision-making process for the two groups. With regard to awareness, it is a well known fact by now that it is high, with the exception of three people which in this case have all been identified to be female. Although the number of the two groups is unbalanced, when it comes to the level of interest displayed towards mobile marketing, the percentage seems to be the same for their respective number. More exactly, slightly less than half of each group has actually taken an interest in mobile marketing.

Moreover, since we know from the general results that many of the respondents have experienced SMS marketing in particular without searching any information about it, it was natural for the number of females and males with experience to be slightly higher than the ones with. According to the statistics, 57% of the male group has experienced mobile marketing as opposed to 60% of the females. At a first glance, these may seem to be decent numbers but it must once again be mentioned that some of them have only dealt with spam messages and most of them have only dealt with SMS marketing.

Overall, the male group regards mobile marketing in the following way: 13 are adopters, 25 rejecters and 2 are neutralists while the female segment has 29 adopters, 35 rejecters and 10 neutralists. Furthermore, the general attitude of the former has been established to be 25% in favor of mobile marketing and 75% against as opposed to 35% for the females and 65% respectively. Thus, according to the results of this particular study, it can be concluded that males do not show a more favorable attitude towards mobile marketing since in both cases the majority of the group perceives it in a negative way. This means that the results do not confirm the claim that has started it all, Haghirian and Madleberger’s (2008) own conclusion regarding gender and mobile advertising.

We have seen that SMS marketing has been around the longest since at the beginning of the 2000’s studies were being carried out about it. However, most marketers’, journalists’ and pundits’ praise for it started after the smartphone introduction to the market precisely because with it, more interactive ways of marketing via a mobile device were now possible. And it is these interactive ways that those who have written on the issue think that it could make the consumer deem mobile marketing fresh and fun and consequently be more open to the concept of marketing. And being more open means wanting to collaborate with companies or organizations more. Thus it can be seen what potential for positive change (for the business world at least) mobile marketing has. But, having already discussed the low percentage of experience for the other types of mobile marketing (see figure 4.), it is clear that the two sides, the respondents and the business world have different views on it and different attitudes to it. Perhaps it is this interactivity of the service that caused many people to make those claims about the younger consumers and mobile marketing and males and mobile marketing. The reality of this questionnaire however is simple: mobile marketing has failed to appeal to most of the respondents.

**6. CONCLUSION**

## The purpose of this research was to carry out an exploratory study on mobile marketing. The chosen topic has been investigated from the point of view of the consumer so as to gain an understanding of their perspectives on the issue. The investigation is not the first of its kind nor will it be the last. Ideally, every piece of research should complement and expand existing research. I believe this research study manages to do it by focusing on eight types of mobile marketing rather than one or a few as is usually the case. It combines the old aspects of the service with the new ones and the results of the questionnaire offer insight on the relation between each of them and the respondents. In the end, they all contribute to the painting of a general picture involving the issue under discussion.

Theoretically speaking, the topic connected a new trend, mobile marketing, with the established theory of consumer attitudes. The aim was on the one hand to offer a comprehensive view of the field while also to present a model that would help guide the analysis process and infer consumers’ attitudes towards mobile marketing. Moreover, the research method was presented and the design of the empirical part carried out. The 114 respondents of the questionnaire generated a significant amount of data that was correlated with the theoretical concepts in order to discuss the issues and answer the problem formulation. The analytical part presented the results in the form of both words and graphics which were then assessed in order to draw some conclusions. The general findings will now be revisited.

## 6.1 Answering the Problem Formulation:

The problem formulation of this research study was “To what extent does the mobile phone provide a novel marketing channel and how do consumers react to a proposed change in the way they are marketed to?” With regard to the first part of this question, the theory selected and presented in the fourth chapter provided a solid answer. Firstly, it was reported that mobile marketing offers the consumer the fastest access to information. Since people have their mobile phones with them everywhere they go, the information can reach them in no time in two different ways. If there is Internet on the mobile device, then they can for instance, on a 2-hour bus ride, access the webpage of their favorite brand and find out the latest news. Or, they can choose to have relevant information sent directly to their mobile phone to which they have access immediately since they almost always carry it with them. This way, they no longer have to wait to receive catalogs for information or wait until they got home to access the Internet. If coupled with the idea of location, then information can reach them when they are in the vicinity of the nearest store of that specific brand and it can be easily reacted upon.

In addition, it was also specified that mobile marketing offers time-efficient solutions. If the right information reaches consumers via mobile and they have the means to respond to it, then such a benefit is truly satisfying because it saves them time. More exactly, mobile marketing can enable people to make a purchase in a five minute coffee break as a result of a discount notification received, purchase that will arrive to their home without them having to go there. Mobile marketing provides these benefits better than any other type of marketing and they can only be attained if consumers choose to respond to it.

Furthermore, with regard to the second part of the problem formulation, the question is simple: how do consumers react to a proposed change in the way they are marketed to? In order to answer this, the first thing to do was to assess the respondents’ awareness with regard to mobile marketing. The results of the questionnaire showed that 98% of them were aware of mobile marketing. However, when breaking the service down to different types, it was revealed that some of them are more familiar to the respondents than others, especially SMS, MMS and apps. Thus, more promotion for the other types was suggested.

Going back to the answer for the aforementioned question, a first reaction for some of the respondents was, although aware of it, not to pursue the issue of mobile marketing any longer. For others, it was to search for more information about it. In statistics, this idea failed to appeal to 45% of them. Also a first reaction for some of the respondents was to directly experience mobile marketing without taking the time to find out more about it first. This aspect became noticeable as a higher number of respondents experienced SMS-marketing than searching for information about it.

Furthermore, a second reaction for the remaining respondents involved once again two scenarios. For some of them it implied deciding to not experience mobile marketing after taking an interest and becoming more knowledgeable on the issue. For others, the second reaction translated into direct experience with mobile marketing. Specifically, approximately half of the respondents experienced mobile marketing. Of them however, 92% experienced SMS-marketing in particular (some only SMS, others more types). The experience of the respondents with the other types of mobile marketing was reportedly low to extremely low, depending on the type. The issue of more promotion and implicitly, consumer education with regard to them was brought forth once again.

Moreover, these respondents’ third reaction coincided with the second reaction of those who experienced it first. Irrespective of the timing, both of them implied making a choice or taking a stand: adoption or rejection. Based on all these reactions that stand behind their activities, the following perspectives on mobile marketing were identified: 9 loyalists, 18 hostages, 15 aspirants, 25 defectors, 12 newcomers and 25 avoiders. From this piece of information, the respondents’ attitudes were inferred and the conclusion reached was that 2% have a neutral attitude, 32% a positive one and 66% a negative one.

In addition, the respondents’ reaction to mobile marketing was also assessed based on what they said with regard to mobile marketing (benefits, cons), on their age and gender. The results showed a disparity in their attitudes based on their activities and on their words. With regard to age, the claim that younger consumers have a more favorable attitude towards mobile marketing was not confirmed in this research study, nor was the claim that males have a more positive attitude towards it than females. Although in statistics the reactions of each of these segments was obviously not exactly the same, neither differentiated itself from the other by a wide margin to suggest otherwise.

## 6.2 Limitations and Further Research:

In what limitations are concerned, I believe the most important ones have to do with method and number. While for this research study the method was the most appropriate and the number of consumer viewpoints assessed was acceptable, for further research, I would definitely consider doing something more relevant. First of all, I would choose to do interviews as they would bring more information to the surface. For instance, regarding the issue of awareness, I would definitely try to find out other aspects related to it such as the degree of awareness, what he/she knows. Is he/she aware only of one benefit, of all or none at all? Is he/she aware of QR codes because he/she saw a friend using one or does he/she know more? There are many variables to awareness only that the questionnaire and implicitly this study could not go into but an interview might provide this opportunity. As I mentioned relevance, I would also be interested to interview a higher number of people although I understand what time, work and sacrifice this would imply. Lastly, in a further study, I would definitely make sure to have a balanced number of respondents based on age and gender. Also, I have read one study in particular whose researchers segmented their respondents by occupation and education as well. Therefore, this could provide an area of interest for the future as well.

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