FACTORS INFLUENCING USE OF MOBILE MARKETING STRATEGY AMONG SMALL-TO-MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN NEW ZEALAND

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ABSTRACT

Small-to-medium enterprises are generally regarded as the most significant source of drive for innovation and transformation in both emerging and developing economies. Mobile marketing is one of the evolving modern direct marketing communication channels, rapidly gaining popularity among businesses due to its many advantages to both potential customers and businesses. This research aims to investigate the attitudes and practices of small and medium-sized business (SME) proprietors in Invercargill regarding the strategic integration of mobile marketing. Specifically, the study is structured around three key objectives: firstly, to gauge the comprehension and familiarity with mobile marketing concepts among SMEs in Invercargill, New Zealand; secondly, to discern the motivating factors that prompt SMEs in Invercargill, New Zealand, to adopt mobile marketing as a fundamental marketing tool; and thirdly, to analyse the array of mobile marketing channels utilized by SMEs in Invercargill, New Zealand, for the promotion and dissemination of their products and services. To better understand factors influencing small-to-medium enterprises' adoption of mobile marketing, eight in-depth interviews were conducted with small-to-medium enterprise owners in Invercargill, New Zealand. The data was analysed using narrative analysis. It was found that conceptual knowledge, motivational factors, and multichannel platforms influenced mobile marketing adoption by small-to-medium enterprises in New Zealand. The findings provides useful information for small-to-medium enterprises owners on how to better engage with their target customers through mobile marketing, and perhaps bridge a gap in marketing literature on small-to-medium enterprises and mobile marketing in the New Zealand context.

Keywords: mobile marketing, marketing strategy, motivational factors, mobile marketing channels, small-to-medium enterprises, New Zealand

INTRODUCTION

Marketing is the process of attracting customers to a product or service. Kotler and Keller (2015) define marketing as satisfying customers' needs while making a profit. Promotion, advertising, sales, product delivery and after-sales support, are all examples of marketing activities (Hazelden, 2019). This research explored various techniques small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) use to sell their products and services using mobile marketing. Furthermore, the research was confined to SMEs only, i.e., businesses with nineteen or fewer staff, as specified by the New Zealand definition of SMEs (Small Business Council, 2019).

Mobile marketing is an emerging and relatively new marketing strategy and has become very useful across all countries, industries, businesses, and markets (Gao et al., 2020). Mobile phones have become a staple device of modern society due to the ubiquitous existence of the Internet, advanced mobile technology with manifold features and, obviously, the ease of communication and connectivity (Hounmanou et al., 2016; Ishii, 2011). Furthermore, the emergence of more sophisticated mobile devices such as smartphones, feature phones, and tablets has increased a richer customer experience, especially given the ability to shop irrespective of time and geographical location (Goode et al., 2005; Parise et al., 2016). According to Huss (2022), 40% of all purchases in New Zealand takes place on smartphones, 87% of Internet users are now smartphone users, and 81.5% of mobile phone users conduct product research online before purchasing.

Small-to-medium enterprises are the backbone of the economy in most of the developed countries including New Zealand. They also contribute significantly to the growth of the global economy (Pandya, 2012). Similarly, SMEs significantly contribute to the New Zealand economy (New Zealand Foreign Affairs & Trade, 2021a). Small-to-medium enterprises account for 28%

of New Zealand's gross domestic product (GDP) and employ over 630,000 workers. Furthermore, there are approximately 487,602 SMEs in New Zealand, representing 97% of all New Zealand businesses (New Zealand Foreign Affairs & Trade, 2021b). Considering the contemporary phenomenon, i.e., the rapid use of smartphone technology (Ismail et al., 2021; Tong et al., 2020; Yin et al., 2019), this research explored the factors influencing the uptake of mobile marketing as a strategy by SMEs in Invercargill, New Zealand.

Research on use of mobile marketing on SMEs has been conducted previously, however, there is limited research on the factors influencing the use of mobile marketing in New Zealand. Likewise, it is noted that the bulk of the previous research was conducted from the customers' perspective, i.e., on user behaviour and attitudes towards mobile marketing (Gao et al., 2020; Jebarajakirthy et al., 2021; Leppäniemi et al., 2006). Although there is literature from other countries on the factors influencing mobile marketing adoption, there is limited research in New Zealand, particularly with SMEs, and the existing literature is fragmented. This research is, therefore, an attempt to fill this gap and better understand the factors influencing SMEs' use of mobile marketing strategies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several types of mobile devices facilitating mobile marketing are available in the market; however, this research was predominantly confined to mobile marketing via mobile phones (smartphones and feature phones) and tablets. The literature review related to mobile marketing and SMEs and is discussed in the following subsections.

Mobile Marketing

Mobile marketing has become a catchphrase in the modern business world and is gaining recognition and acceptance for its efficacy. Mobile marketing is proliferating; due to this very reason, it is emerging as a topic of interest in the research world since its early adoption (Leppäniemi et al., 2006).

Marketing is one of the sectors that has been considerably transformed due to technological innovations in mobile-based marketing; consequently, traditional marketing has, to some extent, been reduced by mobile marketing, which is popularly known as m-commerce. Nevertheless, mobile technology is very fragmented, and as a result, mobile-based marketing has become multi-faceted and multichannel. As such, the target audience can be reached using smartphones, tablets, or other handheld devices via short message service (SMS), multimedia message service (MMS), websites, e-mails, and mobile applications. Huang (2012) defines mobile marketing as simply a process of delivering a marketing message to a mobile device through a mobile communication platform (p. 12). However, Ismail and Razak (2011) criticised the lack of consensus on the definition of mobile marketing; researchers are seemingly ever forced to define it within the context of their studies.

The most significant aspect of mobile marketing is its capacity to use push and pull marketing strategies simultaneously (Armstrong & Kotler, 2017). Kumar and Mittal (2020) noted that the smartphone had aggregated the process of searching for information, shopping, social networking, communication, and leisure. A new term, mobile moments, has emerged, referencing a person using their smartphone to instantly get anything they want. Business enterprises, including SMEs have been motivated to embrace mobile technologies to connect with customers and enhance their competitive advantage. Minelli et al. (2013) state that mobile analytics provides a framework for developing a holistic understanding of customer behaviour. As a consequence, the adoption of mobile marketing offers a framework for ensuring that a brand can align its advertising strategies with its business goals. Effective mobile marketing can result in improved business performance by optimising brand awareness and recognition.

Mobile Marketing and Customer Retention

Prospective customer acquisition is key in as much as SMEs can engage, retain, and upsell to a customer. Considering their limited resources, SMEs priorities activities that generate a high return on investment (ROI) at the least possible cost (Dairo & Beyioku, 2022). A customer focus is paramount to SMEs because of the pressure they face to create positive outcomes as soon as possible. Shareef et al. (2016) reported that mobile marketing offers SMEs the opportunity to reach customers at an affordable cost.

The adoption of mobile marketing by SMEs is determined by multiple factors such as cost, alignment with the business model, efficacy, and target customers (Saeed & Bekhet, 2018). For example, young customers appear to be willing to engage with mobile marketing messages when there is a positive perception of ease of use, usefulness, entertainment value and personal attachment (Saeed & Bekhet, 2018).

There is an obvious need for SMEs to connect with their target customers. As such, their target customers' location is an essential consideration in shaping mobile marketing utilisation (Yousif, 2012). The author stated that mobile marketing is distinguished from other forms of marketing because of its personalisation, interactivity, localization, and ubiquity. Many SMEs, however, may lack the competence or awareness of how to use mobile marketing optimally. As a result, they must rely on the professional services provided by digital marketing agencies. In this regard, a SMEs' owner's knowledge and attitude towards digital technology becomes an important factor in shaping any decision to utilise the services.

Mobile phones have offered marketers a new platform to connect with customers. They offer organisations 24/7 access to individual customers, enabling them to build interactive relationships and cultivate positive relationships (Lu et al., 2019). Rodriguez and Boyer (2020) states that increased interaction between the SME and customer allows them to develop a more intensive relationship. Besides, it provides businesses with the customers' identity, commercial behaviour, communication patterns and geographic location.

Likewise, Eze et al. (2019) states that access to mobile phones is expected to increase due to falling costs and rising income levels. The state mobile marketing enables brands to reach and acquire customers faster than traditional marketing because of the technology's omnipresent nature. When mobile marketing is executed appropriately, it allows customers to access personalised and time and location-sensitive information. Besides being useful, it is also easy to measure its impact through data analysis (Sezgin, 2016). As a result, it is easy for business owners to determine the return on investment on their investment in mobile marketing.

As highlighted by Dairo and Beyioku (2022), mobile marketing generates value for both customers and businesses, especially SMEs. However, many businesses provide limited support to this powerful and versatile platform. Additionally, their existing knowledge regarding the adoption of mobile marketing is limited to their interactions with customers.

Mobile Marketing and Small-to-medium Enterprises in New Zealand

Mobile marketing is increasingly gaining popularity in New Zealand as a direct marketing strategy. It is gradually becoming mainstream among SMEs due to its various advantages to its customers (Basagre, 2022). This literature review explores the benefits of integrating mobile marketing into a business's marketing campaign strategy, especially New Zealand direct advertising processes (Bakopoulos et al., 2017). The use of mobile marketing by SMEs is slowly and gradually increasing in New Zealand. The Coronavirus Disease (Covid 19) pandemic has also sped up the momentum to shift to mobile marketing from 2021 to 2023. During this time the mobile marketing gap in the SMEs community has closed by 1% (NZME, 2023). Another reason behind this is the ability to personalise and optimise the experience for the customers (Basagre, 2022).

In New Zealand, mobile marketing techniques, channel propagation and usage, especially regarding SMEs, have aroused great interest among researchers. Due to limited human and financial capital, these technologies have brought considerable benefits to SMEs since mobile marketing channels are affordable compared to mainstream advertising. Mobile marketing strategies help New Zealand SMEs improve their sales and promotional performance (Berman, 2016). Even so, there is a continued lack of focus on building a usable marketing framework and a lack of clarity regarding the factors determining New Zealand SMEs' adoption of mobile marketing techniques. This research investigated mobile marketing's impact on New Zealand SMEs and endeavoured to formulate a theoretical base model for mobile marketing.

Moreover, mobile marketing campaigns are vulnerable to being copied by a competing business, despite the prospect of a lawsuit (Yurovskiy, 2014). Proprietary trademarks and logos can likewise be appropriated to deceive target or potential customers, with an obvious risk to market share. It might well be possible for a competing mobile marketing campaign to disseminate negative and inaccurate information about a reputed brand, product, or service, to tarnish its online reputation and distance potential customers (Yurovskiy, 2014).

There is the added potential for such a campaign to overwhelm and clutter the market with too many advertisements, pop-ups, pop-unders, banners, etc. (Yurovskiy, 2014). In a customer's mind, such advertisements might originate from a real business or a dubious entity; spammers and scammers are ever-present in the digital sphere, including mobile marketing. This kind of doubt leads some customers to ignore marketing messages and advertisements wholesale, regardless of source, resulting in revenue loss to any bona fide business (Taherdoost & Jalaliyoon, 2014). The content of mobile marketing should therefore be streamlined, rich in the business sense but professional; otherwise, the customers will not perceive the marketing advertisements or SMS or MMS as serious.

On a separate note, mobile marketing is not the solution for all promotional endeavours because it cannot reach out to all target or potential customers. Accordingly, mobile marketing channels may be less relevant where some products and services or the target market are concerned; for example, for the aged (elderly) population, where only a small percentage will be tech-savvy, while the majority have little familiarity with mobile marketing, or indeed mobile technology (Taherdoost & Jalaliyoon, 2014).

An analysis of the available literature would seem to urge researchers to focus on the regulating of mobile marketing and on the responsiveness of customers according to age group. It also points to a greater effort being made to examine the effectiveness of mobile marketing in other business sectors. Addressing these knowledge gaps will enable better understanding of the SMEs mobile marketing experience.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research aimed to establish an in-depth and detailed understanding of various factors influencing the use of mobile marketing strategies for SMEs in Invercargill, New Zealand. The case study method provides a more profound understanding and can be applied to various disciplines (Crowe et al., 2011). The data was collected using a semi-structured interview with eight participants who own and manage SMEs in Invercargill, New Zealand. The samples were selected by using purposive sampling techniques to obtain greater depth and insights (Saunders et al., 2019). The data was collected only after receiving ethical approval from the Southern Institute of Technology Human Research Ethics Committee. The interviews were conducted for about an hour and aimed to collect participant demographics, business characteristics, and perceptions of mobile marketing's importance, effectiveness, implementation, and impact on the business. It also explored participants' awareness of mobile marketing, their current usage, preferred channels, and the feedback from customers. Additionally, it also aimed to understand participants' potential future usage and desired improvements for mobile marketing strategies.

According to Saunders et al. (2019), the researcher should design and conduct such an in-depth interview to better understand certain actions occurring in the situational context and their effects. This justifies adopting a case study approach, including the interview process as a tool for data collection.

The data were analysed and interpreted using the narrative enquiry method. Saunders et al. (2019) found that a narrative enquiry method is more appropriate when the participants' view of their experiences can only be understood by accessing their entire story. Thus, this research aimed to investigate the attitudes and practices of small and medium-sized business (SME) proprietors in Invercargill regarding the strategic integration of mobile marketing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Eight SME owners from different types of businesses from Invercargill, New Zealand, were interviewed to learn about their personal experiences and business practices related to mobile marketing. The participants were selected using a purposive sampling method, the contact information of the partcipants were found from the New Zealand company register office's website and were contacted via phone, or email. The information sheet was provided to the participants and only those interviewed gave permission to participate.

The findings are presented by topic, starting with the participants' demographic information, followed by themes linking to the research objectives. This is followed by a discussion of the findings in relation to existing literature.

Demographic Details of the Participants

In the first part of the interview, demographic and personal details were gathered from the participants; questions 1 – 6. Table 1 summarises the participants' demographic information, while the subsequent Figures 1 and 2 summarise the participants' gender and age. All participants' names have been anonymised; each was assigned a code.

Table 1: Participants' Information

PARTICIPANTS	GENDER AND AGE	SME TYPE	SME HISTORY
Participant 1 (P1)	Female, 35 to 45	Grocery	2 to 3 years
Participant 2 (P2)	Female, 30 to 40	Mobile Accessory Shop	1 year
Participant 3 (P3)	Female, 40 to 45	Saloon and Hairdressing	2 to 3 years
Participant 4 (P4)	Female, 50 to 55	Bakery and Confectionary	20 years
Participant 5 (P5)	Male, 35 to 45	Car Sales	2 to 3 years
Participant 6 (P6)	Male, 35 to 40	Mobile Phone Repairing	1 to 2 years
Participant 7 (P7)	Male, 45 to 50	Dairy	1 to 2 years
Participant 8 (P8)	Male, 30 to 35	Grocery	3 years

Figure 1: Gender Classification of the Participants
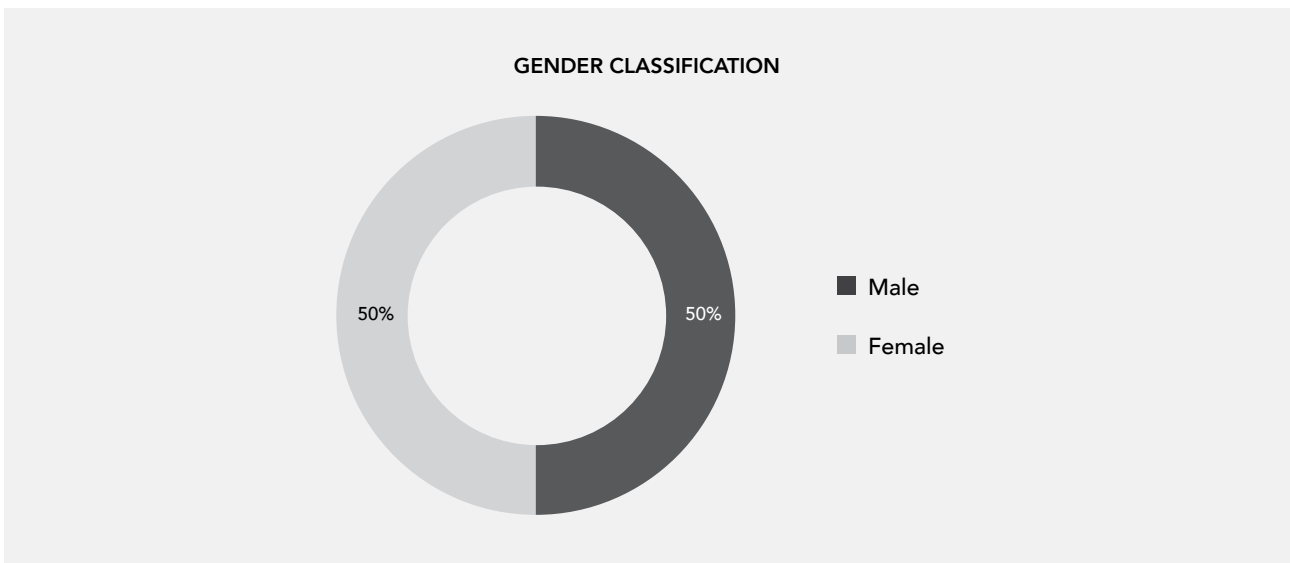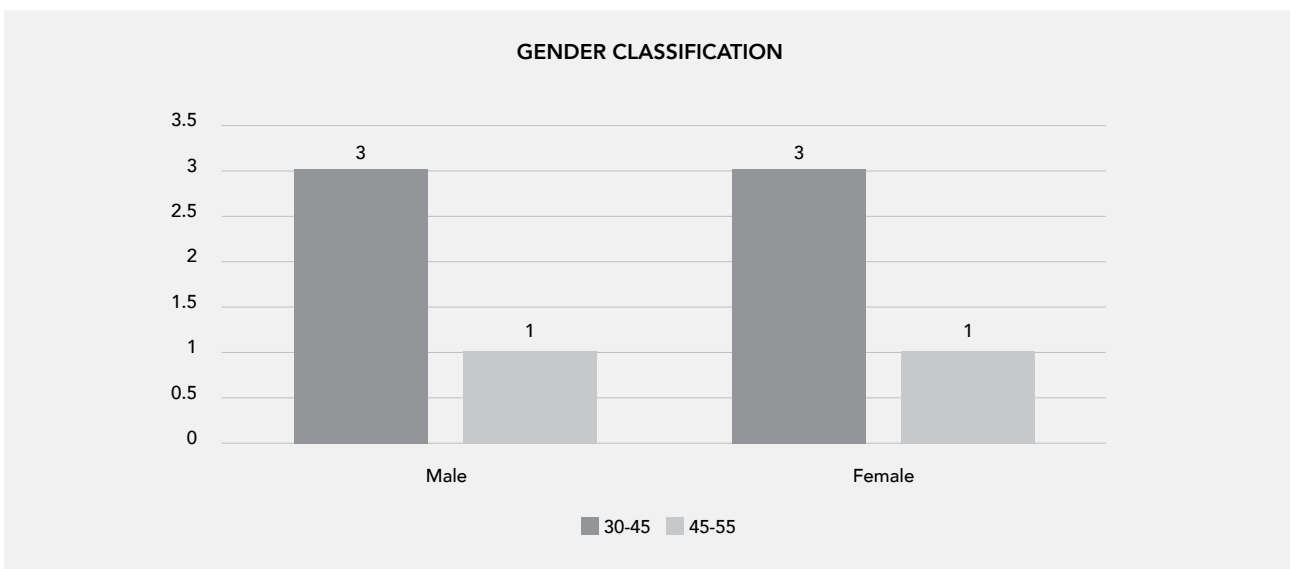
GENDER CLASSIFICATION

50% 50%

Male
Female

Figure 1

When reviewing the age groups (Figure 2), 75% of the participants were between the ages of 30 and 45, and the remaining 25% were between the ages of 45 and 55, i.e., a group of relatively young entrepreneurs.

Figure 2: Age Groups and Number of Participants

GENDER CLASSIFICATION

■ 30-45 ■ 45-55

No sensitive business information, ethnic or cultural information was requested or obtained. The interview questions were formulated in such a way that it gets and answers to all three objectives thoroughly. Some relevant follow-up questions were also added to gain a deeper insight and aid in understanding of each aspect separately. The questions are presented in the following Tables 2 and 3, respectively, linking the interview questions to the research objectives.

Commonalities and differences between participants' responses were soon discovered. Interestingly, in addition to the initial themes identified through the literature review, many other themes emerged from the participants' responses, and the researcher was able to recognise trends among the responses. The researchers also identified the phases of business development as the starting phase, growth phase, maturity phase, and renewal or declining phase based on the trends and initially identified factors. Each phase was interconnected, but the influence of key factors such as SMEs' knowledge and understanding, encouragement to use mobile marketing, and availability of multichannel channels differed from phase to phase.

As indicated in Tables 2 and 3, the questions are organised according to the research objectives, which are discussed next.

Table 2: Linking Interview Questions and Research Objectives

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
Knowledge of the concept (Objective 1)	Are you aware of a concept called mobile marketing?
	How would you describe or explain mobile marketing?
	How did you get to know about this concept?
	Do you think that mobile marketing is important/effective for the success of a business? If yes/no, then why?
	Have you identified any weaknesses or disadvantages of using mobile marketing? Could you please briefly discuss it.
	What changes / new features you would like to see in mobile marketing?
Motivational factors (Objective 2)	Are you using mobile marketing in your business?
	What factors led to your decision to use mobile marketing in your business?
	How do you market or promote your products to your customers?
	Have you identified any positive changes/progress after the introduction of mobile marketing? If yes, could you please briefly discuss it?
	Have you identified any weaknesses or disadvantages of using mobile marketing? Could you please briefly discuss it.
	Would you continue using mobile marketing in the future for marketing activities?
Type of mobile marketing channels (Objective 3)	What traditional marketing or advertising channels you are using to promote your business?
	What are the mobile marketing or advertising channels you are using to promote your business?
	Which is your most preferred mobile marketing channel, and why?
	Do you think that mobile marketing is effective compared to the other methods of marketing used currently for your business?

Table 3: Linking Research Objectives to Key Research Findings

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	KEY FINDINGS
Knowledge of the concept (Objective 1)	The following factors were identified. – Awareness / Effectiveness – The difference between conventional marketing, mobile marketing, and synergy effect – Current trends / Advantages and Disadvantages / Developments.
Motivational factors (Objective 2)	The following factors motivated the participants to use mobile marketing as a marketing strategy, the ubiquitous nature of mobile devices, the ease with which companies can raise awareness of their existence, the ability to reach new markets, the ability to provide a personalised and contextual experience, and high customer engagement and interaction.
Type of mobile marketing channels (Objective 3)	The following mobile marketing channels were heavily used by the participants: – SMS / Push notifications / Mobile applications / Company websites The following social media was not used: – WhatsApp / Facebook messages / Facebook The following mobile marketing channels were seldom used by all the eight participants to promote their products and services: – MMS / YouTube / LinkedIn.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE CONCEPT

All eight participants used mobile marketing in their capacity to meet their personal needs; however, two were unaware of the terminology of mobile marketing. Six participants were well-versed in mobile marketing and had considerable experience.

Mobile marketing helps deliver highly interactive content with compelling formats. Further, due to the one-on-one personal nature of mobile devices, mobile advertisements are more effective than traditional marketing. The findings are similar to

Kumar and Mittal (2020) research on mobile marketing, suggesting that most business organisations are motivated to use mobile technology to connect with their customers. This can be further ascertained from the participants' awareness of mobile marketing, as indicated in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Participants Awareness and Effectiveness of Mobile Marketing

PARTICIPANT QUOTES	PARTICIPANT
AWARENESS	
"I was not aware of the term mobile marketing; however, I have used all the tactics that you explained under mobile marketing."	P1
"Yes, of course, I am very much aware of the concept mobile marketing."	P4
EFFECTIVENESS	
"It is a cost-effective marketing method for our business."	P3
"It helps our business to consistently send content to our target customers"	P7

To understand the participants knowledge regarding current trends and developments in the marketing field, especially as regards mobile marketing and other technological advancements. All the participants were well informed about the new trends and developments as above, suggesting that a mobile marketing strategy is fitting well with their marketing mix model, simplifying overall marketing campaign planning (Xi et al., 2019). The participants' responses to current trends and developments in relation to their experiences and business practices, are illustrated below in Table 5.

Table 5: Current Trends and Developments

PARTICIPANT QUOTES	PARTICIPANT
CURRENT TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS	
"Artificial intelligence (AI) will be a groundbreaking phenomenon after mobile marketing."	P1
"I would say mobile marketing because it facilitates one-to-to-one, interactive dialogue between retailers and customers using the various platforms that suit the customer best."	P2
CURRENT TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS	
"I think video marketing is one of the most significant marketing trends today."	P3
"Social messaging apps can be very useful, which is part of mobile marketing. The customers believe businesses should be on social media apps like Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram. This is what I've learned after doing business for many years."	P4
"Artificial intelligence will have the greatest potential and commercial value over the next decades."	P5
"The use of data from social media platforms, and mobile analytics can assist businesses in discovering where customers go and what they look for."	P6
"I am excited about chatbots. According to me, that is the latest development in the marketing arena."	P7
"Personalised marketing means personalised content, products, product information and promotional messages."	P8

During the interview, the participants' feedback and responses were obtained on the advantages and disadvantages of mobile marketing by posing the following two questions:

– Have you identified any weaknesses or disadvantages of using mobile marketing?

– Have you identified any positive changes after the introduction of mobile marketing?

Participant 1, who is running a grocery business, described the positive changes they have seen in adopting mobile marketing as follows:

> *"The benefits are numerous; for example, through mobile marketing, a retailer can reach millions or even billions of people to sell their product. A single advertisement in multiple formats makes it simple to use. Furthermore, since mobile marketing is direct marketing, it allows you to have a direct conversation with your potential customers and receive immediate feedback. User responses can also be easily tracked with mobile marketing" (P1).*

Despite these numerous positive changes, P1 described the weaknesses and disadvantages they have faced as a business when using mobile marketing:

> *"There are drawbacks as well; the most significant downside is false negative customer feedback. We have had some bad experiences that have negatively impacted our brand. Another drawback is that navigation on a small mobile screen can be difficult, resulting in the advertisement going unnoticed. Customers are also reluctant to log in to new sites due to privacy concerns, which poses a challenge to retailers like us because we will not be able to fully leverage the potential platform." (P1).*

These responses from the participants are similar to Huang et al. (2022) arguments that mobile marketing is vulnerable to being copied by a competing business and possible for them to disseminate negative and inaccurate information. However, some of the participants indicated that such a weakness is being overshadowed by the benefits they offer. For example, P2 and P6 are in the mobile accessory business, and they tend to get more customer feedback regarding mobile marketing due to the nature of their business. According to them, the following two weaknesses also negate the benefits mobile marketing has to offer.

> *"Since mobile advertisements are fast, it's difficult to correct or fix a mistake before it's noticed" (P6).*

> *"User costs must also be considered; standard data and texting charges may apply to some of those who review mobile advertisements, causing them to avoid watching them, so causing retailers to miss out on the full potential available" (P2).*

Participants P3, P4, and P5 gave feedback on another aspect of the concept knowledge. All three agreed that mobile marketing was not a complete replacement for traditional marketing but that businesses should reap the benefits of both platforms by leveraging the synergy effect. These findings align with Yousif's (2012) argument that mobile marketing needs to be used as a tool to improve SMEs' marketing via their personalisation, interactivity, locational, and ubiquity features.

Table 6: The Difference Between Conventional Marketing, Mobile Marketing, and the Synergy Effect

PARTICIPANT QUOTES	PARTICIPANT
CONVENTIONAL MARKETING, MOBILE MARKETING, AND THE SYNERGY EFFECT	
"I own a saloon and dressmaking business, and word-of-mouth is how I get most of my customers. Mobile marketing is useful for spreading the word about a company's presence, whereas word of mouth attracts loyal customers."	P3
"I'll tell you what I did. I used traditional marketing platforms to inform about my digital presence. I first mentioned our Facebook and website details in paper advertisements."	P4
"I believe that SMEs should combine traditional and mobile marketing methods to provide a comprehensive customer experience."	P5

Based on the participants' responses, it is evident that awareness of mobile marketing is one of the prerequisites influencing mobile marketing adoption. This means customers will be willing to engage with mobile marketing when they perceive its easy use, entertainment, and personal value (Saeed & Bekhet, 2018). Because SMEs can organise their knowledge into a coherent whole, this allows them to learn new concepts by connecting them to what they already know. This means mobile marketing provides a more holistic understanding of customer behaviour as Minelli et al. (2013) argue and an opportunity to reach more customers (Shareef et al., 2016).

Motivational Factors

The participants all agreed that various motivational factors encouraged their use of mobile marketing, and many different factors went into a mobile marketing strategy. The findings revealed that among SMEs, motivation was found to be an important factor in mobile marketing adoption in New Zealand, or at least in Invercargill. The following themes were identified from the participants in response to the motivational factors.

Omnipresent

Participant 2, who runs a mobile accessory, elaborated on their views regarding motivational factors and the omnipresence of mobile technology, stating.

> *"That people carry mobile phones all the time and retailers can keep in touch with customers all the time"* *(P2).*

Participant 5, who represents the car sales industry, agreed with P2, and said.

> *"that not only the pervasiveness of mobile phones but also the addictive nature of smartphones had opened a new range of business opportunities for them" (P5).*

Similarly, P4 and P7 emphasised the benefits that retailers can derive from the omnipresence of mobile phones, serving as a driving force for retailers to integrate mobile marketing into their marketing strategies and to promote their products. These findings align with Shareef et al's. (2016) research suggesting mobile marketing allows businesses to reach more customers at affordable prices.

> *"We chose mobile marketing because of this feature of mobile phones; all other benefits are secondary to us. As a retailer, you want to be everywhere, and this magical device facilitates that." (P4).*

> *"In my opinion, this has made things easier and is a convenience to both merchants and customers." (P7).*

These views from the participants align with the Watson et al. (2013) argument that mobile marketing is a direct marketing tool that establishes immediate contact. This is because mobile devices are widely available and can reach customers at any time and at any location.

Increasing awareness of products, their existence, and reaching new audiences

In addition to the advantages of mobile technology's omnipresence, participants highlighted the motivation to use mobile marketing from the prescriptive of reaching new customers. This supports the arguments of Rowles (2017) that the proportion of people using mobile technology has dramatically increased, such that mobile technology has become an eminently viable option for businesses to attract new customers. For example, P3, who runs a saloon and hairdressing business, response regarding increasing product awareness and the possibility of reaching out to new audiences:

> *"Because small saloons and hairdressing shops do not typically advertise on television or in newspapers, I had to rely on word of mouth to attract new customers. However, since introducing Facebook and Facebook Messenger, I have noticed a significant increase in customer traffic." (P3)*

Similar viewpoints were shared by P5 and P8 on the ability of mobile marketing to attract new customers and increase awareness of their products:

The responses from P2, P3 and P7 to the questions relating to motivational factors are listed below.

PARTICIPANT QUOTES	PARTICIPANT
ABILITY TO OFFER PERSONALISED AND CONTEXTUAL EXPERIENCE	
"Customers expect businesses to be available when they need them the most. I believe that mobile marketing channels, especially social media channels provide a valuable source of information that businesses can use to personalise customer interactions."	P2
"Customising content and product details is simple with mobile marketing; all it takes is a single SMS."	P3
"The ability to collect reviews through mobile marketing channels provides an opportunity for companies to learn what customers think companies should do differently. If used correctly, we can personalise, our level of customer service to the fullest extent possible."	P7

These responses from the participants are similar to the (Aschoff, 2020) research that suggests that the United Kingdom has become a smartphone society and that New Zealand is no different. Given this situation, it has become easier for businesses to use mobile technology to provide customers with personalised and context-specific services.

Viswanathan et al. (2017) argue that branded mobile applications and access to websites via smartphones or tablets are constantly changing how customers interact with a brand. Similar views were expressed by the participants to the questions related to motivational factors.

PARTICIPANT QUOTES	PARTICIPANT
CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT AND INTERACTION	
"Mobile marketing is often a two-way communication, so it is quite easy to interact and engage with customers."	P1
"With mobile marketing, getting customer feedback is only a click away. It is a pleasure marketing via mobile because of this interaction."	P4
"You can get immediate customer feedback with mobile marketing; It is personally rewarding and exciting to interact with customers using mobile marketing."	P8
"As to customer engagement and interaction, the first impression is critical. You can develop enticing content and make your company's website or mobile application captivating with mobile marketing."	P5

Type of Mobile Marketing Channels

The participants had mixed views about using mobile marketing channels. All participants were familiar with the AI platform, Facebook, and Facebook Messenger, company websites, and company-owned mobile applications for marketing campaigns. Responses indicated that P1, P7 and P8, all in the grocery business, were knowledgeable about push notifications and their benefits and functionality however they had never used the push notification medium.

All the participants asserted the importance of having their mobile applications and a company website whereby businesses can upgrade product content 24/7, plus the customer's ability to work offline and online, and that mobile apps presented a seamless experience.

PARTICIPANT QUOTES	PARTICIPANT
SMS AND PUSH NOTIFICATIONS	
"SMS is a very fast and efficient method of communication."	P1
"Marketing messages will hit the target audience almost instantly and are easy to disseminate and less complex."	P2
"The customer will feel it because an SMS is delivered directly to their mobile phone. It is very personal."	P3
"By delivering the right message to the right group of people, businesses like us can boost sales."	P4
"Easy to use." "Since we have our own mobile application, we are making good use of push notifications."	P5
"Most popular mobile marketing method." "Push notifications will increase the customer experience."	P6
"Simple and easy."	P7
"SMS can be easily tracked using the delivery reports."	P8
MOBILE APPLICATIONS AND COMPANY WEBSITES	
"It increases customer acceptance and a positive reputation when the business has both app and website."	P3
"Can bring the consumer closer to the company's products or services."	P4
"Paves the way for more seamless customer experience."	P5
"According to my view, mobile applications and company websites enable customers to interact and transact with ease."	P7
"Can delight the customer if the business has both app and website. The more, the merrier."	P8

Among the participants, the most popular social media messaging apps were Facebook, Facebook Messenger, and WhatsApp, all free to use and have a user-friendly interface. Small-to-medium enterprises might well be advised to use these social media apps to engage with their target audience.

PARTICIPANT QUOTES	PARTICIPANT
WHATSAPP, FACEBOOK AND FACEBOOK MESSENGER	
"Cost-effective method of marketing."	P1
"Convenience."	P2
"The most popular mobile marketing channel."	P3
"Most potent and interactive channel."	P6

None of the participants were using MMS, YouTube or LinkedIn for mobile marketing campaigns to promote their goods and services. Apart from P5 and P6, the other six participants were not aware that LinkedIn could be used to promote their goods and services.

CONCLUSION

This research investigated the factors influencing New Zealand SMEs' uptake of mobile marketing. Using a qualitative case study approach, it was found that omnipresence, the ability to increase visibility and reach new markets, the ability to deliver personalised and contextual experience, ability to provide extensive customer engagement and interaction were the key factors influencing New Zealand SMEs in using mobile marketing. This research may act as a starting point for taking a broader view of mobile marketing for SMEs, especially from the perspective of business owners themselves.

Finally, the research found that mobile marketing is the most effective tool for advancing the business objectives of SMEs and the ever-present need to stay ahead of the competition. Small-to-medium enterprises can produce unparalleled results by successfully integrating mobile marketing at the right moment. By embracing mobile marketing and going digital, SMEs all over the world have reached new heights and achieved outstanding results. More emphasis could well be placed on promoting mobile marketing as a versatile and sophisticated marketing method for SMEs.

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