

Usage of Mobile Marketing Strategies in Zimbabwe's Tourism and Hospitality Sector

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Abstract

The convergence of the mobile phone and mobile internet presents endless opportunities for the hospitality sector. This study aims to explore knowledge about benefits and usage of four mobile marketing (MM) practices amongst the hospitality tourism marketing employees in Zimbabwe. Four MM practices: short message service (SMS), multimedia message service (MMS) location based service (LBS) and mobile social media (MSM) were examined. The objectives were to establish their benefits or reasons for use, extent of use and, level of popularity of each of these MM practices amongst these employees. A quantitative approach was adopted using a cross – sectional survey. Data was collected from 100 randomly selected respondents using a self completion structured questionnaire. Results indicated that SMS is increasingly becoming unpopular. MSM is the most popular mode of conducting mobile marketing. LBS is rapidly increasing in popularity. MMS has gradually sunk into oblivion. Ubiquity is the main reason of using MM practices. A positive association between knowledge about benefits and MM usage exists. There is a positive association between usage of MM practices and speed of tasks and achievement of work objectives. It is recommended that management should support hospitality marketing employees through acquisition of mobile technology infrastructure for increased use of MM practices in this sector.

Keywords: Mobile marketing; hospitality; knowledge; usage; ubiquity

Introduction

The mobile phone is arguably an all-time successful innovation in the ICT and telecommunications sector. Usage of the mobile phone is the most common global phenomenon (Velmurugan & Velmurugan, 2013). Worldwide reports admit that usage of mobile phones surpassed six billion by year 2012 (Rohm et al., 2012) with China alone having reached one billion by 2012 (Haught et al., 2018). At the same time, the global tourism and hospitality sector industry is growing rapidly (Salim et al., 2013; Wearne & Baker, 2002). Collectively global tourism contributes 10% of the world 's GDP, as such most countries are eager to restart tourism activities and boost their economic activities post covid-19

pandemic (Adinolfi et al., 2021). Furthermore evidence exist that support the view that tourism is key in sustaining most economies across the globe (Magano & Cunha, 2020; Opute et al., 2020). Evidence suggests that hotels need to embrace ICT if they are to remain competitive (Salim et al., 2013). Moreover in Zimbabwe this is imperative as ICTs can help lower hospitality marketing costs. The search for lower advertising and marketing costs are the major drivers behind hospitality companies' acceptance of mobile marketing (Nyatsambo & Phiri, 2018).

In Zimbabwe the use of mobile devices has spread to all parts of the country including rural areas (Mbengo et al., 2015) possibly because citizens have embraced mobile money in the face of cash shortages. In 2021 the Posts and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (POTRAZ) third quarter report indicated an unparalleled growth of 3.4 % increase in mobile phone use, along with a marked increase of 10.4% to record 25.882 Terabytes (TB) in mobile internet data traffic during the same period. Furthermore, the report acknowledges that active Internet subscriptions had increased to 9,3 million users while the overall mobile penetration rate reached 93.5% as at 31 September 2021 (POTRAZ, 2021). The POTRAZ indicators confirm mobile communication as the primary means of communication amongst Zimbabweans.

However, the tourism and hospitality sector has faced viability challenges in the last twenty years due to the general decline of the Zimbabwean economy. The sector recorded a 19% decrease in foreign tourist arrivals by end of 2013 (ZTA, 2013) and World Bank Report recorded a significant 66% decline of tourists arrivals from the EU to Zimbabwe between the period of 1999 to 2013 (World Bank, 2013). Tendai and Chikobvu (2017) submit that tourism is a major contributor to the GDP in Zimbabwe. Several researchers contend that the use of mobile devices and applications in the hospitality industry has been applied to speed up a variety of services such as reservations as well as digital concierge and geo-location (Moro et al., 2018).

Extant research has given more attention to mobile marketing from the consumers perspective, with very few researches emphasizing the supplier side for example (Hongyan & Zhankui, 2017) in study involving 320 consumers found that information via mobile increased intention to purchase amongst consumers. Furthermore an earlier study by Rohm et al. (2012) examined consumer acceptance of mobile marketing in a comparative study of three major global markets; Europe, USA and China. Additionally many other studies have focused on the consumer perspective (Chee et al., 2018; Persaud & Azhar, 2012; Siraj et al., 2021). Moreover, Law et al. (2018) reviewed 92 research articles on mobile technologies in tourism and hospitality and concluded that the majority of the articles focused on consumers rather than suppliers.

Against this backdrop, the current study examines mobile marketing usage from the perspective of hospitality marketers. Therefore the research objectives are to (i) establish the extent of usage of four mobile marketing practices amongst hospitality and tourism marketers in Zimbabwe; (ii) determine associations between knowledge of mobile marketing benefits and intention to use mobile marketing practices; (iii) explore their main reasons for using individual forms of mobile marketing strategies. Additionally the current research seeks to test associations between usage of mobile marketing practices and the speed of completing tasks such as bookings and making reservations Finally the study seeks to test associations between mobile marketing usage and belief that mobile marketing can increase work efficiency of hospitality marketing employees consequently increasing domestic tourism activities .The paper is structured as follows. Firstly we provide a detailed review of literature which leads to the development of hypothesis. The next step is we clarify the research methodology. This is

followed by the presentation of study results. A detailed discussion of these results is provided. Lastly conclusions, implications and suggestions for future research are explained.

Literature review

Mobile marketing

Mobile marketing is the use of mobile devices to communicate marketing messages and promotions to potential customers. In the case of tourists this information could include alerts about nearby restaurants and other trip related information (Tamaki, 2018). Several authors confirm the meteoric rise in mobile phone usage (Chuah et al., 2014; Haught et al., 2018; Shankar & Balasubramanian, 2009). Reasons for a surge in the use of mobile devices include ubiquity, personalisation, immediacy and information access (Okazaki et al., 2014; Shankar et al., 2010). Consequently, arguments for migrating from traditional marketing practices to mobile marketing have been tabled and are based on benefits such as interactivity and personalisation of the marketing messages (Al-Hawary & Obiadat, 2021). These gains have been expedited by the amalgamation of the mobile phone and the internet to produce a more intelligent device built on a mobile computing platform with extended computing and connectivity potential (Balubaid et al., 2015). Worldwide mobile internet usage continues to expand as a result of the increased variety of these cosmopolitan mobile devices including the Smartphone (Chuah et al., 2014). These devices are equipped with mobile applications that carry out complex and personalised activities and are essential to mobile marketing. United States of America firms such as the Loews Hotel's Instagram campaign dubbed #TravelForReal, and the Hamilton Island Resorts use of social media through the 'Ultimate Instameet' campaign are two success stories of mobile marketing usage in hospitality and tourism (Litvin et al., 2018). Notably, mobile marketing is rapidly becoming an important component of the marketing function (Maduku et al., 2016).

Use of these personalised and accessible mobile applications has proliferated with the increased accessibility of mobile internet by many across the globe (Chuah et al., 2014; Magano & Cunha, 2020). Earlier assertions by various authors concluded that Mobile Marketing (MM) is any marketing activity conducted using a mobile device at anytime, anywhere (Kaplan 2012; Scharl et al., 2005; Khartikeyan & Barlamurgan, 2012 as cited in Nyatsambo & Phiri, 2018). Hongyan and Zhankui (2017) advance that the surge in mobile devices adoption by consumers globally means that marketers have a chance to further their gains. Additionally a results from a study conducted in Zimbabwe by Dhlodhlo and Mafini (2014) advanced that there is a positive relationship between virtual marketing and work effectiveness. Hitherto these assertions suggest a gap in theory and practice. Therefore, this study aims to add to the growing body of knowledge in mobile marketing usage in the tourism and hospitality sector from a perspective of a developing African country setting.

Short Message service

Earlier findings posit that SMS usage grew remarkably in the 2000s, as showcased by its widespread adoption rate globally in the preceding years (Lai, 2004; Nyatsambo, 2021). Short message service is among the first successful forms of Mobile Marketing (Megdadi & Hammouri, 2016). Existing findings suggest that the key drivers of SMS's success include interactivity, personalisation, ubiquity, and its push advertising capability (Shadkam, 2017). Shankar & Balasubramanian (2009) reported that 60 % of the 86% cell phone users in the USA were using SMS by year 2009. However Persaud and Azhar (2012) insist that marketers must ensure that mobile marketing strategies should avoid being intrusive.

Multimedia message service

Several authors have described MMS as flexible technology that prolongs the relevance of standard short message text service (ur Rehman et al., 2018; Lillie, 2019). In addition Bandera (2017) admits that multimedia message service follows behind SMS in popularity. The notable features of MMS is its ability to send pictures, videos and audios between users (Lillie, 2019, Chou & Bandera, 2020). ur Rehman et al. (2018), however, contends that the major disadvantages of MMS is its inability to send large files.

Mobile social media

Social media offers a two-way communication channel with cost- effective benefits between businesses and their customers (Lupo, 2018) .The fusion of social media and mobile internet presents a new outlook; that of MSM (Minazzi, 2014). In Zimbabwe companies large and small have resorted to using social media as a cost effective measure to avert their demise in the continued harsh economic environment currently faced by the country (Rambe et al., 2017). According to Rambe et al. (2017) the extensive adoption of mobile devices and social media has advanced Mobile Social Media in executing marketing practices. In the travel and tourism sector social media has long been associated with trip planning in tourism, as it can easily assist travellers gather more information about their planned tourism destination (Matikiti-Manyeverere & Kruger, 2019). Social media has emerged as powerful marketing tool that enables tourism marketers to better meet customer needs (van der Bank & van der Bank, 2014) .Furthermore mobile phones enhances the convenience for tourist as they plan their trips using mobile social media in particular (Minazz, 2014). Social media has also been seen to be an effective way of creating awareness about tourism products (Madondo et al., 2019). Nonetheless others still argue that Social media should be used responsibly to yield positive results in Tourism sector (van der Bank & van der Bank. 2014). The propensity to influence one another is inherent in consumer behaviour, consequently making social media-driven word of mouth (e-word of mouth) an emerging important marketing technique (Litvin et al., 2006). An example is cited in a study in Thailand, where e-word of mouth has been found useful in influencing hotel bookings (Kitcharoen, 2019). In Zimbabwe evidence exist that confirms the benefits of social media as a means of exposing the daily lives of marginalised communities and hence improve inclusive development (Gift et al., 2019; Masocha & Dzomonda, 2018). While most authors submit that social media information is important for the tourist decision making process with regards to trip planning (Kitcharoen, 2019; Matikiti –Manyeverere & Kruger, 2019, van der Bank & van der Bank. 2014). A few advanced contrasting views and argue that tourists do not trust information on Social media as credible to help them when deciding on trip planning (de Souza & Machado, 2017; Matikiti –Manyeverere & Kruger , 2019).

Location based services

Location based service (LBS) ensure that MM practices can be implemented based on the consumer's exact location in real time and also basing on consumer's previous behaviour (Bernritter et al., 2021; Suganya, 2022). Location based service thrives on the fact that mobile devices are endowed with GPS capability to pinpoint their current location at that particular time thus allowing marketers a chance to design target oriented promotional messages based on the location of the customers (Bernritter et al., 2021; Shankar & Balasubramanian, 2009). Whilst it is an emerging marketing method with potential for high returns given its ability to pinpoint the location of a customer or tourist LBS remains under- utilised (Suganya, 2022). Tourism marketers can benefit from embracing mobile technologies, Internet of things including GPS and 5 G technology in order to harness the new generation of tourists (Bi & Liu, 2022). Ververidis and Polyzos (2002) advance that the potential of LBS as a mobile marketing

tool is intense as it extends the satisfaction of the anytime anywhere phenomenon brought up by the mobile web to its users.

Hypothesis development

Existing evidence suggests that awareness is a key determinant of individual adoption behaviour to adopt mobile devices (Velumugan & Velumugan, 2014). Findings by Kim et al. (2016) posit that awareness about existence of mobile devices, and having expert knowledge regarding mobile devices had a positive effect on willingness to use them in tourism. Additionally awareness has an effect on an individual's knowledge about a product benefit (Velumugan & Velumugan, 2014). Furthermore adoption and use of mobile devices is negatively influenced by lacking knowledge about the functionalities of these devices (Wang et al., 2019). It is suggested that tourism marketers must gather knowledge about the shifts in digital and mobile technologies in order to stay ahead of competition (Chamboko-Mpotaringa & Tichaawa, 2021).

The utility and convenience are some of the main reasons why these mobile internet based technologies have become a part of everyday life especially for tourist as these enable access to information anytime anywhere (Magano & Cunha, 2020). Furthermore several authors argue that the positioning of the mobile internet service as a profitable global market segment is unquestionable (Chuah et al., 2014; Magano & Cunha, 2020). Another major reason why firms have embraced mobile marketing is the low cost of advertising, as MM makes it possible to target a large audience with a single message (Algumzi, 2022; Amirkhanpour et al., 2014; Fang, 2017; Maduku et al., 2016). In the context of Zimbabwean tourism and hospitality sector cutting operational costs is key. Lower costs can allow these firms to pass over this benefit to tourism customers and enable them to access affordable tourism packages and services. Strom et al. (2014) advance that another reason for the uptake of MM is interactivity. Entertainment has also been found to be one major driver for the swift adoption of mobile devices, mobile apps and advertisements as mobile users often download these for self-enjoyment (De Silva & Yan, 2017; Nyatsambo, 2021; Shadkam, 2016). Mobile devices are convenient to use and easy to handle as they are portable and always on and can be used anywhere (Rialti et al., 2022). Earlier findings suggest that ease of use is one of the issues that explain the fast uptake of mobile phones and other mobile devices globally in short space of time (De Siva & Yan, 2017; Loudon, 2016).

Given the above findings from extant literature current research examines the extent of usage, reasons for use, and level of popularity of the four mobile marketing practices namely; short message service, mobile social media, multimedia message service and location based service amongst the hospitality marketing employees in Zimbabwe. In addition the following hypothesis are to be tested to establish associations.

H₁: There is significant association between knowledge about mobile marketing benefits and usage of mobile marketing practices amongst hospitality marketing employees in Zimbabwe

H₂: There is a significant association between usage of mobile marketing and speed of completing bookings and reservations by hospitality marketing employees in Zimbabwe

H₃: There is a significant association between usage of mobile marketing and achieving work objectives amongst Zimbabwean hospitality marketing employees.

H₄: There is a significant relationship between usage of mobile marketing practices and increased interest by local tourist to visit tourism destination in Zimbabwe.

Research methodology

In this study, both exploratory and descriptive research designs were adopted pursuing a quantitative approach by means of a survey. A self-completion questionnaire was distributed to 100 respondents in Vumba, Mutare and Bulawayo which are the key tourism destinations of Zimbabwe. The predominantly quantitative questionnaire comprised a seven-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. We opted to use the Likert scale because previous findings allude to its extensive use in mobile technology usage behaviour and adoption studies (Liebana-Cabanillas et al., 2017; Schierz et al., 2010). To ensure the reliability and validity of the survey instrument, a pre-test of the questionnaire was conducted prior to conducting the field survey. Using a simple random sampling method, 100 participants were selected in Vumba, Mutare and Bulawayo. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS, to compute frequency, percentages and means. Correlation analysis was done to measure the strength of relationships between variables in data sets. Stated hypothesis were tested by conducting Pearson’s Chi-Square test. Cronbach’s Alpha co-efficient tests were used to verify the reliability of the data collection instrument. Cronbach’s Alpha is useful when measuring internal consistency (Remler & Van Ryzin, 2015:122).

Study results

Results on demographic profiles

The demographic profiles are shown on Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic attributes table

Attribute	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender				
Male	47	47.0	47.0	47.0
Female	53	53.0	53.0	100
Total	100	100	100	
Age				
18-25yrs	32	32.0	32.0	32.0
26-35yrs	49	49.0	49.0	81.0
36-45yrs	15	15.0	15.0	96
46-55yrs	3	3.0	3.0	99
Above 55yrs	1	1.0	1.0	100
Total	100	100	100	
Education				
Ordinary Level	19	19.0	19.0	19.0
Advanced Level	5	5.0	5.0	24.0
Diploma	34	34.0	34.0	58
Degree	42	42.0	42.0	100
Total	100	100	100	
Years using a mobile phone				
1-5yrs	10	10.0	10.0	10
6-10yrs	30	30.0	30.0	40
Over 10yrs	60	60.0	60.0	100
Total	100	100	100	
Years working in hospitality & Tourism				
1-5yrs	58	58.0	58.0	58.0
6-10yrs	25	25.0	25.0	83.0
Over 10yrs	17	17.0	17.0	100
Total	100	100	100	
Marketing department				
Sales and Marketing	13	13.0	13.0	13
Front Office	26	26.0	26.0	39
Functions & Events	13	13.0	13.0	52
Bookings and Reservations	48	48.0	48.0	48
Total	100	100	100	100

Source- Authors

Demographic variables were analysed using frequency distribution and percentages. Appendix 1 illustrates the results of the demographic profiles that were identified in this research. The majority of respondents were aged between 26 and 35 with a fairly even gender representation

of males (47%) and females (53%). About 60% of these respondents had owned and used a personal mobile phone for over 10years,76 % had acquired tertiary level education,58%had worked in the hospitality sector for only five years or less and 42%had six or more years of experience in the sector. All respondents worked in various hospitality marketing departments in these proportions: bookings and reservations, 48%; front office, 26%; functions and events, 13% and sales and marketing,13%.

Results on reliability tests

It is important to highlight that reliability tests using the Cronbach’s Alpha α co-efficient scored above 0.6 on most datasets, indicating that respondents were generally reliable on most questions. Alpha ranges from 0 to 1 with 0.7 being the often minimum acceptable value (Remler& Van Ryzin, 2915:122). However others admit that 0.6 is a fairly good value(Zikmund et al., 2010 as cited in Nyatsambo 2021) (see Table 2 below).

Table 2: Reliability S Cronbach’s alpha co-efficient results table

Variables	Cronbach’s Alpha	Cronbach’s Apha based on standardised item	Number of Items
Statements on awareness of potential benefits of using Mobile Marketing Strategies amongst hospitality marketers in Zimbabwe	.744	.772	6
Statements Extent of usage of Mobile Marketing Strategies amongst hospitality marketers in Zimbabwe	.795	.796	8
Statements on effect of individual human factors on Mobile Marketing Usage	.573	.651	8
Statements on Actual Usage behaviour of Mobile Marketing Strategies amongst hospitality marketers in Zimbabwe	.689	.666	10
Reasons for using Short Message Service amongst hospitality marketers in Zimbabwe	.873	.879	10
Reasons for using Multi-Media Message Service amongst hospitality marketers in Zimbabwe	.882	.892	10
Reasons for using Location Based Service amongst hospitality marketers in Zimbabwe	.754	.798	10
Reasons for using Mobile Social Media amongst hospitality marketers in Zimbabwe	.876	.887	10

Source – Authors

Results on extent of usage of individual MM practices among hospitality marketing employees

Table 3 displays mean scores for the responses of those that agreed to have used individual forms of MM practices in the past; mobile social media use and mobile social advertising is most popular with users.

Table 3 item statistic extent of usage of mobile marketing practices

Item	Mean	Mean (%)	Gap (%)
SMS use	4.56	59.3%	40.7%
LBS use	4.72	62.0%	38.0%
MMS use	4.43	57.2%	42.8%
MSM use	5.72	78.7%	21.3%
SMS adverts	4.39	56.5%	43.5%
Multimedia Message Service adverts	4.05	50.8%	49.2%
LBS adverts	4.56	59.3%	40.7%
MSM adverts	5.79	79.8%	20.2%
Overall	4.78	63.0%	37.0%

Source – Authors

Furthermore the correlation matrix below was used to ascertain the patterns of relationships across the MM practices. The determinant is 0.040 which is greater than the necessary value of 0.00001. In these data items correlate well as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Extent of mobile marketing strategies / practices usage correlation matrix^a

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Correlation	1 SMS use	1.000	.408	.386	.183	.659	.318	.078	-.009
	2 LBS use	.408	1.000	.540	.354	.281	.328	.567	.315
	3 MMS use	.386	.540	1.000	.291	.249	.548	.329	.267
	4 MSM use	.183	.354	.291	1.000	.092	.377	.225	.694
	5SMS adverts	.659	.281	.249	.092	1.000	.354	.136	.006
	6MMS adverts	.318	.328	.548	.377	.354	1.000	.392	.428
	7LBS adverts	.078	.567	.329	.225	.136	.392	1.000	.367
	8.MSM adverts	-.009	.315	.267	.694	.006	.428	.367	1.000
a. Determinant = .040									

Source - Authors

The results on the correlation matrix above indicate that there is no connection between Mobile Social Media use and SMS advertising; Location based adverts and SMS use or SMS adverts; as well as between SMS adverts and Multimedia Use. However there is significant links amongst all the other variables as indicated by P values < 0 .

Results on commonly used MM practices

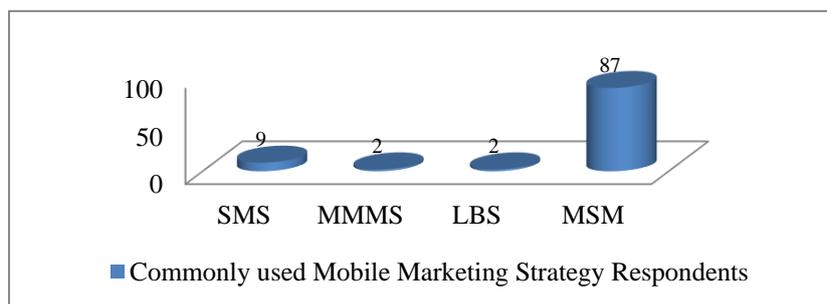


Figure 1: Commonly used mobile marketing practices
 Source: Authors

Results on the figure 1 above show that SMS (9%) is increasingly becoming unpopular with users while MSM is becoming the most popular mode of conducting mobile marketing (87%).

Results on reasons for using individual mobile marketing practices

Results from table 4.4 below imply that Mobile Social Media (MSM) is the most useful practice as it emerged with two factors on first position and two on second position. MSM gives the user better utility because it has the highest mean values such that even its least reason is still significantly higher than the top reasons for other Mobile Marketing Strategies. Personalisation did not appear to be a unique reason on any of the four practices although its mean values were significantly high across all MM practices.

Table 5. Mean Scores and Percentages for top (3) out of (10) reasons for using individual MM practices and the least reason

Position for reason of using individual MM Practices	SMS	MMS	LBS	MSM
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Position 1	Ubiquity 5.96 (82.7%)	Entertainment 5.73 (78.8%)	Reliability 5.97 (82.8%)	Ubiquity / Interactivity 6.50 (91.7%)
Position 2	Easy to use 5.74 (79%)	Ubiquity 5.53 (75.5%)	Real-time 5.88 (81.3%)	Effectiveness /Real-time 6.49 (91.5%)
Position 3	Low Cost 5.57(76.2%)	Easy to use 5.44(74%)	Convenience 5.87(81.2%)	Reliability 6.46(91.0%)
Least reason for using individual MM practice	Entertainment 3.29(38.2%)	low cost (3.92) 48.7%	Entertainment 4.05(50.8%)	Low cost 6.26 (87.7%)

Source- Authors

Results on hypothesis tests

Table 6 Results for hypothesis tests using Pearson Chi - Square

Proposed hypothesis / Relationship	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)P value	Result
<i>H₄</i> There is a significant association between knowledge about benefits of MMs and Usage of MM	57.746 ^a	36	.012	Accept
<i>H₅</i> There is an association between usage of mobile marketing and speed of completing bookings and reservations	71.219 ^a	30	.000	Accept
<i>H₆</i> There is a significant association between usage of mobile marketing and achieving work objectives	60.457 ^a	25	.000	Accept
<i>H₇</i> There is a significant relationship between usage of mobile marketing and increased interest by local tourist to visit tourism destination.	96.922 ^a	30	.000	Accept

Accept if P value 0.000<.05

Source – Authors

Discussion of results

The study aimed to establish the extent to which four mobile marketing practices are being used to market hospitality and tourism facilities by hospitality employees in Zimbabwe as well as the reasons why each is preferred in usage to market hotel and tourism facilities. Specifically the four mobile marketing practices that the study focused on are Short message service (SMS), Multimedia- message service (MMS), Location based service (LBS) and Mobile Social Media (MSM). The study also sought to establish the most commonly used mobile marketing practice among the four. Furthermore the entire four hypothesis were tested using Chi-Square to test associations between knowledge about benefits of mobile marketing and usage of mobile marketing practices and other completion of work objectives. The results for all for tests for associations were significant.

Our findings indicate that a small section of the population (9%) is still using SMS though it is slowly losing its relevance because of the rise of by Mobile Social Media utilisation. Location Based Services is also quickly gaining acceptance while Multi Media Message Service is quickly falling into disuse as a marketing strategy of choice. These findings support earlier assertions by Moreno-Munoz et al. (2016) that advanced that mobile social networks will overtake the use of short message texts over time.

The present study established that ubiquity is the most important reason for using mobile marketing practices. It emerged in the top three reasons for SMS, MSM and LBS usage. Several authors have submitted that ubiquity is a key reason or using mobile marketing practices (Fang, 2017; Moreno-Munoz et al., 2016). The second and third most important reasons were real-time and easy to use respectively. These findings are supported by earlier authors who found that the real-time phenomenon is one of the key reasons why location based mobile advertisements are more effective than no-mobile (Van Doorn & Hoekstra, 2013; Van't Reit et al., 2016 as cited in Bernitter et al., 2021). However for Mobile Social Media alone, interactivity scored number two, whilst convenience was singled out as third in

importance on Location based service. Regarding these findings interactivity has long been associated with popularity in use of Social media, for example social media interactions allow users to form relationships and exchange huge amounts of information in groups thus (Dwitya & Briandana, 2017; Matikiti-Manyeverere & Kruger, 2019). Furthermore this sharing of experiences and opinions can shape the outcome decision of potential tourists with regards to tourism destinations and hospitality facilities thus benefiting the tourism sector (Matikiti – Manyeverere & Kruger, 2019). The findings from this research support the argument that Mobile Internet is largely responsible for the expansive use of Mobile Social Media and the fast uptake of Location Based services. Mobile Internet is largely responsible for mobile phone users' shift from SMS and Multi-Media Messaging towards the adoption of Mobile Social Media and Location Based Services. In the context of this study, these results provides the basis for arguing that indeed digital and mobile marketing practices especially mobile social media can increase work output for hospitality marketing employees in Zimbabwe. These findings are supported by earlier submissions of various authors (Chigona, 2019; Matikiti-Manyeverere & Kruger, 2019; Moreno- Munoz et al., 2016; Opute et al., 2020; Sakar et al., 2017). Correlation analysis established that voluntary use of mobile devices was strongly related to understanding mobile marketing benefits and to frequency and effective use of the individual types of MM.

Hypotheses were tested to establish associations using the Chi-Square test in this study. The Chi- square test has been used to test hypotheses by previous researchers (Ezgibo, 2013). Table 4.5 provides the list of the hypothesis results, with the Chi square computed values, the degrees of freedom and the *P* values at 0.05 significant level. Furthermore the current research upheld the notion that a significant relationship exists between knowledge about the benefits of Mobile Marketing (MM) and usage of mobile marketing practices. Furthermore findings suggested that the speed of completing tasks and achieving work objectives were positively influenced by using Mobile Marketing. Table 6 above provides that summary of tested hypothesis. These results are in agreement with several past researchers who advanced that adoption and usage of mobile devices is predicted to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the marketing function (Nyatsambo, 2021). Furthermore a recent study on SMEs in Saudi Arabia found out that digital and mobile marketing enhances performance (Algumuzi, 2022). In addition MM has been embraced as key component of marketing strategy (Gana & Koce, 2016; Stanoevska-Slabeva et al., 2017).

Implications and conclusion

The study aimed to establish the extent to which four mobile marketing practices are being used to market hospitality and tourism facilities by hospitality employees in Zimbabwe. The study also examined the main reasons for using specific mobile marketing practices, as well as the most commonly used mobile marketing practice among the four. Furthermore a number of hypothesis were tested using Chi-Square to test associations between knowledge about benefits and mobile marketing usage was also conducted. This study has shown that internet based mobile marketing practices (MSM and LBS) are gaining prominence and are often used for informing customers about hotel facilities and services. On the other hand, message service platforms (SMS and MMS) are becoming less popular amongst users. We can conclusively assert that mobile internet is largely responsible for the success of mobile marketing in Zimbabwe's hospitality and tourism sector. Furthermore, the study's findings advance that gender and age are not key determinants of mobile phone usage behaviour imply that these results can easily be generalised across sectors. Therefore, these results present interesting managerial implications. We suggest that managers in the hospitality sector encourage the use of MM practices, possibly by ensuring that smartphones, mobile internet and other mobile devices are readily available in the work environment. Furthermore tourism and hospitality

marketing employees themselves should increase more efforts to communicate with potential tourists using trending mobile social media technologies such as Instant messaging applications like WhatsApp on a one on one basis or via groups. Updating tourism companies social media accounts such as Facebook, Twitter and with new relevant information could encourage uptake of tourism and hospitality services in the sector.

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